

NEWSLETTER

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*Instructors can impart
only a fraction of the
teaching.*

*It's through your indi-
vidual, devoted practice
that it's mysteries are
brought to life.*

O'sensei, founder of Aikido



**NOTHING
UNNATURAL
CAN
EXIST!**

CHANGES IN THE NEWSLETTER

From now on this newsletter will be published every other month (with possible rare exceptions). The initial purpose of this newsletter was to keep club members informed about some events and to emphasize certain teachings and principles that there wasn't time for in class. It's come to the point where the newsletter occupies much of what little free time I have. I have three partial books in the computer that I haven't had time for in the last two years as well and possibly just take some time off. Cutting back on the newsletter I hope will permit me to pursue some other ventures.

BEGINNING CLASSES

SEPTEMBER

September is the month for beginners to join the club. The beginning classes will be:

Saturdays 10-noon
10-11 Chi Kung Basics

11-12 Tai Chi/Pa Kua instruction
I will also be including beginning Beginning Chen Tai Chi this month so this is the window to start Chen if that's your interest.

CONTINUING MEMBERS

Members from the evening classes attending the Saturday sessions will receive low priority for instruction and questions since this class is primarily for new members. However, this is a good time to hang around the beginning students and pick up detailed information on basics, forms and practice - see article: *Change*

The first hour in September will focus on the basic principles, theory, study and practice of chi kung.

FORM COMPLETION

The following have completed the Hsin I Chuan 5 elements
Victor Crandall
Russ Fish
Rick Bodzewski
Steve Cousins
Matthew Burnett

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Are you practicing? I mean between classes? If not, why not? In order to receive benefits from the art daily practice is essential. On a more direct note if you don't practice between lessons why take lessons?

ARE YOU PRACTICING?

THE THREE LEVELS:

learning, practicing, studying

When you look at students of the internal arts (or actually any art) there are three levels to work through in order to achieve excellence.

Everyone begins at this first live *Learning*. 100% of all practitioners start here, this is the very first step. Everyone begins at the learning level of these or any arts. Everyone is a beginner at some point and regardless of how 'advanced' they may seem, a good practitioner always considers themselves beginners. Maintaining a 'beginner's mind' is one of the secrets to advancement and skill. As the Zen saying goes,

"In a beginner's mind there are many possibilities, in the experts there are few."

The *Practice* level means to work on the postures and choreography in order to remember the movements and the form. As odd as it may sound I'd say that 70% of students beginning the art actually practice. They just show up for the next class with nothing to show for the time spent in the previous session. Some just want to come and play

(Continued on page 2)

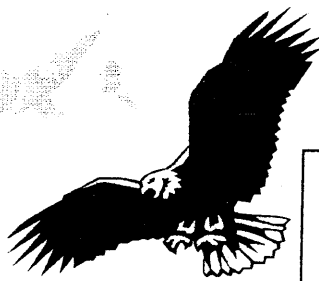
(Practicing' continued from page 1)

with the group, perhaps get a little exercise or socializing.

Practice means constant repetition of the forms, exercises, and movements so eventually there is no thinking about the movement. Being able to go through the form without being stuck or getting lost. Though this seems very reasonable there still is a percentage that doesn't practice at all between class sessions. Even just once a week extra. One teacher of mine said this is where people waste their money and teachers earn more money and some frustration. Before we can discover and work with the inner core of the internal arts the forms need to be practiced to the point of familiarity. If you're worried about the next movement there's no room to focus on correct body structure, alignment, etc. You need to get beyond the choreography in order to practice 'real' T'ai Chi or Pa Kua. However, even so, there are some students that after learning a new movement sit down, and don't practice. Simplistically (for some) this is where demonstrations and competitions can help. Some people **need** a reason to practice! The practice of the art itself isn't captivation enough.

Now I'd say about 5-10% from the practicing group move to the next level of *studying* the art. Now moving to the next level required more effort and dedication beyond just daily, practicing the routine. Here, as you practice you're also investigating the inner core and teachings of the internal arts. (You're really doing T'ai Chi or Pa Kua). Working on applying the principles of the classics and lessons from your teacher. Relaxation, rooting, differentiating yin & yang, suspending the head top, keeping the connections smooth and strung together, working with the energies, using intent to lead the movements etc. the entire list. At deeper levels this means partner work in tui-shou, san-shou, weaponry, teaching and sharing with other members. Partner work is the personal feed back as to what needs work and how to improve on the basics. To me this also means incorporating the principles and philosophy into our daily life. Relaxation in the form is nothing compared to relaxation while stuck in rush-hour traffic. While waiting in a line are you rooted, relaxed and comfortable? In a traffic jam are you centered and relaxed? When someone shows anger toward you can you yield and not let it touch you? As a teacher, the goal is no just to teach, but to pass along the 'secret': the joy and healthiness of the art. Actually pass along the principles so they may be applied to each students' individual life. So, don't just practice, practice mindfully: listen and study.

Now, get up and practice! Five minutes is better than no minutes.



Training, . . .

Sluggards and Perfectionists

PART II

© Harvey Kurland

REALISTIC TRAINING

For real health benefits you need to practice regularly, at least three times per week. At first it is best to do short practice of about 20 minutes and concentrate on the form. This will allow you to learn the form and be able to do it by yourself. If you do not practice between classes you will have a hard time learning the form and it will be hard to keep up with the class. You also will not get much exercise benefit. Everyday on your own you can practice the stances, the basic walk, and the individual techniques as well as the form. Just like with other types of exercise you need to train regularly to gain lasting benefit. When you stop, the benefit stops too. No magic, sorry.

Grandmaster Tchoung Ta-Tchen would tell us to practice 20 minutes every morning and every night. He said that, "I can show you the method, but it is up to you what you do with it." Most of learning of the art is by practice. Practice makes permanent, not perfect, as only perfect practice makes perfect, and the quest for perfection is endless. Through practice the form teaches you.

When you practice you should be MINDFUL. Mindfulness is an important part for the psychological payoff of the practice. Mindfulness is what is meant by "Be here now" and "Being in present time". Doing this helps to get rid of the negative effects of stress and produces a serene feeling. Mindful practice also increases your skill and allows you to learn faster. You then get the maximum benefit from your training program regardless of your goals.

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.

CUTTING THE LINE

By Victor Crandall

Pa Kua Chang is noted for being an "interior" or "close in" fighting style. A common terminology of old was "in order to fight you need to be close enough to kiss". As a marital martial artist, when fighting with your spouse, kiss her/him. you will win every time. If you lose, you need kissing training, which is outside the scope of this article. Consult Dr. Ruth for help. One concept I have found highly effective in close in fighting is the idea of "cutting the line".

The basic concept of "cutting the line" is for you to attack at a 90 degree angle to a line connecting your opponents two feet. In doing so you can invariably off balance your opponent and win the encounter. In this article I am going to ignore hand position. Although important, hand position is not necessary to execute a "cutting the line" maneuver.

BASICS: The basic concept is simple. Start by drawing an imaginary line between your opponents feet, generally from ankle to ankle works but so does heel to heel or toe to toe. Now draw a line at a right angle (90 degrees) to it. Any force along that second line will off balance your opponent. The force can be applied in either direction. So you have two sides you can attack. If you also add that you can push or pull along each direction, you now have four ways to off balance. This is also called the third leg concept. The idea is that the end of the line, which would be the same distance as 1/2 the length of the line between the feet, forms the third leg of a stool. Your feet are the other two legs. Push or pull the opponent towards the third leg to off balance.

APPLICATION: To utilize this concept, you need to maneuver yourself into position to attack along that right angle or third leg line. Normally, when squaring off with an opponent, he will have one leg forward and one back. The type of stance is irrelevant. You need to move to cut his line. You can do this by angle stepping, circle walking, pivoting, or any combination of stepping maneuvers to move in. You can also wait for him to move and attack along that line when it becomes available. As you attack, step completely across his line. This is what takes his balance or knocks him over. A common mistake is to stop

your attack short of the line. If you can not kiss him, you are not close enough. The obvious difficulty with applying this concept is that your opponent can move also. In doing so he changes his line. So you need to practice your timing, maneuvering, deception, etc. in order to cut the line properly.

EXERCISE: Master Park has an exercise for training this skill in a two man drill. You square off with your partner. Side A attacks straight ahead. Side B pivots 90 degrees (for defense). Then Side 8 attacks straight ahead. If done right this will "cut the line". Side A then pivots 90 degrees for defense and attacks to "cut the line". The two sides trade off like this throughout the exercise. Initially keep your hands behind your back. Use only your body and stepping to cut the line. You may have to pivot more or less than 90 degrees in order to attack correctly. This is OK. In fact make any necessary adjustments you need in order to attack at the correct angle. Remember to step across the line so that your body is involved in the off balancing process. The deeper your stepping the better your attack will be.

In this exercise you are not actually off balancing your partner. He is pivoting out of the way of your attack as his defensive maneuver. This allows him to train sensitivity and response to attack. Once you get pretty good at this, you can add the hands. They are held in the classic Pa Kua guard position. Employ a "Fan Jan" (both palms up, rear hand slides forward) and palm strike in the attack mode. Employ palm up, elbow down with the pivot in the defense mode. Ask me and I will be happy to demonstrate this exercise. My only requirement is that, if I show it to you, you have to practice it. A test will be given at "Big Bad Bob's Biker Bar & Grill".

GENE'S AMENDMENT: Your line of attack must bisect their line.



Also in my experience the "3rd leg" is sometimes felt as an exact spot but more often as a sort of "zone" in space. If I direct my- attack to staying on this zone as it moves and shifts, grows and shrinks, I eventually "lock" on it and off balance the other person.



Flower Hidden Beneath Leaf

Change LOOKING AHEAD



"The method may change but
the principles remains constant."

Sifu T'choung

Seeing Tai Chi, Pa Kua & Hsing I, outwardly they seem not only different but possibly contradictory to one another. Tai Chi appears mostly soft, easy going, meditative while Hsing I looks hard, explosive, martial. But beneath the surface we're working on the

same principles: *I - Ling - Chi*: Intent leads energy.

We get so caught up in the obvious and unfortunately sometimes we never get beyond it. The same holds true within the various methods of Tai Chi, or the various schools of Pa Kua. "The form has changed!", "You taught me another way before", "— taught the form wrong!" These comments show clearly the individual doesn't have a clue about what they are studying and practicing: the internal arts! INTERNAL is the secret word.

Take for instance, the Chen Tai Chi 48 form. In the last 8 years Grandmaster Feng (the originator of this particular form) has continually refined and adjusted 'his' 48 form. One result is the 24 form which focuses more on chi kung aspects than the wushu. Master Gao is currently visiting Seattle and teaching the refinements of Grandmaster Feng. (class information 325-6364)

But regardless of form what and why are you practicing? Regardless of just where your right hand is, what about:

softness - the 3 curves - suspend the head top

sink the waist - store and release energy - differentiating yin and yang?

When you are in a class why waste time comparing versions of the same form? If you've already learned the form once, enjoy learning another aspect or stylization of it - Empty your cup. Your teacher is teaching NOW, what he/she feels should be emphasized NOW. Perhaps their understanding has deepened? Perhaps the majority of the class is 'young' practitioners and things need greater simplifications. It doesn't matter!

Anyway (I've gotten off tract with the article). Once a form is taught and the student has it correctly in structure and shows a basic understanding of how and what to practice you're basically set free with the form.

The form doesn't matter: the QUALITY of practice and practicing does.

Once I feel you've completed a form and are on the correct tract it's no longer of any concern to me. As I teach a new group or some younger students my concern is with them. How to get them to understand and 'taste' the internal arts. Applying it to them. That's all a teacher can do.

Now, back to the article. *CHANGE* With the start of this new season the Internal Wushu Arts classes will begin to focus primarily on the principles and put the emphasis of specific forms as a secondary focus. Each quarter I will focus on 'themes' of practice.

For instance what this means is for the Saturday session, aside from being a basics/beginning session, I have started a lesson plan for the next few months. Beginning September, each week, I will move from the basic principles, theory and practice of chi kung to the more advanced, spiritual levels. In addition we will focus on the O'mei Chi Kung method as our practice. Evening courses: **Pa Kua**: Movement options and capabilities **Yang Tai Chi**: Tien Shan Chi Kung and Tui Shou **Chen Tai Chi**: 48 form, energies of the sword **Monday**: movements of Aiki

ATD

READING

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following books I consider a 'must' as part of your library:

TAI CHI

- There Are No Secrets by W. Lowenthal
- String of Pearls by M. Gilman
- The Essence of T'ai Chi Ch'uan by Lo/Inn/Amacker/Foe
- T'a Chi Ch'uan Ta Wen by Chen Wei-Ming
- Cheng Tzu's 13 Treatises on T'ai Chi Ch'uan by Cheng Man Ch'ing
- Practicing and Teaching T'ai-Chi by Gene Burnett

PA KUA

- The Genuine Transmission of Bagua Quan by Sun Xikun trans: Crandall
 - Classical Pa Kua Chang: Fighting systems and weapons by Johnson/Crandall
 - The Fundamentals of Pa Kua Chang by Park Bok Nam
- #### CHI KUNG
- Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body by B.K. Frantzis
 - The Way of Energy by Lam Kam Chuen

AIKIJU (staff) WORKSHOP

SEPTEMBER 20th

Saturday 2:00-4:30

2:00-3:30 Beginning \$10.00

3:30 - 4:30 Partner Form Refinements \$10.00

both sessions \$15.00

pre-registration required

WHERE ARE WE????

With September here if the weather on Saturdays is wet we will be back at the Phinney Neighborhood Center.

FALL POT LUCK

September 12, 1997, 4 -

Chris has invited members of the club to bring food and enjoy. If you'd like to come RSVP Chris 789-9223.

DENNIS' OPEN HOUSE

Oct. 3rd, Friday 7:30-8:30pm

Dennis' club has it's open house and demonstrations at:
University Heights

MASTER GAO FU'S CLASSES

Chi Kung & Chen Tai Chi
information: 325-6364)