

NEWSLETTER

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<http://members.aol.com/ATDale/internalwushuarts.html>

ON THE WEB

The Internal Wushu Arts is officially on the web with links to family sites.
<http://members.aol.com/ATDale/internalwushuarts.html>

EVENING CLASSES

When the weather permits us to practice in Discover Park, park your car on Magnolia Blvd. There have been several car break-ins so don't park in the Discovery Park lot.

WANT THE IWANL QUICKER??

To make things easier and faster if your a subscriber to this newsletter you can have it faxed to you. Also I will eventually be putting portions of it online. Or if your computer systems can handle MSWord 7 I can send it as an attached document to you.

SEATTLE T'AI CHI FESTIVAL

July 21-28th schedules on the last page.

T'AI CHI CONFERENCE NOTES

TO ALL WHO WENT: If you didn't learn from all who gave presentations and demos at the conference then question your practice and study habits. The level of kung fu was extremely high. Merely watching the masters at this level should have inspired and taught you much.

XU, GONG WEI - wushu coach gave a wonderful presentation of Chen T'ai Chi Chuan. Truly a master possessing a brilliant energy and vitality at 81 years old.

VICTOR FU - the great grandson of pa kua master Fu Chen Sung. Wow, he demonstrated the Liang-I Chuan and Fu Dragon Palm (trademarks of the Fu family). I feel very stiff by comparison.

SIFU - began his presentation by scolding us: "You eat and sleep how can you say you don't have time to practice daily?" And to those who say they don't have the room, Sifu brought the conference to a completion by doing the

form on a desk top! There are no excuses.

SIMU - opened the conference along with her students with a wonderful demo of the grace and power of yang T'ai Chi chuan.

IF YOU MISSED IT:

Friendship, family, artists working sharing, enjoying each others talents, insights, and skills. If you didn't attend you missed one of the historic events of the Northwest in the art of T'ai Chi chuan.

Amazing feats:

Sifu withstood 5 of us pushing on his arm as he rooted, then displayed fa-jin and knocked all 5 of us back.

Victor Fu moved like a boa (or a change ling for trekies) and his fa-jin was awesome.

alertness, spirited Xu, Gong Wei was like a cat: and his fa-jin was incredible.

Laurens Lee and Francis Tsen demonstrated their great kung fu in organizing ten thousand things and making them flow smoothly and appear simple and easy. Without these two this event would never have happened. Thanks guys.

The most inspiring was the gathering of masters, disciples and students showing the power and potential of brotherhood and unity. A sharing and spreading the essence of the internal arts. NURTURING LIFE ... ALL LIFE ... friendship.

Every time Dave Harris came he was mobbed by a group of sincere students asking for lessons. Each presenter ended up with 90 or more people attending their lectures and workshops.

Now for those who went and would like to 'keep' the feeling of openness and sharing or those who would like to get taste there is one more event to look forward to this year.

KOOTENAY T'AI CHI/PA KUA CAMP

KOOTENAY T'AI CHI CENTRE

SUMMER CAMPS

20TH ANNIVERSARY!

T'AI CHI CAMP:

August 11-17, \$360 U.S.

PA KUA CAMP:

Aug 19-25th, \$360.00 U.S.

(\$655 for both weeks)

Kootenay T'ai Chi Centre

Box 566

Nelson B.C.

Canada V1L 5R3

Phone/Fax (604)352-3714

also:

July 6-13th T'ai Chi-Surf Camp on Vancouver Island

From Harvey:

"I enjoyed the feeling of family, seeing my many T'ai Chi brothers and sisters, nieces, nephews and cousins again. I was glad that my students were able to attend this once in a lifetime event and experience all the wonderful experts first hand. Unfortunately I was not able to attend all the workshop sessions and play outside all at the same time. I missed many good workshops. I see that as being the downside."

"I especially enjoyed seeing the 80 year old plus masters demonstrate their arts and being so powerful and spry. But especially I cherished the time we spent with Sifu Tchoung. His skills have continued to improve over the years and he is an inspiration for me. I am happy I was able to get many questions answered. It was great to spend some time with him again. I applaud Laurens Lee for all his hard work in putting the event together this was a major T'ai Chi chuan landmark event."

NEW PA KUA WEAPONS VIDEO

7 Star Staff, Turning Sword, & more \$35.00

T'AI CHI PRINCIPLES

IN ACTION

1996 JULY

INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS

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by Gene Burnett

One thing that becomes increasingly clear as we study T'ai Chi is that force and will power will not "overcome" our blocks to learning, understanding and improving our practice. It should be clear too, that as we seek to become more fully human, more fully alive, that "overcoming" our obstacles is not the way. Will power, ego, and separateness are important, they have their place, but in our study of T'ai Chi and in our search for our humanity they are often part of the problem.

Surrender to the body, to life's intelligence, to the moment, and to the universe is what we're after. If, that is, we are truly committed to our practice. This embrace involves feeling pain, discomfort, fear, anger, sadness and great joy. To be more human means to feel more life. To feel more life means to feel more pain as well as more pleasure. It is a surrender to a movement that is beyond the ego's control. It is a fundamental fact that you can't have life, god, truth or T'ai Chi on your own terms. We've all heard it before: You can't MAKE T'ai Chi happen. It's already happening! What you can "do" is let yourself experience it. Let yourself be conscious of it. And of course in T'ai Chi chuan and daily life we can improve our body's alignment with it. The "it" that we call T'ai Chi, the Tao, God, Truth, Nature . . . is fundamentally important to our study. Without our faith in a deeper reality, a larger intelligence than our own, without "it", in my opinion, the experience of T'ai Chi is impossible. For what are we surrendering to? What "flow" are we going with? Is T'ai Chi chuan to be a pressure release or an exploration into the nature of pressure itself? Is it to be a nice relaxing thing we unwind in like a hot bath or is it an exploration into the winding and unwinding process itself? As we explore, study, learn and grow we encounter again and again the limits of our ego's, our "small" selves. We see how ultimately powerless we are. Can you chose your emotions? Make them start and stop? Can you choose who to fall in love with? When you're born and when you die? All of our attempts to control life ultimately lead us to the fundamental fact that we can't do it. Anymore than we can control a forest or a practice partner or the unfolding of our practice. We come again and again to the point of surrender. Do we rest up and start another round of fighting to control life? Do we let go of our precious ego and truly surrender?

True surrender, to me, involves studying the quality of our attention, not by "doing" something different. It is allowing our attention to go where it is most urgently drawn, studying the results and repercussions of that focus, allowing it finally to rest in a deeper, larger, less contracted place. Where is your attention when you don't force it where you want it to go? Can you let go of what you want and see where the movement of attention is urgent, passionate, and full of life? Can you find the quality of attention that will allow your blocks to dissolve? Can you notice where your attention is when your T'ai Chi is not working?

T'ai Chi Chuan to me is a context to study T'ai Chi, the supreme ultimate unity of yin and yang, and since T'ai Chi is beyond context even that must be dropped to experience the fullness of the moment. Think of your best form practice or push

hands experience. Were you "doing" T'ai Chi chuan or simply noticing something larger than "you" happening?

During our T'ai Chi summer intensive week I will be leading a five part exploration into some of the ideas touched on in this article. Each night will be focused on a different aspect of T'ai Chi practice and how it might relate to solo work, partner work, and daily life. We will do some exercises but class will not be strenuous. We will have open discussion but will not spend the whole time talking. The schedule is as follows:

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| Monday - July 22 nd - 7:45-9:00 GROUNDING AND FACING REALITY |
| Tuesday - July 23 rd - 7:45-9:00 SITTING AND SHIFTING WEIGHT: GROUNDING IN ACTION |
| Wednesday - July 24 th - 7:45-9:00 YIELDING, STANDING YOUR GROUND, AND BOUNDARIES |
| Friday - July 26 th - 7:45-9:00 RESPONDING TO CHANGE - INVESTIGATING BODY TENSION AREAS |
| Saturday - July 27 th - 7:45-9:00 TIMING: RUSHING, WAITING TOO LONG, AND AWARENESS |
| Classes will be at: Magnolia T'ai Chi Club |
| The fee for each class will be a \$5.00 donation. (Don't let money get in your way if you want to come - pay what you can!) Questions? Call 527- 4673. |

Partner Practice Attitudes

reprinted from January 1994 newsletter

In addition to a greater degree of exercise and conditioning, the partner exercises and applications serve the purpose to enhance our awareness, relaxation and the softness we begin to develop in the solo forms. On merely a superficial level they teach the applications of various postures and movements within the form. They also serve a very important function to give us feedback as to how correct our postures, movements, and body alignment are. This level is still just the tip of the iceberg, the shell of the art. With practice our self-knowledge and understanding can be brought to deeper levels provided we have a mindful and open attitude. The trick here is to avoid the ME - THEM, attacker - defender, sport attitude. The idea is to learn about ourselves, not to control or conquer our partners. One of the biggest misconceptions is that the forms and postures we practice are the art when it's acutely the forms and postures that lead us to, and teach us the art. The art is our own life.

**Winning means
winning over the
mind of discord in
ourselves.**

O'sensei, founder of Aikido

Once we get beyond learning the outward movements is when the NEI KUNG (internal work) begins. This is the art. The first road block many students come across is the ME vs THEM attitude. We see our partner as doing this to us, or we see them as an attacker to be controlled and conquered. Sometimes this brings up a competitive attitude, sometimes a fear or anger toward certain partners. What's important here is to understand why or where these feelings come from. Misunderstandings are usually the case. Unfortunately when this happens everything comes to a halt, nothing is gained except bad habits and a slow down of our chi flow - blockages. When encountering this level many students get stuck and they stop. There is a decision that pushing hands or partner drills aren't worth doing.

The attitude in the art should be one of sharing, there should be no competition; you and your partner are a team learning, actually the club is a team. We should be helpful to each other so we may all advance. The partner exercises are a joint study in the art. PARTNERS You are a team studying, using and discovering the principles of the internal arts. The first and most important part of this is to communicate with each other. If your partner goes too fast, hard, or whatever let them know. There is no one-side to these exercises. Don't get angry with them because they were too hard or too fast. Let your partner know, NOW! The majority of the time your partner doesn't realize the force they are using, or that it's an overload for you. The end result of this misunderstanding can be bad feelings between you for no real reason what so ever. On the applications, the one having the techniques applied to them should be learning and studying what they feel, how their body reacts to the movement. This is equally as important, if not more, than applying the techniques. I've learned most from being my instructor's dummy.

Once passed this we can begin to focus on the true purpose of these exercises. First, *RELAX* and try to use the least amount of

strength in the movements. Be soft and smooth, try to flow with the force. Notice your partner's force and direction, from here you will begin to develop TING JIN, listening energy. This is the first level of sensitivity in *tuishou*. The more you relax the more you can feel and listen to your partner's direction, force, and speed. *THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT TO*

LEARN!!!! You can't learn this on your own in the solo forms. You should ask your partner to work on only one aspect to the drill, movement or form until it's comfortable, then move on. It's not up to your teacher to force you to drill the movements until you understand them. Your teacher's job is to teach you the movements, to get you started and to give you the necessary

tools. Whether you do anything with them is all up to you. Is it important enough for you to practice before or after classes, or during the week? Though partners may be hard to find there are occasions (like warm-up time) where you could spend 10 minutes on one drill. Master Tchoung would give us an exercise, make sure we knew it and then walk away, next class we got another drill. It was up to us to practice last week's drill if we wanted to advance. The class time wasn't for practicing the drills, it was for corrections and then the next exercise.

It's from studying and practicing the drills where you discover whether, where or when you're using too much force. Ask your partner what they feel and to let you know from time to time. Where does the movement break? Where are you stiff? Don't just move on to the next exercise, get the kinks out of the current one. The more partners you have the greater your range of learning and skill development. Eventually you try to overcome the idea that the two of you are separate. You should see yourselves as one, beyond separateness, just displaying the interchange of Yin and Yang in motion. Balancing the energy and movement. The goal is to flow with your partner's movements like water, whatever the movements are, at any speed. Flow into the weak spots and move around the attack as if they were rocks in the stream.

At a deeper level, as you practice, you gain an insight into yourself. Why does anger arise when you are pushed? Why do we feel weak when practicing various movements? Why does practicing with one partner make you feel weaker than another partner? Why does the fighting mind show itself only with certain individuals? We should try to be alert yet neutral, respond when needed but without fear or anger. Seek to understand the thoughts and emotions as your practice continues.

There is no winning or losing in these exercises; anytime you gain insight into yourself, you've won. Your physical health will improve as will your strength because of the added work of the partner exercises.

Work on how you feel and the emotions that arise when you practice then go back to the basics: relax, sink, soften, circle of power, don't fight, peng jin. Stay centered, listen, feel, and be alert.

Keep in mind this is a martial art. We are responsible for ourselves and our actions. Our goal is to be centered, healthy, and alert. From our solo forms, once we begin tuishou and sanshou, we should have good habits of: rooting, centering, staying within our circle of strength, knowing our physical limitations. As we practice we need to trust each other. What trust means here is I will trust my partner not to be out to kill/hurt me intentionally. If I don't move out of the way as my partner punches and I get hit the fault changes depending upon my level of advancement. As a new person to the applications, if I'm practicing with an advanced student it's their fault. If however, I know the drill or movement, then it's my fault. At an intermediate and advanced level I need to trust my partner to be alert as we practice so I can give them an 'honest' force and energy so my attack becomes more realistic. As the speed and force picks up both parties must trust the other to practice sincerely, whatever the boundaries of the exercise encompasses. In sanshou, you trust your partner's punch to be a punch, kick to be a kick. At an advanced level you trust your partner to help you improve your weak points. As good partners at this level we 'push' each other to get better.

At a beginning level a good partner will go slowly and carefully so I can learn the steps and flow. At an advanced level a good partner is sneaky and tricky, creating problems so I have to change and adapt spontaneously. This permits my training to mature and advance. The commitment level at this advanced stage is great which is why you don't find many internal martial artists who have a high level of skill anymore.

ATDale

Master Tchoung



ETIQUETTE

A few of us were sitting around talking about behavior, misunderstandings, and attitudes in classes, toward the instructors, and toward the art.

Mostly about unknown mistakes made, assumptions, and not understanding proper etiquette that results in restricted information.

First, most new members of a club come with the same idea as going to an aerobics class or a department store and assume they are 'buying' lessons. Club fee is \$55 monthly which equals \$13.75 a week (2 hr classes, once a week, 4x a month) which = \$6.88 per hour. Well this month I can only attend 3 weeks so it should cost \$41.25.

The club fees are to ensure the classes continue and that you're instructor will keep the sessions going so next month they'll be there. It's more of a membership fee than an instruction fee. Keep in mind rent and utilities have to be paid even if the teacher isn't making a living teaching the art.

Second, these are arts which are transferred from teacher to student. The teacher guides you along to discover your own talent and develop your own understanding and help you get started in your discovery of this wonderful art.

ACCESS DENIED!

What many westerners don't understand is that if you show a callousness, or rudeness to the instructors your teacher won't go the 'extra' mile. Why should they invest time and effort into a member that doesn't seem (or appear) interested. Usually a teacher will match the student's effort. In class as I look around I will gladly help and give priority to those who practice before, during and after class. Those who stand around, or wait for instruction I assume are just here for some basic movement and exercise and just to follow along the class sessions.

It's logical that it's more fun to help someone showing a genuine interest in their study. Also, one of the most rude things to do in class is to have a conversation that doesn't have anything to do with the lesson or while the teacher is talking. This wastes the teacher's time, annoys other students, and takes up

space that could be used by sincere students. Before or after class is time to socialize. Keep in mind that the teacher is one, the students are many. How much energy does the teacher have to go around? Are you asking and listening to the instructions, whining or making excuses to the teacher about why you're not getting it? Or why it doesn't seem to work or trying to visit with the teacher as they're trying to give all the class members the corrections and attention they need? The clock is ticking and class time is limited, make use of the valuable time and make the best use of the instructor and instruction you have.

I've had students that after learning a movement or getting a correction sit down, some need to let me know how their last

teacher taught or did the same movement, or how much like this or that kung fu it is. I take this as if they are referencing everything to something else instead of 'listening' to a new or different approach to gain a greater depth and insight. After a few weeks I usually find myself not going into much depths this individual since (I feel) it's not going in and have other students waiting. *ATDale*