



XIN QI SHEN DOJO

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Thank
 Tusen Takke
 Arigato
 YOU
 Xie Xie
 Danke

25 YEARS!

Last year we celebrated my 30th anniversary in the internal arts. This February marks the 25th anniversary when I took out the business license and formed the Internal Wushu Arts. Though I had been teaching a couple of years prior to this under the name Internal Arts I decided to go 'official' in 1974. At this point I decided to call the club Internal Wushu (martial) Arts. The reasons for this was in under the name Internal Arts I kept getting adds and catalogs for medical supplies. I am also pleased to mention that about 1/3 of the club members have been around over 8 years and some over 1!

Thanks to everyone supporting the club and me. May the Internal Wushu Arts continue for at least another 25 years or transform into something better.

SATURDAY BASICS CLASS

As you know the internal arts are based upon a series of Chinese classics. These classes describe proper body movement, practice methods, philosophy, and martial applications. These writings are our road map to check if our practice is correct so we can improve in the arts with minimal wrong turns. Beginning March, in addition to our form work we will begin to study and look at some of these classics.

UNOFFICIAL BANDON WEEK

July 10-15th

A few of us will be in Bandon during this time. I will be teaching afternoon

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Under the direction of Cedar, the Xin Qi Shen club members began a donation fund for purchasing mats for the dojo. Well . . . We have them! \$1230 was raised to buy mats and cover shipping costs. Though the Aikido group will be extra happy not having to tumble on the concrete floor the soft flooring will ease everyone's practice. Anyone having worked retail on a hard floor knows the pressure and ill effects a non-giving floor has. The new flooring will improve balance as well as our endurance for practice. A super thank you, thank you, thank you.

Andy

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No, I am not talking about "song".

One thing that I have noticed about any master performing his or her art is a certain degree of casualness in the movements. If one looks beyond the intensity of the energy and intention, one can see the ease with which the master moves. A large part of this casualness, I am sure, comes from having repeated the movements thousands of times. Another part is the result of relaxation, a relaxed body and a relaxed attitude.

In order to become adept at healing with qi, one should be able to achieve a fairly relaxed state of being. Tension impedes the ability of energy to flow throughout the body and inhibits ones ability to listen to the energy of another. While energy will go wherever one has the strength of will to send it, pushing it along blocked and clogged pathways is similar to running 220 volts through a wire only designed for 110 volts. The possibility of burning something out is quite high. So you can see why it becomes essential to understand relaxation and to actually relax!

My teacher, Peter Ralston, would always take something he was working on to extremes in his study of it. That way he would have a better understanding of it in all its aspects. Relaxation is no different from any other principle in this aspect. To take relaxation to its extreme means letting go of every bit of muscular tension possible. Peter would say to "relax so much that you turn into a puddle of goo on the floor." And Robert W. Smith tells a tale of a man, who after being beaten by Cheng Man-ching, asked what he needed to work on. Cheng's answer was to relax. The man's reply to that was that he was relaxed. The moral of the story is that not only was he not relaxed and but he didn't really know what relaxation is.

Three questions often asked by my newer students are:

- How do I relax?
- How do I know I have relaxed?
- When have I relaxed enough?

I find that the easiest way to begin to work on relaxation is to set up a scale. Let us use the arm as an example. First tense up the arm as much as possible. Then release the tension. Now you have a subjective scale from tense to relatively relaxed. With this scale

Relaxation

as a reference we can work on relaxing further. Now the quick and easy way to total body relaxation is a long session with a good masseuse/masseur, however I personally frown on this as a training method because it isn't as much under your own control. The better method (in my view) requires time, intention, and feeling. It is best to start with a small area of the body to avoid being overwhelmed by the task. Again let us use the arm. Put your attention on the arm and feel it. Feel it inside and out. Feel the whole arm as a unit all at the same time. If you have to scan the arm from section to section, then the arm is too large an area to start with. Choose something smaller like your hand or a finger. Again run through your scale to get a fix on relative tension and relative relaxation. Now with all your attention on the arm keep letting go of any tension you feel in the arm. The muscles in the body are often layered over each other. Tense surface muscles can hide tense muscles below. After an initial session of releasing tension in the arm keep your attention and feeling in the arm. Look for tension deep inside that may have been hidden and keep letting it go. A number of things may happen during this type of training. It takes energy to hold muscles in a state of tension. Releasing this tension then frees up that energy. How you experience this freeing may depend upon the practitioner. It may manifest as a general sense of health and good feelings or it may be a sudden spasm of the area affected. Often tension is used to protect the body from some type of trauma. Releasing this tension can have some very interesting side effects. I usually tell new students that they probably will be getting sick a lot for the next year. The relaxation exercises that they do will release bound up toxins and other nasty things that their tension has been holding off for years. They may find themselves reliving past injuries, physical, emotional, and psychological, so it doesn't hurt for a teacher to have some counseling experience to deal with these things when they come up.

Since it is so easy to deceive oneself, I recommend getting a partner to help determine how relaxed one can get. Again let us use the arm a convenient tool. In a standing position, allow your arm to relax as much as it can. Then have your partner lift up your arm and drop it. The arm should drop at the same rate as gravity, any slower illustrates hidden tensions

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TEACHING CERTIFICATION

A special congratulations to Russ Fish and Chris Liberte for being only the 9th & 10th certified instructors issued by the Internal Wushu Arts since its beginning in 1974. So far there are only 4 certified in Bagua Zhang, 5 certified in Taiji, and 1 in Qi Gong.

Now anyone can go out and teach but many teaching the internal arts haven't been trained in the 'competé' art. Most teach or know only the health and form aspects of the art. Certification from the Internal Wushu Arts / Xin Qi Shen Dojo means: First, that the individuals have knowledge of the solo forms, push hands, applications and weaponry. Second, their basics are solid and they show persistence in practicing and researching the art outside of classes. Third, it means that they are carrying on the traditions of Taiji, Bagua or Qi Gong I have received from my teachers.

Now there is really no such person as a perfect teacher! At least for everyone. Each person has different interests, needs, wants. An excellent teacher for one person may be a bad teacher for another. We each need to find someone 'in sink' with our own learning abilities, habits, and interests. Also, a good practitioner isn't necessarily a good teacher and vice-versa.

I don't had out teaching certifications easily. Many believe that if they learn the entire system they will automatically receive a teaching certificate. Not so! As many of you have already noticed, I'm always watching! Even when I may be teaching someone else I notice each individual as they practice. I have a visual memory of all long term members practicing various forms, weak and strong points. It's interesting how few practice before a class. Many just stand around waiting for class to start instead of being in their own practice. Another important element in certification is what questions an individual asks during the course of time. As a person advances the questions are less on the forms and postures and tend to focus on principles, energy and refinements. These individual also research the classics for guidance. I also see them correcting themselves during practice.

I am very proud to issue the teaching certification to Russ and Chris. As many of you Saturday members will notice that over the years, regardless of weather, there's usually several people always practicing as you show up for class: Victor, Cedar,

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and evening classes (one of which will be short staff). Since it was so wonderful last year some of us just have to return. I will be available for private lessons during this time also. Our practice sessions are on the beach in front of the Sunset motel.

www.sunsetmotel.com

SUMMER INTENSIVE

July 30th – Aug 1st

This year we will be in Seattle at Discovery Park. In the next issue I will list some of the participating instructors and classes available. This session will be similar to our Anacortes workshop two years ago.

FORM COMPLETION Congratualtions!

Yang Taiji Sword

- * Deborah Goldhaft

Yang Taiji Long Form 1-6

- * Lisa Black

Bagua Old Eight Changes

- * Joel Hartshorne

Bagua Eight Mother Forms

- * Rikki Scandora

Bagua Teaching Certification

- * Russ Fish
- * Chris Lalibert

NO SATURDAY CLASSES IN THE MONTH OF JULY

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in the arm slowing down the movement. I have seen students quite shocked to notice that when their arm was let go it remained held straight out in the air. And they thought that they were relaxed. Another good exercise is to have your partner manipulate your arm through all its ranges of movement. This should be done gently and smoothly, with your partner feeling for any resistance and tension. Your partner can then give you feedback and work with you to loosen up the arm.

To answer the third question, one is never relaxed enough. Relaxation is a process that should never stop because we are constantly tensing muscles throughout the day in response to the workings of the world around us. Never stop relaxing.

Obviously humans require some tension to function

and the student who thinks that performing a Taiji set like limp lettuce will make him a fighter is sadly mistaken. Then again too much tension will inhibit the student from ever acquiring that smooth easy grace that the masters exhibit. The goal is to find the right balance, enough tension to set up the proper postures and enough relaxation to make the postures functional. For healing the need for the tension may not be obvious since I earlier railed against it. But good body posture is essential for nurturing and cultivating , focusing and directing energy. With a strong healthy body you will be in a better position to help somebody than if you yourself are the one in
n e e d o f a i d .

Joe Crandall is a long time practitioner and authority of the Internal Arts. He has co-authored 'Classical Pa Kua Chang: Fighting systems and Weapons' and has translated several Chinese books on the Internal Arts never available before in English.



UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES: ALL SAME

All Same!

Use It Or Loose It!

An Active Hinge Never Rusts

The one saying I don't believe in is: NO PAIN NO GAIN!

One of the common terms we use in the club is "All Same" from Master Yueng. When asked about the various martial arts he'd always say, "All same". Basically meaning they all lead to similar results, all different paths to the top of the mountain. However I also use this term not only about the arts but particularly the importance of individual training for mind, body, qi, and spirit. Actually I now use *All Same* as a short cut in saying that certain principles or practices are universal. This covers the principle of 'Use it or loose it: all same!'.
Mind — Body — Qi — Spirit

Mind — Body — Qi — Spirit

Once you stop moving about, exercising, learning, or taking interest in life you begin to weaken on all these levels. Since we live in a physical world that is impossible to ignore it's very easy to see how 'Use it or loose it' applies.

An Active Hinge Never Rusts

If you don't moderately and consistently exercise the body the muscles weaken and you move in a direction of poor health. The less you use your body physically the more you loose it. This is a *truth*, there is no getting around it. The mind on the other hand isn't visible and can easily be ignored or forgotten. But just like the body, if your mind isn't active in learning or stimulated it weakens.

Recently a few of us were talking about some friends in their 90's having birthdays and how sharp they were mentally (sharper than many folks I know including myself). These individual have one thing in common; they love to read, explore, try new things and learn. When talking to my friends they claim never that they never get bored since life is so interesting. Though their physical body limits them their minds are quick, sharp, and young. While visiting Master Gao once, her assistant mentioned something he though was radical and would shock her (since she was an old 83 years). Her comment was, "I may be old but I don't have an old mind!"

The body is limited.

The mind is only limited by our attitude.

On the Discover channel they had a show about the latest developments in mapping the mind. What they've discovered is that parts of the brain grow in proportion to the individuals activity. It's not that the brain grows but the neural routing and activity in that area of the brain increases. They've mapped out areas of the brain that show activity when a person is listening to music, play a musical instrument, doing a physical activity, working on calculations etc. What they've discovered is that the parts of the brain that correspond to an individuals' daily activity, interest, or training continues to increase. Athletes have strong areas that are responsible for motor functions and coordination that keep expanding and growing in relation to their field of activity. The same holds true for those who are avid learners.

Use It Or Loose It

All the same. So . . . Just like a muscle in our body if the mind isn't used and expanded it not only stops growing but weakens. IT'S ALL THE SAME. Qi Gong, qi cultivation also is governed by the same principle. As we practice qi gong or the internal arts mindfully our energy pathways open up and we begin to direct more and more energy. Intent leads energy! As our mind listens to the process of the body movements, the visualization, or meditation we are directing energy to certain areas. As we practice over a period of time we are able to move and work more and more energy. Just like opening up the nozzle of a hose. The physical movement tone the muscles, the mental imagery exercises the qi.

Spirit

Think about the phrase 'She has spirit'. Though we can think about spiritual matters another interpretation of spirit is having a strong life force, an enthusiasm, personal integrity, and vitality. Focus on the positive! Though there are days where it's hard to be up, bright and positive, these are the days that we need to practice refining our spirit the most. Again . . . Intent leads energy! Spirit is perhaps one of the finest vibrations of qi and still needs to be nurtured.

'Everyone has a spirit that can be refined, a body that can be trained in some manner, and a suitable path to follow. Work on yourself and your appointed task. Foster peace in your

AIKIDO: KI AND KEEP ONE POINT

By ATDALE

First: Tiantian, Center, Tanden, Seika No Itten = ONE POINT (you say potato . . .)

Due to the efforts of Master Koichi Tohei (a disciple of the founder of Aikido) the word and idea 'Ki' has become a central theme to some Aikido people. Actually most practice Kido instead of Aikido. But what is *Ki*, and are there special methods of training or acquiring it so that we become invincible and all powerful?

In my opinion not really. Tohei describes *Ki* as "that something that binds all things". Simply *Ki* is energy: *Chi*. When talking about energy we are talking about everything, all matter, all life, anything that exists. The frequencies are endless. Usually in the martial arts and health arts, particularly the Chinese arts, we talk primarily about the *Ki* in our bodies. We work to keep our *Ki* flow strong; which we say reflects health. It's not the purpose of this article to explore the body or health *chi*, instead just talk about the *Ki* as it's used in Aikido.

Tohei sensei formed the *Ki No Ren Kyu Kai*, an organization to teach and spread the teachings of his understanding and practice of *Ki*. Basically he focuses on principles of the body and principles of the mind in order to strengthen our individual *Ki* flow which he says comes from mind and body coordination. Hence is Aikido is called: *Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido* (Mind Body Coordinated Aikido). Simply to access and use the power of *Ki* the mind and body need to be coordinated. There are tests used to see whether you are thinking correctly and standing with *Ki* or One point (the source of *ki*). Tohei's principles are:

- KEEP ONE POINT
- KEEP WEIGHT UNDERSIDE
- RELAX COMPLETELY
- EXTEND KI

These are the primary principles Tohei sensei came up with to teach *Ki*. The philosophy of *Ki* is a good one but it makes too much of something natural and being natural.

In Taiji we follow a series of classics for correct practice: Suspend the head top, don't lean, relax, keep the shoulders and elbows down, tuck the hips, keep the body soft and fluid in movement, always keep the 5 curves, never stiffen your arms or legs, all

movements come from the feet and are express through the hands, all movement connected to the *tiantian* (one point). The list goes on but it's all the same. A short cut to saying all the Internal Arts requirement in Aikido would be KEEP ONE POINT! (Actually any of the four basic principles). What KEEP ONE POINT means is to stay centered i.e. don't lean in any direction, keep the body unified, move within your circle of strength, let the *chi* sink to the *Tanden* (Tanden).

In Tohei's system of Aikido he emphasizes what he calls 'Ki testing'. This is not a new thing, it's been used in some Taiji schools since the early 1900's. We'll call it 'Ki Testing' since this is now a common term. What the *Ki* testing does is give you feedback as to your body alignment. Is it good or poor? Are you stiff or relaxed? Are you within your circle of natural strength or are you reaching? As you stand in any position, if you're standing correctly your partner applies pressure to your body or arms, pushing forward, back, or to the side. If you maintain a good posture, no excess tension, calm mind you'll be able to neutralize, absorb, or ground the push to keep from being moved easily. In the Internal Arts we call this *Rooting*.

Adhering to these principles doesn't mean you have more energy or are more powerful, what it means is that you are being efficient and coordinated in the power you already have. Nothing special except you are eliminating friction within your body, bad postural habits and mental vagueness. When we stand or move with good body alignment, we waste less physical energy and we make it easier for our blood and body energy to circulate freely. Then as we practice correctly we are strengthening these connections, getting stronger physically, emotionally and mentally. Committed to the task. Determined.

The *Ki* testing is good since it gives feedback on proper alignment. While practicing we'll discover if our body isn't in correct alignment because the movements and techniques don't work, or we strain ourselves. This is true of any athlete, any sport. EFFICIENCY and proper body mechanics is a must if you are to endure long periods of training and practice. However, in solo practice and daily life it's too easy to move incorrectly so these tests give good baseline for proper standing and moving that we can use so we are always in a position of strength and health. No mystical power, just good sense, just moving naturally.