

KUAN YIN SANCTUARY

Sundays:

sitting meditation 7-7:30pm

t'ai chi practice 7:30-9:30pm

Kathleen Dolan has converted her basement into a meditation and practice studio and invites club members to enjoy the space for a Sunday meditation and practice on Queen Anne. If you're interested give Kathleen a call: 283-5731.

FULL MOON ADVANCED PRACTICE

MAY 4th, 7-midnight

A NEW TRANSLATION AVAILABLE

My thanks again, go out to Joe Crandall for the completion of his latest project; the translation of Sun Xikun's **Bagua Quan Zhen Chuan** (*The Genuine Transmission of Bagua Quan*). One of my teachers, T.Y. Pang, was a protégé of Master Sun Xikun and Pang is one of the best Bagua people I've ever seen. This book has valuable information translated on practice, forms and the philosophy of Bagua Zhang. Master Sun was deeply Taoist and there was no separation of Bagua and Daoism for him. Bagua club members should definitely get this for its information.

Joe Crandall has helped us all with his many translations, making these classical books on Bagua available to us non-Chinese speaking practitioners. Without the proper guidelines and being able to check the classics we could be practicing for years without any skills or depths to our art. Thanks Joe.

So far Joe has translated three books on our lineage of Bagua:

- ◆ Bagua Quan Zhen Chuan (*The Genuine Transmission of Bagua Quan*) by Sun Xikun, \$15.00
- ◆ Cheng Shi Baguazhang (*Cheng Style Baguazhang*) by Ma Youqing & Liu Jingru, \$15.00
- ◆ Bagua Quan Zue (*A Study of 8 Trigrams Boxing*) by Sun Lutang, \$19.00 also available:
- ◆ Baguadao (*Bagua Knife*) by Guo Zhenya, \$15.00

- ◆ Baguazhang lianxi fa (*Baguazhang practice method*) by Jiang Rongqiao, \$15.00
- ◆ Wudang Baguazhang (*Wudang Baguazhang*) by Fei Yintao & Fei Yuliang, \$15.00
- ◆ Yin Shi Baguazhang (*Yin style baguazhang*) - Zhang Lei, \$19.00
- ◆ Classical Pa Kua Chang Fighting Systems & Weapons by Johnson & Crandall, \$20 (Bagua encyclopedia)
- ◆ Xingyi Wu Xing Lianhuan Quan (by Li Cunyi) \$10.00
- ◆ Henan Orthodox Xingyi Quan - Pei Xirong & Li Ying'ang \$17.00

some of these books are available from Victor through the club

T'AI CHI AND MODERN LIFESTYLES

I have detailed information on this even and posters available if you know where we can put these up so interested people can get the information. Also, the club (Internal Wushu Arts) will purchase group tickets at a discount.

at the door: \$12.00 one day / \$20 two days (Canadian)

pre-order: \$8.00 one day / \$13.50 two days (Canadian)

If you're on the net check out the home page for this event:

<http://www.uhuru.net/taichi>

Along with opening ceremonies and demonstrations by the Masters there will be presentations by:

SATURDAY:

OPENING CEREMONIES

Grandmaster T.T.Tchoung - *T'ai Chi and Modern Lifestyle*

Martin Lee - *8 Part Talk on Yang T'ai Chi*

Tony Jay - *T'ai Chi and Nei Kung*

Peter Dickson - *T'ai Chi in Teaching Seniors*

Tim Glasheen - *Role of San Shou in T'ai Chi*

Harvey Kurland - *Kinesiologist's Perspective on T'ai Chi*

Rex Eastman - *Play the T'ai Chi*

Dave Harris - *Chin Na applications*

Douglas Lee - *Wu style T'ai Chi*

Tran Wu - *The Martial and Healing Arts of T'ai Chi*

DINNER FOR GRANDMASTER

TCHOUNG TA TCHEN (\$25.00 separate fee)

SUNDAY:

Xu, Gong Wei - *Chan Style T'ai Chi*

Philip Chan - *Modern Role of T'ai Chi*

John Camp - *T'ai Chi Rooting*

Robert Houghton - *Relationship between T'ai Chi and Hsing Yi*

Dr. Kwok Chu Li - *Health perspective of T'ai Chi*

Victor Fu - *Fu style T'ai Chi*

Andrew Dale - *T'ai Chi, Pa Kua and Chi kung connection*

Lawrence Der - *Health benefits of Chi Kung and T'ai Chi*

Ron Sue - *T'ai Chi weaponry*

CLOSING CEREMONIES

If you would like to order tickets through the club then let me know asap. Due date for the ticket discount is May 15th.

inquiries & registration:

CHINESE CULTURAL CENTRE,
50 East Pender St., Vancouver B.C.,
687-0729 or #860-4400 Hazelbridge
Way, Richmond B.C., 278-0873

PICK YOUR FAVORITE

Nope I'm not that boarded! In the last few months I've changed the format of this newsletter (did you notice??). Anyway, please look over the last few months, or last few years if you have old copies and let me know if there's one format you liked over the others.



TRAINING CONCEPTS

© Harvey Kurland 1996

The benefits of t'ai-chi ch'uan can only occur if the techniques are done correctly. The Chinese believe that if done correctly, t'ai-chi ch'uan can be used to help treat chronic disease. When used with medical treatment it is used for depression, chronic hepatitis, heart disease, high blood pressure and gastrointestinal disorders. It is also used for osteoporosis and the most recent research shows it helps balance which prevents falls and subsequent broken bones in seniors. The benefits come to the student if the movements are done properly. If you have medical problems you should seek state of the art medical treatment and combine it with t'ai-chi ch'uan, unless it is contraindicated by your doctor.

In the last two issues we discussed why it is important to find a good t'ai-chi ch'uan teacher. If you learn the wrong method, it may not help you, other than giving you some light exercise. Basically slow t'ai-chi ch'uan has the same exercise value as walking 3 to 4 miles per hour, depending on the amount of knee bend and length of your stance. But for the full therapeutic effect some basic guidelines must be followed. First, relax. As I like to say, "if in doubt relax."

Second, keep your attention on the tan t'ien. Breath with your diaphragm. This type of breathing helps to circulate the blood and stimulate the internal organs. This facilitates blood flow through the abdominal cavity through the body. If you do these you are on the right path. These are the two most important concepts.

All movements start together and end together. According the Cheng, "When moving everything moves, when at rest everything is at rest." "Every joint in the body should be interconnected; Then the chi can flow." (Advanced T'ai Chi Form Instruction). There is a continuous flow in the form with no breaks. I find this produces a beneficial internal effect.

To add to the effect the movements should have a silk like quality. They should be continuous and circular. This allows the nervous system to relax and in turn relaxes the body. This combats the negative effects of stress. You should concentrate on what your are doing and the movements should be coordinated. Use a smooth slow tempo as in reeling silk from a cocoon. Another way to look at silk reeling energy is a twining, twisting energy within all movements which starts at the feet and twists up to the finger tips. This concept is stressed in Chen style but is also found in Yang style, if you know what you are looking for. The movements should be continuous like the flow of a river with no breaks or jerks in the flow. The height of the form should stay the same with little vertical movement. Breathing should be with the diaphragm. All the movements are circular and the circles occur due to waist movement. You must be mindful of what you are doing. Concentrate. Keep the knee alignment correct, as covered in my previous article.

If in
doubt,
relax

There is a waist turn in every technique. The waist leads each movement. The energy starts at the feet and goes to the waist, then to the hands. This gives you the circular motion. The arm movement is secondary to the body movement. There should not be any isolated arm movements. For example in "White Crane Spreads its Wings" and "Raise Hands" you have one to three waist movements depending on which version you practice. The waist movement gives it life.

Extension is a very important concept the I see very little of in practice. The mind must be extended through the movement. This gives the movements life and power. Without extension the form looks dead. At our UCR tournament last year there were many version of "dead tai chi", totally soul less. Kuo Lien Ying and Tchoung Ta Tchen always demonstrate this energy or liveliness while practice, "extension energy" is my word for it. They both criticized "dead T'ai-chi". Dead t'ai-chi ch'uan lacks vitality and energy. It often is the result on working on only yin energy without the yang or not understanding the form. Once you know what to look for it is easy to spot. Both yin and yang should be in each technique as well as relaxation, extension and mindful coordination. Only then do you get the full benefit.

Harvey Kurland received his Masters Degree from the University of Washington and has dedicated himself to public health issues for the last 30 years. He has degrees in public health education and exercise physiology. He is a certificated chief instructor of t'ai-chi ch'uan by Grandmaster Tchoung Ta-tchen and teaches at the University of California at Riverside and Loma Linda University. He also holds certification from the American College of Sports Medicine and International Sports Sciences Association.

FRUSTRATIONS OF A TAI CHI TEACHER

by ATDale

The lessons the same . . . You can't push the river

One of the common comments that comes from members is: "It must be frustrating teaching beginners", or "It must get tiring going over this stuff over and over again." Not true. Though teaching an advanced group has its enjoyment so does a beginning group. Working with a beginning group is fun because of the sharing, the eagerness to learn, the newness of some of the concepts, or the enjoyment from spending an hour or so working on relaxation. A complete beginner is actually easier to teach than someone who has had any training since they come to the class with an empty cup. Those with previous training reference all taught to their other art thus limiting or locking in the information into something else seeing the information through 'tinted' glasses. Though some movements may look 'Monkey' style like, or like the other T'ai Chi method there is an assumption of knowing it already or comparing it instead of opening up to see what can be learned now, without prejudice or assumptions. In the advanced group the enjoyment is seeking to apply the principles, movements, and exploring with a partner how to permit the Tai Chi to be, flow with the Tao, Wu Wei (effortlessness/ non-action). The frustration with a senior group or member is lack of exploration of what they have. Also, waiting to be told what to do, or waiting around for classes to start instead of practicing once they've arrived.

The true frustration in teaching is the same frustration faced in many areas of our lives; primarily to relax and permit things to flow as they need to and gently direct them, don't force or use strength. (how often have you heard that from me?) Working on our basic tai chi principles. It's the students that are too eager to get to the next thing that they don't work on what they have, they give me the challenge to soften and let go. They're so eager to get to the partner work, next form, weapons . . . that they neglect their basics. They may learn the movements but their is little tai chi or pa kua in their forms even though they may be performing a tai chi pa kua form! They're collecting a series of books but they're not reading them! The frustration isn't in their eagerness but in their neglect of what I've given them so far. It like giving someone a care and all they do is look at it.

It's the same as a parent or friend who've been there. You may try to save your friend, child from the mistakes you see but they need to learn that lesson for

themselves. The harder you try to 'force' them to understand the more frustrated you become and the more adamant they become in doing what they want to do.

The goal of a teacher varies with each individual and at each level. For beginners the teacher needs to present the art in the easiest terms and in a gentle manner. The lao shr needs to present the art to the new member so the new member can determine if they'd like to pursue the art. They need to see if the art will benefit their life and can fit into their life. As a beginner graduates to become a student (about a year) then the lao shr focuses on refining and strengthening the foundation of the art. This is where most of the frustration lies. There is the assumption that knowing the movements is having the movements. Being able to do the form is knowing the form. Practicing the forms is Tai Chi or Pa Kua. So the eager students wants to learn more and more instead of practicing what they have. "What's next??" "When will we get to learn the staff??" Beginners and most members have a trust that things will come, there's no time limit and the lao shr will present the information when the time is right. Some students however worry about the information not being there when they are ready, or the teacher will hold it back. Or they believe the lao shr doesn't see how advanced they really are! These are the students that I've found need to work on basics even more. Usually they'll compare themselves with someone 'advanced' that doesn't have the physical skills or flexibility they do assuming they are more advanced. So . . . as their lao shr I proceed to 'make' them get a better foundation whether they want it or not. Only frustrating us both. The physical performance isn't the art, actually there is a quality to the movement, an inner quality that displays advancement, not the obvious movement. Things such as consistency in posture alignment, timing and a certain presence determine advancement. In the book "There Are No Secrets", Wolfe Lowenthal states that Master Cheng, Man-ching would offer a correction or suggestion three times. After that he wouldn't bother he'd permit the students to find their own path.

One of our important concepts is Wu Wei. Performing an action in such harmony and smoothness that it feels like it does itself. While pushing hands or working on applications occasionally your partner will be thrown but you didn't do anything! That's wu wei. Your training, body coordination, the timing and harmonizing with your partner's movements were perfect. Awkward strength wasn't needed. Right time, right space, right action/non-action. The lesson is to try without trying, or get it without trying.

At a luncheon with Master Gao-fu for her friend Master Daniel Wang, Master Wang mentioned that in

China there was a saying: "The teacher can lead you to the door but the students must enter by themselves." He continued saying that Master Gao-fu was different, her idea was to drag the student through the door. The problem I think, is that some students want to or are ready to be pulled through the door. Master Tchoung would also do this with his students. It was important for him that the students learn correct and excel in the art. He want's everyone who does tai chi to be good! However, when the students are kicking and screaming about being pulled into the art then I guess it's too much and that's where the frustration comes in. Or when the student isn't ready to listen yet.

The frustration is seeing the quick route to acquire skill and wanting everyone to take it whereas some either aren't prepared, or need to find it themselves. It like telling someone to soften up and not try so hard with their movement or application when they need to go through the process to understand what "not so hard" or "softer" or "no strength" actually means. There needs to be a comparison, there needs to be a yin for the yang to be noticed.

It's all the same. Relax, Listen, Soften, No force, Root, Comfortableness, Gently. This is the internal arts. Easily done in a form, but while teaching or in daily life, this is our practice. While I'm saying all these things to you as you practice your forms and applications, there's this little voice saying the same thing to me as I'm doing more than suggesting those things to you.

My goal for student (goal is not Taoist but one day I'll learn) is for the all student to attain the tai chi body and understand the principles of tai chi life, or to attain the pa kua body and the pa kua principles related to the universe. Actually this is the goal I have for myself. The principles of tai chi and pa kua are the same, all stem from the Taoist tradition of naturalness and flowing with the rhythms of life and our own unique innate current. The physical bodies of the arts are different however; the tai chi body is soft yet strong and healthy. In applications the ideal tai chi body is like a cloud, you may see it but you can't feel it. It may look like you are touching it but there is no feeling of touching it. The Pa Kua body is different, it's robust and bright. As you touch it, it's like a revolving wheel or touching a large snake that may be pliant but has a feeling of great power. Touching a pa kua practitioner is like touching a current moving swiftly whereas a tai chi person is empty.

Well, it's another year. Lets see if I can get it right this year. Now lets see, all I have to do is: relax, sink, soften, empty, don't force, don't strain, listen and surf the current.

DO WE HAVE AS MUCH SENSE AS A GOOSE?

When you see geese flying along in "V" formation, you might be interested in knowing that scientists have discovered about why they fly that way. It has been learned that, as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% greater range than if each bird flew on its own.

Basic Truth; people who share a common directional sense of community can get where they are going faster and easier because they are traveling on a thrust of one another.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

Basic Truth; we should stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are going.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the "V" and another goose flies point.

Basic Truth; we need to take turns doing hard jobs.

The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Basic Truth; we need to offer encouragement, praise and feedback to other members of the "flock."

Whenever a goose is sick, two geese fall out of formation and go with him to help and protect him. They stay with him until he can return to the flock or has died, then they will fly with other flocks to get back to their own flock.

Basic Truth; if we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other.

