

NEWSLETTER

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<http://www.cnw.com/~atdale/internalwushuarts.html>

other members if there is a week of cancellations due to snow.

Club Rules

- ◆ Relax
- ◆ Practice if you're not receiving instruction
- ◆ Practice softly, gently and mindfully.
- ◆ Don't rush. This applies to your learning as well as your forms.
- ◆ Talk during class should be either instructions or questions. Move to another room if you need to visit.
- ◆ Ask questions.
- ◆ Help one another.
- ◆ No pain, don't force any movement, be conformable.
- ◆ Club fee is due the first week of the month, I budge the month by this! Please pay on time.
- ◆ Evening class are 7-9:00,(9-9:30 practice) the club doors open at 6:30 unless you are scheduled for a private session. Doors will close at 9:35!

Season's Greetings

THURSDAY CLASSES CANCELED DECEMBER

E-MAIL

I'm putting together a contact list for the club. This list will only be used for club information, workshops, class changes and report cards. It will be available to all club members with the conditions that they ask permission of the addressee for other use of the e-mail. If you have, or have changed your e-mail address please send me your address: atdale@cnw.com

DON'T LET THE HYPE GET YOU DOWN

With the commercialize of the holiday season it's very important to remember to take care of ourselves. Walk in the park, enjoy a good book or music. Take time each day to just 'time out' for yourself.

BAD WEATHER

In case of snow I wouldn't expect you to venture to class of course. If you only attend one session per week I will make adjustments for the snow cancellations. The same will be true for

VIDEO SALE

This month all club video's (normally \$35.00) will be reduced to \$25.00 @

BOOK OF THE MONTH

A String of Pearls
108 Meditations on Tai Chi Chuan
by Michael Gilman
(great book, get one)

Sat, DECEMBER 7TH change

The Phinney Center will have it's winter festival on Dec 7th so class will meet at the Magnolia studio:
3625 Magnolia Blvd. W (by garage).

NO CLASSES

DEC 23,24,25,26,31ST or Jan 1st. This will change the fee for those of you who only attend one night a week to \$42.00 for December.

OPEN HOUSE

January 18th, noon-5

This will celebrate the one year anniversary of the opening of the Magnolia club. We'll be open to friends and family. Munchies tea, food and spontaneous demonstrations/performances.

SWEAT SHIRTS AVAILABLE

A limited supply of the Taiji man and club sweatshirts(xl) are for sale at \$27.00.

T-shirts of both of the above are available in X-large for \$18.00

Happy
Winter
Solstics

1996 1997 FALL WINTER SCHEDULE

Chen Tai Chi: Wed 7-8pm This class is no closed for the following year.

T'ien Shan Chi Kung: Thurs 9-10:30a NO CLASSES DECEMBER!

Liang- I Chuan: Sat 9-9:45am

Basics/Beginning - Saturday 10-noon beginning class for Yang t'ai-chi and Pa Kua

Tuesday Continuing Yang Tai Chi:

Thursday Continuing Pa Kua: NO CLASSES DECEMBER resumes Jan 2nd

Thursday morning class discontinued 1997

BEGINNING AND BASICS CLASSES START Sat, Jan 4th, 10-noon

PRACTICE WHAT'S IMPORTANT

In Kungjia(solo form); do you practice relaxation and smoothness or postures and forms?

In Tuishou; do you practice softness or pushing? Emptiness or strength?

In weaponry; do you practice focus and control or looking sharp?

In Sanshou; do you practice blending and timing or fighting and winning?

SEEK TO LEARN, LEARN TO SEEK

Pa Kua's 24 Animal Palms

This form is from the Nine Palaces, Cheng Ting-Hua Pa Kua lineage. In fact most the form in the Nine Palaces incorporate many of the 24 animals as transitions between movements. The 24 comes from the basic 8 inner palms done at 3 levels (3 palaces: high, medium, low). The Nine Palace Pa Kua contains quite a trace of Hsing-I in the forms compared to the other Cheng Ting-Hua Pa Kua versions. Liu Bin was one of Cheng Ting-Hua's top students and it's said Cheng Ting-Hua specifically worked with Liu Bin to systematize the forms toward the ritual symbolism and character of ritual Taoism.

For example, the walking pattern of the linking 24 palms I've seen in a book on Taoist talisman. Some of the forms work with building power and energy by weaving the movements primarily clockwise, while others work at clearing and cleansing by moving counter-clockwise. Much of this stems from the Lung Men Taoist sect (Dragon Door).

The 24 palms teach foot work, opening the hips, begin to work on fa-jin, spinning, and various palms strikes. To be done correctly the forms should be low while changing directions while staying at one level(height). The head and shoulders don't rise while performing the change until the end where you fa-jin (on some movements).

Like so many forms students get caught up in 'doing' the form instead of researching the movements and trying to understand them. Each of the eight forms is related to a kua of the Pa Kua and to a specific animal. These animals are different from the Chinese astrological animals (why? I haven't the foggiest idea). The animals are: Chi-ling, Monkey, Lion, Snake, Bear, Dragon, Phoenix, Rooster.

Some qualities:

CHI-LING: (unicorn) plays, frolics, high and low, spirited, horse-like, winged.

MONKEY: mischievous, sneaky, playful

LION: prowling, appearance of laziness

SNAKE: seeking food, prey, quick movement, or softness but always ready to pounce, change of direction, intense.

BEAR: big, lumbering, power, swiping arms, strength, forceful.

DRAGON: high-low, rolling, twining, changing directions quickly, fierce, claws, big.

PHOENIX: elegant, rising, arrogant, swift, proud.

ROOSTER: (fighting cock), ready for a fight, vicious, brave, heartless, struts.

Liu Bin was a Taoist scholar as well as one of Cheng Ting-Hua's best students.



When you understand yourself as an individual, only then can you entrust all things to all things.

When you return the world to the world, only then can you transcend the mundane while in the mundane.

Huanchu Daoren, Back to the Beginnings

TAOISM & PA KUA continued from page 4:

You don't have to change your religious views, if you have any, to practice pa-kua, ch'i kung or t'ai-chi. It is easy to incorporate your religion's prayers, mantras and religious beliefs into the practice of meditation, t'ai-chi, pa-kua, yoga and aikido.

Confucius said, "Although you may respect spiritual beings, hold them at a distance, this is the part of wisdom."

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.

TAOISM AND PA KUA CHANG CIRCLE WALK MEDITATION

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Pa-Kua chang (eight trigram palms) is the one of the internal arts that has its roots in Taoist practice. Several students asked about the mantras that were used by the Dragon Gate Taoists whose circle walk became the foundation exercise for pa-kua chang. Two different mantras were used. The morning mantra was, "When rotating in Worship of Heaven, the sound of thunder is everywhere and transforms everything." (Lei Sheng P'u Hua T'ian Tsun) The evening mantra was, "When rotating in Worship of Heaven, the Great Void saves us from the hardship of existence." (T'ai I Chiu K'u T'ien Tsun). (Reference PKCJ V3 #4, pp28-29). These had meaning to those Taoists. But, you can use any prayer or mantra appropriate to your religious beliefs.

If you are not a religious Taoist and have other religious beliefs, a substitution of a prayer which is in line with your thought processes makes more sense and would be more powerful. There is no need to become a Taoist to practice pa-kua or t'ai-chi, nor a Buddhist to practice Shaolin or Kung-fu, just like you don't need to be a Christian to play baseball or a Jew to be a physicist.

RELIGION AND SECULAR TRAINING

Religious beliefs are important to the power of the mantra. Religious belief is even healthful. A researcher found that after surgery those with religious beliefs (Christian and Jewish) had a third less deaths than those not religious. Faith is powerful. Dr. Herbert Benson, who wrote Timeless Healing, said that the placebo effect is based on belief and is 70% to 90% effective. The placebo is a biological effect. Benson believes that the body remembers what it feels like to be well, "Remembered wellness". For example, he also feels that belief in herbs may be more important than the herbs themselves. The mind effects the body. To prove it just think about eating a lemon . . . Work written about by Dr. Larry Dossey has also shown the value of prayer in healing. Prayer combined with deep belief is powerful. According to Dr. Dossey any religious prayers e.g. Christian or Buddhist, worked as long as the feeling of love was part of it. If love is there then prayer works.

PART II TAOISM

Originally Taoism was a philosophy as written by Lao Tze in the Tao Te Ching. Many feel that the Taoist religion was organized as a political institution by a Chinese Emperor to replace Buddhism. Buddhism at

"A persons heart and mind are in chaos. Concentration on one thing makes the mind pure. If one aspires to reach the Tao, one should practice walking in a circle." From the Taoist Canon

that time threatened the power structure and it was considered a foreign religion. You see the term "external Martial Art" referred to Shaolin Ch'uan, based on Buddhism and other practices which had their roots in India. Historians believe the Indian practices in turn had their roots in Greece and the Mideast, as is seen in the religious art. So one view of "External Arts" (Wei Chia" means the arts that came from outside China. "Internal Martial Arts", (nei chia) e.g. t'ai-chi ch'uan, pa-kua chang and Hsing -I ch'uan, are those developed within China and have Taoist and Confucian roots. This has nothing to do with internal or external power.

The common use of the term Internal Arts Boxing (nei chia ch'uan) can be traced directly to a group of martial artists in 1894 who brought together pa kua chang, Hsing I chuan and T'ai-chi ch'uan into one family that used similar concepts. The name "Internal Martial Arts" stuck and was popularized by Sun Lu Tang. (Xing Yi Quan Xue, Sun, p3) Then for good public relations other stylists tried to include their arts into the internal martial arts classification. Later others improperly called the Internal Arts "Wu Tang Boxing" (Wu Dang).

Wu Tang Arts was a name popularized in 1928 in Nanking to try to tie the arts to the Taoist Wu Tang Mountain area. When arts were later developed by researchers in the Wu Tang area there were claims that they were the original arts, but in reality were developed later in history. For example Wu Tang tai chi clearly has Yang style influences. These teachers market themselves using a concepts of "older is better". So they make up an ancient lineage. While thinking people know that evolution and tests of time is what produces better arts. For example, some teachers from China told me that Liang-I predates tai chi as well. But we all know that it was a product of the Fu family.

BUDDHISM PERSECUTED AGAIN

The destruction of Buddhism by the Chinese government is the basis for many of the old Chinese movies. The typical plot has an evil Taoist martial artist dressed in animal skins working with the Emperors soldiers to help destroy the Buddhist monks. This is based loosely on the political replacement of Buddhism by Taoism and the persecution of Buddhists, about 8th and 10th centuries AD. More recently both religions were purged by the communist "cultural Revolution". The

monasteries were destroyed and the monks persecuted. It is funny that many new teachers pop up claiming to have studied in a monastery during the cultural revolution, when history shows those facilities were closed down by the communists. I guess it sounds good, even if not true. More recently the temples were reopened as tourist attractions and teach kung-fu, staffed by wushu students and ex-bureaucrats. Ch'i kung has filled in a need for religion and some ch'i kung seminars appear similar to charismatic religious practices but without the ethical religious content. This comes from a sanitized, communist politically correct culture. Remember communism replaced religion, which frowns on religion as they believe religion is the opiate of the masses but there still is that human need to understand life's meaning.

The Taoist religious movement combined Taoist Philosophy, Chinese Folk Religions, animism, and about 7th century AD Buddhist practices. While you may appreciate the philosophy of Taoism, you need not become a religious Taoist. Those are two different ideas. And some orthodox Taoist Philosophers say there is little original Taoism has to do with the religion. Taoism was organized as a religion in the 7th century AD by Li Shih-min aka emperor T'ai Tsung. Chang Tao-ling who was magical head and lived in the 1st century AD was deified in the 8th century as head. So if you call your self a Taoist you could be a philosophical Taoist or Religious Taoist.

The "Internal Arts' philosophy incorporates Confucianism as well. As you know Confucianism and Taoism were in conflict in the old world. Both were assimilated into the Chinese culture. The Taoist writers often poked fun at the Confucian beliefs and vice versa. Confucianism is also split into philosophical and religious segments. Confucianism gives the ethical base. This is one of the "Excellences" to study for the complete gentleman.

Part III

WESTERN RELIGION AND T'AI CHI

You do not need to be a Taoist to practice pa-kua, nor a Shintoist to practice aikido, just like you don't need to be a Catholic to be a Western Boxer. If you are a practicing Jew, Christian or Moslem you should be aware that practicing religious Taoism smacks of spirit worship, is sacrilegious and considered an abomination. You should be very clear about what you are learning in class. Most ch'i kung are neutral as they come from a no-religion, sanitized context. Most ch'i kung are more interested in energy and health than religion.

It is ironic that in our school system that prevents the practice of Western religion, the more exotic Asian religions are practiced with impunity. Unless clearly explained to students, I feel that instructors should only teach the martial art or exercise forms of pa-kua or t'ai-

chi and not religious Taoism. Many people who are not religious like to "Play" with these religions. This should not be taken lightly. The same goes for aikido and yoga.

Aikido is a Japanese martial art similar in concept to pa-kua and t'ai-chi. The art is rooted in Shinto, the national religion of Japan, and Omoto-kyo. Shintoism is similar to Taoism with animist elements and spirit worship. Some aikido teachers include chanting to Shinto Spirits (Kami) as part of their classes. Students usually go along with it to be part of the group. But most don't really understand what is going on. Others are willing to practice Shinto. Some blissfully chant along, not knowing what they are saying. I feel this is OK for private classes where the students understand they are practicing religious Shintoism, but it is totally inappropriate for secular public classes or generic workshops. If students have other religious beliefs, I do not believe that they should be unwittingly be subjected to these practices, especially if they do not even realize they are practicing Shinto. Yoga classes often do the same.

Yoga comes from India, out of Hinduism, a polytheist religion, and Indian Culture. Some yoga classes include chanting to various Hindu deities and gurus as part of their practice. Others, such as certain branches of Kundalini Yoga use Sikh chants. Sikhism is a monotheist Indian religion. I think it is inappropriate that in a secular setting, where Western religious prayer is banned, that chants in other languages are allowed, especially if the students do not realize they are practicing religious ritual.

Practicing a religion should be done with full awareness and consent. In our history and all over the world, religious practices were and are taken very seriously, many have died for their beliefs. We should respect that..

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