



XIN QI SHEN DOJO

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Desires don't injure the mind as much
 as opinions do.

The senses don't hinder enlightenment
 as much as the intellect does.

Huanchu Daoren



TEACHING

1. Know the right time to correct a student
2. Know how much to correct at one time
3. Know how much to teach at one time
4. Know what depth to teach or what level
5. Avoid confusion
6. Work to simplify all information and movements
7. How much can you chew at one time?

LEARNING

1. Relax
2. Listen and try
3. One thing at a time.
4. Always start from the beginning.

ASSISTANT INSTRUCTORS

Joel Hartshorne
 Cedar Acosta
 Russ Fish

Over the last year the above members have given up their personal practice time to cover classes for me, help members, and gone out of their way to support the club. All are well versed in one art and more than familiar with the others. They are the first appointed assistant instructors of the Internal Wushu Arts / Xin Qi Shen Dojo. Congratulations!

Andy

ENERGETIC RETREAT 1999

If you weren't there you missed it a super time. Though we'll have other great retreats this one was special and magical due to two living treasures: Masters Gao Fu and Fook Yueng. This year in addition to the above masters were Maestro Michael Gilman, Bob Iden, Ron Jorgensen, Pamela Mellish and myself. Never a dull moment. Practice, study, music and hearing the wisdom of the masters. Be there next year! Check article on page 3

NEWSLETTER MAILINGS

This NL is mailed out to those attending workshops (for the last year). Those wishing to stay on the snailmail list after that a mailing fee of \$10 U.S. \$15 Canadian will keep you on for a year. If you have email there is no cost for updates of the online version which is usually online a week prior to mailing.

Be sure I have your current email address and request to be put on the newsletter list.

Newsletters Online

By November many of the old newsletters will be online. So far 1991 & 1995 have been added.

dojo@wuji.com

This is the official club email address, the old one will only be good for another month.

SATURDAY, DEC 4th

The Phinney Center will have its annual Winter Festival so this Saturday is cancelled. December dues are 1/2 since there is only 2 Saturday sessions.. January classes will start up Jan 8th.

NEW BEGINNING CLASSES JANUARY 8th

I will be starting a brand new beginning group for Yang Taiji and Bagua, if you know someone interested in classes this is the best time to start.. The Chen Taiji class is closed for the year. Continuing members will be expected to arrive early to warm-up then proceed to work on their forms. The second 1/2 of each session will be focused on the continuing members.

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*Some people confuse having
 an opinion with thinking!*

Calmness

Relaxation of the Mind

I think this is one of our most challenging practices and tasks. As we practice our various arts this is one thing that we seek to maintain it and nurture it in our daily lives. The calmness we seek is a result of relaxing mind and body in the process of movement, slow or fast. In Aikijitsu calmness and clarity is referred to as "Mizu no kokoro" mind like water, being calm like a pond that will reflect anything flying over it, yet fluid like water adapting to all situations smoothly.

As we practice our solo movements *alone* we have the challenge of keeping our mind present on what we are feeling and the focus of the movement, the posture, the energy. This is relatively an easy task compared to applications or randori (Aikido multi-man attack) or tuishou (push hands). Even before beginning the application we deal with our partner's appearance, size and personality that may disrupt our wishes for a mellow workout. We deal with our own prejudice, fear, greed, and assumptions that create friction in our mind/body/spirit. This is the beginning of our practice, relax!

Your partner for this session may not be your favorite, he/she may not know the movements well enough to do them softly, they may be beginners or may be trying to show off their skill, they may chatter too much. This is very mild compared to real martial arts but the goal is still the same: to center, relax and maintain our calm amidst the activity and distractions. To maintain a mind like the great round mirror, reflecting clearly without being disturbed.

One important point though (not the focus of this article) is to communicate with your partner in all partner work. If they are too rough or too fast for your level ask them to soften, if they talk too much suggest a quiet practice.

If we don't practice, if we don't increase the pace we won't develop skill. As we start applications and tuishou there is a co-operation in learning and helping each other. As practice continues and once the movements are learned, then the goal changes. In applications the attacks should become quicker and forceful in order to make them more real. In tuishou your partner may change pace, root, be less cooperative, or apply techniques. As the pace increases, our practice of relaxation and calmness must be challenged but remember, this is our practice. Being an observer of the situation and taking appropriate actions instead of trying to control, manipulate, or run from the situation. Surf and notice first, wisdom and skill to deal with the situation come later.

What I think is our hardest practice, except for staying calm in daily life, happens during group practice. This is especially true on Saturdays when we are outside. There are cars driving by, people all around (some staring), different arts practices at many different levels. It's difficult not to notice regardless of what you may be working on. While practicing you may notice someone practicing a movement incorrectly or insincerely. You may notice someone goofing off or working on applications. Where is your focus? Your relaxation, your calmness? Draw your attention back, feel and refine your practice and movement. If we can do it here then we can do it anywhere, anytime.

Andy

(Continued from page 1)

FORM COMPLETION

Yang Partner Saber

Mike Ullman
Cedar Acosta
Derryl Willis
Steve Cousins
Jennifer Lange
Francine Seders

Yang Taiji Section #9 (Jio Lu)

Anne Walker
Jim Doulong
Belinda Frazier
Russ Fish
Derryl Willis
Cedar Acosta
Barbara Osinski
Ruth Pattison
Dennis Sharp
Francine Seders

Chen Taiji Saber

Steve Cousins
Tom Flener
Derryl Willis
Cedar Acosta

Chen Taiji Pao Chui

Steve Cousins
Tom Flener
Derryl Willis
Cedar Acosta
Francine Seders

Bagua Dragon Palm

Michael Hall
Rikki Scandora
Chris Laliberte

Bagua Flowing Form 2

Rikki Scandora
Chris Laliberte
Joe O'Malley
Joel Hartshorne
Michael Hall
Brett Petrilli
Ken Astrein
Russ Fish

Bagua Cyclone Saber

Rikki Scandora
Chris Laliberte
Joe O'Malley
Joel Hartshorne

NO CLASSES

Mark Your Calendars

Wednesday - Nov 3rd
Week of - Nov 22 - 26th
Monday - Nov 29th
Saturday - Dec 4th
Week of - Dec 25th - Jan 1st

DECEMBER ½

Saturday month fee \$½





Not Good Enough!



One of the highlights of Michael's Energy Retreat happened on Saturday night when some of the masters, instructors, and participants performed demonstrations. The performances and skills were beyond exceptional. It's very, very clear that the participants just didn't go to classes follow along and do their forms. They learned, studied, nurtured, and polished themselves as well as their art. They're working towards mastery not just practice.

Master Yueng became a Preying Mantis before our eyes which awed everyone and scarred those sitting in the front row due to its realism. Master Gao Fu demonstrated the 24 form and moved so smooth that silk couldn't compare with her softness and fluidness. People were speechless, not able to clearly express the 'kung fu' they had just witnessed. The memories will linger but more importantly I hope it adds inspiration to our daily practice.

When seeing a master or someone exceptional perform most miss the point. Don't just admire what you've seen or just it. What we were privileged to see was years of hard work, passion and dedication to the art. Seeking excellence not merely practice. These performances should inspire you to put more time aside for your own practice and refinement; to clean up, polish and deepen your art. This was not a performance, this was a sharing of their love of the art and what can be accomplished from mindful practice and dedication.

We love excuses and to give lip service to why we don't practice, or why we haven't achieved degrees of skill. Get out of your mind set and raise your expectation! There are so many excuses students use for not practicing or refining the art. When watching masters the most common statement is: "They had the best teachers!" "They started when they were children!" "They studied in China!" Time and age don't matter, where and when don't matter as much as dedication and work do.

For instance Michael showing the many possibilities and applications of single whip clearly shows mindful intent in practice, research and a strong interest in getting to the core of the art. A polishing of the details as well as the major movements. This is the path to mastery.

Roger's Five Animal play was amazing, it was a demonstration of shamanism as he took on and brought out the energy of the animal forms in an elegant yet powerful way.

Kim Ivy's fan form was clean, crisp and functional. There so no mediocrity in her demonstration. You don't just get a form that way by just practice. It takes self-discipline, daily practice, mindful practice and a love of the art.

Virgil Rogers did the Xing-I Quan Five elements and twelve animals with explosive power then softness. You can't just get up and do that, the details of each particle of movements needs to be mastered in order to incorporate hard and soft. Also the receiving end of the applications, Josh had to be alert and centered as he attacked to keep himself safe from the power of the applications. Zan-Shin: ever present.

Though not a 'nei jia' Pamela's demonstration of Yoga sun salutation and explanation of each posture and energetic connection is another example of 'kung fu', refined skill and mastery. Another demonstration of research not merely practice.

Moving from the martial arts to the musical arts Jason completed the evening playing joyfully and skillfully at the piano bringing the performances to a smooth end.

Excellence, beauty and power don't just happen, it's years of working on the details and not sluffing off.

NO EXCUSES.

Andy

ARE YOU MISSING THE POINT?

Now think about your practice of the solo forms, go ahead I'll wait. . . How and what are you practicing? Where is your focus?

One of the problems with beginners as well as instructors sometimes is that practice and instruction go too fast and instill bad habits of practice and learning. "Overlooking the near to seek the far" happens all too often.

The function of learning the form is to polish our relaxation, connections, centering and coordination. All too often I get members wanting the next move NOW. What's next? What's next? What's next? When will you teach this form? Impatience with no concern toward polishing has been already learned, just an interest in getting to the end. The same thing happens with people asking about lessons and wanting to join classes. I get off list of what they've studied and then questions about them moving into the advanced classes or onto advanced forms. First of all, if you've studied and learned a form or style well then you don't need to learn another one; just practice what you have, that's Taiji. Second, each instructor and system is different enough that the credits from one don't really transfer when it comes to learning some forms. The reason for studying with someone else is to learn Taiji from them, however they teach it, their individual approach instead of learning forms.

RELAXATION

How well can you relax? How soft is your practice? How smooth and grounded are your movements? This is why you need to keep practicing and polishing. Next movement, don't worry it'll still be there next week. Beginners need to look at the most advanced members of the club during practice sessions. You'll see them repeating a movement over and over, working on basic forms over and over, continually practicing instead of just standing around. Don't wait for someone to lead you in practice or for the class to begin, start practicing and when the time for the group session happens join it but don't waste time now.

Section two is taught after section one! It means that you're ready for the next step and you've gotten the superficial movements down enough to polish. The same holds true with sections 3,4,5,6(long form), 7&8(sanshou) 9(fast form) and the weapons. It all has its place in training but the foundation 1-6 (long form and qi gong) have to be in place first and then continually polished and refined. Just like Baseball stars, they continually practice batting, pitching, etc.

Now, form groups; how many repetitions of each form do you do when practicing or during class time? One of the guidelines we have is from master Tung Ying-chieh:

On Practicing Taiji Quan

By Tung Ying Chieh

In practicing Taiji Quan, one should do it at least three rounds each session. The first round is to stretch the tendons and loosen the joints, the second round is to coordinate and correct the postures, and the third round is to do it with full spirit. After you become skillful, you will have the full spirit with correct postures as soon as you start the exercise.