



XIN QI SHEN DOJO

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**MASTER GAO HAS HER GREEN CARD
 CONGRATULATIONS GAO LAOSHR**

A Map of Practice

As beginners we can get overwhelmed with all the new information, exercises and forms we're taught to the point it's difficult to know where to start. As we learn these arts there are warm-ups, meditations, qi gong and forms that we proceed through in learning. Some of the common questions are:

What do I practice? How long should I practice each? What's the most important to practice if my time is limited? How can I remember it all?

One of the goals I have for members of the club is for each individual to develop their own practice. Coming to class and just following along may be good for health and diversion but doesn't enable the session, class, group or individual to progress into the art. It doesn't even scratch the surface. With the Bagua system there has always been a "map" or "formula" to practice which also guides the student step by step through the system (see below).

In Taiji though this is also true it's not as easily mapped out. It's clear that you start at the beginning of the solo form and proceed through to the end. However, depending upon system, there are also many warm-ups and extra training methods used to prepare and accelerate ones progress. In addition to that, it's important for me that all members of the club know the specific systems they are learning from the ground up. Learning the sword before you have a good foundation in the solo forms and qigong only enables you to wave a sword around with no qi, no inner connection, no power, no skill or Taiji/Bagua. I judge members having a foundation and understanding not on what they say they know but what their body demonstrates as I see them practice. This is also demonstrated by the type of questions asked. Below I have put together 'maps' for the various arts that I expect members to follow

NO JULY SATURDAY CLASS

This gives you the time on Saturday morning to come workout, polish and refine what you already have. There are many members that will still be practicing during this time.

Saturday Taiji members are welcome to come on Tuesday nites 7-9pm at Discovery Park and the Bagua 7-9pm members can attend the Thursday session.

No evening classes: July 12-15

Club fee for July is \$45.00

QI GONG INTENSIVE

Every 3rd Saturdays (except July) there will be a basic Qi Gong intensive 2:30-3:30 covering movements, theory, and practice of qi gong for exercise, health, healing and martial ability. The second session 3:40-4:30 is for advanced students working on the Tian Shan Qi Gong.

Each session is \$5.00 for club members, \$10.00 non-members.

BANDON WORKSHOPS

July 10-12th

SUMMER INTENSIVE

July 30th - Aug 1st

See page 6

SATURDAY PREVIEW FOR SEPTEMBER

9-10 am Bagua Basics

10-11am Yang Taiji Basics

11-12 Chen Taiji Basics

There will also be a Saturday fee change:

\$55 for 1 style monthly (@ hr)

\$60 for 2 styles monthly

\$65 for 3 styles monthly

Or \$15 per session

(Continued on page 3)

Bagua Zhang

- Warm-ups/Qi Gong
- Zhan Zhuang
- Wuji Walking (100)
- Inner Palms (20)
- Linking Inner Palms

Yang Taiji Quan

- Zhan Zhuang
- Shoulder rolls & waist rub
- 24 movement qi gong
- Clam
- Fox
- Taiji Basic Step
- Sparrow's Tail
- section #1 (3x's) or

Chen Taiji Quan

- Zhan Zhuang
- Chan Ssu Gong
- Taiji qin-na stick
- Taiji Sphere
- 48 Form (2x's)
- Er Lu 9(2x's)
- Dao (Knife)
- Jian (Sword)

Those familiar with Tuishou, Roushou or Sanshou should include those too.

SINGLE PALM VARIATIONS

By Victor Crandall

This is a Pa Kua single palm change variation that I learned from Steve Cotter. Steve is a long time student of Mike Patterson in San Diego. Mike's school primarily emphasizes Hsing-I with the lineage coming from Taiwan. In this change the Hsing-I influence is readily apparent.

1. The change begins from the single palm posture common to most Pa Kua schools.
2. Toe in. Specifically toe in the outside foot as you normally would. In Steve's toe in there is approximately 6 to 8 inches between the feet. They do not do a T step with the feet close.
3. Begin Fan Jun. Both palms are up. Rear palm touches the arm behind the elbow.
4. Drive off of the forward (toed in) foot. Stepping back along the circle into a long forward stance.
5. Simultaneously with the driving step, the rear palm strikes the center. This is a very vigorous and straight palm strike.
6. Step forward with the rear leg and resume circle walking.

The emphasis of this change is the driving force of the change issuing through the palm. It is very offensive in nature with the intention of delivering a crushing blow at the moment of the change. They ignore (and shorten) the defensive nature of the Fan Jun. Instead the intention is to bypass the opponents attack/defense to strike the mid section. The change itself is your defense. The palm strike naturally falls roughly stomach level. This happens because the forward stance of step 4 lowers your body. The key point to make this technique work is the driving step back along the circle. It is a very simple yet very effective change.

Try it. I sure like it. Maybe you will too.

SINGLE PALM VARIATION #2

This single palm variation is from Mike Patterson's Pa Chang Hsing set. For my ease of writing, start by walking counter clockwise with the left side toward the center of the circle.

1. The change begins from the single palm posture common to most Pa Kua schools.
2. Toe in right foot. Weight primarily on the rear leg. Specifically toe in the outside foot. There are approximately 6 to 8 inches between the feet.
3. Shift weight to right foot. Pull the forward elbow in toward your center while drilling up vertically. The palm is held head high. This is a covering motion of your centerline. The rear hand stays in place stomach level below the elbow.
4. Step back long the circle with the left foot into a high forward stance. Left foot points along the circle. The left arm sweeps up to a horizontal position. The arm ends with the palm out, the thumb down, fingers toward the circle center. This action uncoils the energy of the drilling motion in step 3. Simultaneously the right hand palm strikes forward. Fingers are straight up held under the left wrist. This action is best visualized as a coil and release to block up & strike under the block.
5. Step up with the right foot while pivoting on the left foot. You are now facing away from the circle with your back toward the center. Both feet point out from the circle shoulder width apart.
6. Simultaneously with the step, the left hand/arm holds its position. The right hand drills underneath the left armpit. The right hand does not touch the body.

7. Continue the drilling action attempting to look to your left rear at the center of the circle. There should be a rounding of the back and a stretching to it.

8. Continue the drilling action to perform "rise, drill, overturn, fall". You extend the drilling straight up in the air as high as you can reach.

9. Turn your waist to the right as you continue the overturn motion.

10. As you reach toward the center of the circle the right hand performs a vigorous splitting motion downward. This action is done the same as the "Splitting" of Hsing-I. Simultaneously with the splitting, the right foot pivots on the ball to turn the foot pointing along the circle. This has returned you to the classical single palm position.

What sets this single palm change apart from others is the splitting action of the "rise, drill, overturn, fall" and the foot pivot at step 10. This is really much simpler than it sounds. I was able to get the feel of this in about 15 minutes. After a week of practice it felt pretty natural.

SINGLE PALM "ORIGINAL" FORM

This single palm variation is from Jiang Rongqiao. The form was commonly called "The Original Form" because it was the first form he taught. For ease of my writing, start by walking counter clockwise with the left side toward the center of the circle.

1. The change begins from the single palm posture common to most Pa Kua schools.
2. Toe in right foot. Weight primarily on the rear leg. Specifically toe in the outside foot. There are approximately 6 to 8 inches between the feet.
3. Shift weight to the right foot. Pull the forward elbow in toward your center while drilling up. Continue this action pushing the left hand as far across your body as it will go. The right hand pushes underneath the left arm (fingers pointed up) as far as it will go. This is a covering motion of your centerline. You should have an extreme rounding of the back.
4. Step back long the circle with the left foot into a high forward stance. Left foot points along the circle. The left arm sweeps up to a horizontal position. The arm ends with the palm out, the thumb down, fingers toward the circle center. This action uncoils the energy of step 3. Simultaneously the right hand palm strikes forward and down. Fingers are pointed down. This action is best visualized as a coil and release to block up & strike under the block toward the groin or lower stomach.
5. Step up with the right foot while pivoting on the left foot. You are now facing away from the circle with your back toward the center. Both feet point out from the circle shoulder width apart.
6. Simultaneously with the step, the left hand/arm holds its position. The right hand drills underneath the left armpit. The right hand does not touch the body.
7. Continue the drilling action attempting to look to your left rear at the center of the circle. There should be a rounding of the back and a stretching to it.
8. Continue the drilling action to perform "rise, drill, overturn, fall" You extend the drilling straight up in the air as high as you can reach.
9. Turn your waist to the right as you continue the overturn motion.
10. As you reach toward the center of the circle the right hand performs a vigorous splitting motion downward. This action is done the same as the "Splitting" of Hsing-I. Simultaneously with the splitting, the right foot pivots on the ball to turn the foot pointing along the circle. This has returned you to the classical single palm position.

This palm change is almost identical to the Pa Chang Hsing change except for the extreme covering and low strike.

DAN HUAN ZHANG

The Single Palm Change: *The methods may look different but the principle is only one.*



Fortunately, due to Bagua not being popular it hasn't become as stylized and restrictive as the art of Taiji Quan. For non-Bagua people the Dan Huan Zhang is the 'Grasping Sparrow's Tail' of Bagua. Dan Huan Zhang is the practice of the four primary energies of Bagua: Ti, Tsuan, Lo, Fan (rise, drill, fall, overturn) just as Grasping Sparrow's Tail focuses on the four primary energies of Taiji.

The basic practice and study of the Single Changing Palm is to teach the body to change directions quickly and to use the body, shoulder, elbows and palms for striking, deflecting, blocking, or guarding. In addition to this body movement what's actually being trained is the 'Chan ssu jin' or Silk Reeling Power. I've been



fortunate to study and be exposed to 3 teachers all from the same lineage. Even



so all their methods of Dan Huan Zhang were very different from each other, even though their art comes from the founder's disciple Cheng Ting Hua.

We have slow, fast, flowing, deliberate, power and soft versions. Some simple some complex.

Regardless, they all focus on

changing directions and the four energies: Ti, Tsuan, Lo, Fan. It's interesting how many ways this movement can be done. For fun, training and comparison we have a set of 8 - Single Palm Changes I put together reflecting various systems. But remember, learning one well is more important than know several superficially.



It's also interesting to see how many different common names these changes have depending upon system. I believe the imagery of the name demonstrates the characteristic of the 'style' or teacher. Though the movement is Dan Huan Zhang, it's been given many different nicknames as well

as the various parts of it have many different names.

The turn is referred to as: crossing the waist, wrapping the body, flower hidden beneath leaf, looking to the rear, black bear looks back. Though the ending of the Dan Huan Zhang in all methods are Ti, Tsuan, Lo, Fan; together these movements are called: Green Dragon Extends Claws, Standing Palm, Single Palm, Bird Leaves Flock, Wild Goose Leaves Flock, and Phoenix Extends Wings to name a few.

If you look at these labels it can get quite confusing so... Don't worry about the names, just practice,



(Continued from page 1)

SEPTEMBER CLASS CHANGES
Saturday Yang Taiji members that are able to demonstrate the qi gong, section #1 and the beginning of 2 will be able to filter into the Tuesday nite 7-9 session. BAGUA members able to demonstrate the walking patterns, inner palms and 8 changes will be able to join the Thursday nite Bagua group.
BEGINNING CHEN TAIJI - There will be a beginning Chen Taiji Class 11-noon. After September this class will be closed to new students for a year. (if you don't have the discipline of daily practice Chen Taiji isn't for you)

FORM COMPLETIONS

TAIJI BROADSWORD

- ▶ Andy Wilks
- ▶ Anne Walker
- ▶ Jim Doulong
- ▶ Belinda Frazier
- ▶ Barbara Osinski

BAGUA INNER PALMS

- ▶ Michael Hall
- ▶ Nora Lih
- ▶ Kevin Radloff
- ▶ Tom Flener

AIKIDO 5th KYU PROMOTIONS

- ▶ Joel Hartshorne
- ▶ Francine Seders
- ▶ Jennifer Lange
- ▶ Derryl Willis

CLARIFICATION OF CLUB FEES

Below are the club fees. For July the base club fee is \$45.00 since we'll be missing the week of the 11th. The new Saturday fees will take effect

September:
XIN QI SHEN DOJO pm classes
\$60 one art monthly
\$65 two or more arts monthly
or \$15 per session

SATURDAY SESSION
\$55 for 1 style monthly (@ hr)
\$60 for 2 styles monthly
\$65 for 3 styles monthly
Or \$15 per session

The difference in evening session and Saturday reflects the limited time on Saturdays and the lack of club resources (tapes and books).



Don't Do The Technique Just Keep One Point

Keeping one point is basically being centered. Actually it's finding, developing then nurturing your center (dantian) and hanging on to it. As we're moving through our basic waza (technique) it's very easy to see when we've moved beyond our circle of strength, beyond our physical reach of *one-point*. However just like the surface of an iceberg we can't see the major portion which lies unseen: our mind. In some Taoist classics they talk about the five thieves referring to our senses. If we get too caught up in any of them they steal our health, well-being and center. The emotions are also considered the five thieves. Here I'm just going to focus on fear and greed. The Taoist say that when the five thieves are balanced and under control they become members of the household, they are in balance and helpful in maintaining our health.



As we practice our waza, part of the greed and loosing *one-point* is forcing the technique on our partner, working too hard at it, or working on controlling our uke (partner). Already it's easy to see there is no *one-point* since our concentration is outside of us. Remember that we can't control others we can only work on centering and controlling ourselves.

In correct Aikido the practice is to move from and always maintain *one-point*. As uke attacks, blend with the force so that it revolves around us and actually becoming part of us. Instead of me/you, if I can properly blend we become a yin/yang symbol parts of a whole. My focus is to maintain a strong center and then only move myself, once our two forces have blended. As an Aikidoka (Aikido practitioner) advances this should happen even before the physical attack. The effort isn't in controlling the other but maintaining *one-point* physically and mentally. Being calm so that we can listen to the force/attack/balance as see where the appropriate movements should be. What direction is it heading and finding the path of ease, the safe path, the aiki path. As we practice and learn to listen it's the attack and uke (attacker) that decides what to do, not us.



Now another place of loosing one point is in randori (several attackers) or jiyu waza (free style). Here's where fear becomes overwhelming because there's many of them. The principle still remains the same, one at a time. Even though there are several we focus on the group as one, maintain *one-point* and move accordingly. If we learn to listen to direction, ki and force it's easy to throw, move and not get stuck in the middle of the group. If on the other hand we try to DO a technique all of a sudden everyone is upon us. The practice of randori is to learn to move like water, stay clear and alert but above all

*When you are calm and stable, careful of
attention, the celestial design is always
clear, open awareness is unobscured; then
you have autonomy in action and can deal
with whatever arises.*

The Taoist book of Balance and Harmony 13th century

We're all Special

My teacher was the top/private/secret student of Master Yang Cheng fu! I studied in the Chen village for one year! I practice the *older* forms, the *lao jia*, the real/original one. I was an inner door student to . . .

I've seen people sell their stuff to go study Aikido at the hombu in Japan. Upon return the only difference I could see with some is that they learned broken English! I've seen some go to Beijing to learn the true Taiji/Bagua. Only to come back with stories of these masters but no skill to show for their visit. Some even going to the mountains of China to find the 'real' qi gong. (I think they're lost) I've also met some who, due to time or location, haven't had the opportunity to study with a 'true' master, or learn a 'complete' systems, or to travel outside this country whos skills soar high above some verifiable 'inner-door' students and masters who come from a strong lineage.

One of Master Gao Fu's friends visiting recommended that we follow up on certain statements. Like, "My teach was assistant to master so and so" with, "Was master so and so a good teacher? Was he able to pass his skill down? How long did your teacher study? Did your teacher study hard? Was your teacher a good student? Was your teacher a good teacher? Did your teacher teach everything? Are you a good students? How much do you practice daily?" Just because a

master is excellent doesn't mean they can transmit the skill. There is such a thing as natural talent. Also what about the classmates the master trained with? Sometimes they are as important if not more so than the teacher. Just look at the practice group in Taiwan: Wang Nien-yen, Cheng Man-ching, Tchoung Ta-tchen, T.T. Liang, William Chen, Wang Hsu-chin, Chen Pan-ling to name a few.

Another point is creativity vs don't change or ask questions. Aikijitsu master Don Angier during a workshop brought up the point that if you look at the top martial artists in history the majority of them broke away and evolved their own systems. They studied the classical method then went beyond it. Learn the basics, study hard but don't be restricted by the past.

We all want to be special or legitimate. We all want to have learned the secrets or the special method. Is your interest primarily in studying the art or belonging to a lineage? Well the first and last secret is practice, practice, practice regardless of system or master. You may have a map to the top of the mountain but if you don't follow it, regardless of reading it, it's just a piece of paper.

Now - - -

WE'RE ALL SPECIAL!

Anyone who does Yang Taiji can trace their lineage back to Yang Lu Chan! You may not know the exact lineage or do the exact form but Yang Taiji and all it's offshoots stem from Yang Lu Chan! The same goes for Chen Taiji, Bagua and Aikido. If you practice the art, good or bad, you can trace your lineage back to the founder! The real important issue is: Are you practicing correctly? Are you following the principles of the art? Are you practicing daily?

Andy