



XIN QI SHEN DOJO

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**Xin Qi Shen Dojo
Beginning Classes
Start September**

One of the problems with running a club is giving everyone the attention and nurturing they need. All in all, a beginning group requires the most time, attention and guidance. This usually leaves the advanced and continuing members without much time.

Starting this September, the first half hour will be a group warm-up and instruction. (evenings 6:30-7:00) The second half hour will be strictly instructional for the beginners. While the continuing members work on partner exercises. The remainder of the session will be for the beginners to practice while I work with the rest of the class.

Also, PLEASE PAY ON TIME. Rent is due the first of the month. Our new place isn't only 1.5 times larger than the old, it's also equally more \$\$\$\$. Until the club is large enough to fill the space, I don't have the extra money lying around to front it.

**PLEASE SEE CLASS FORMAT
ON PAGE 2**

*Good Teachers
Teach What They've Been Taught.
Great Teachers
Teach What They've Learned.*

DO-RE-ME-FA-SO-LA-TI-DO

What do the masters do?



**Bandon Dojo
August 2-4, 2002**

Those teaching these arts get an assortment of phone calls from individuals wanting to join. Amazingly, a large percent mention they are above beginning classes. These statements range from, "Oh, I've had Taiji before (10 years ago) so I don't need to be in a beginning class," to "I just want to learn the sword." Imagine going into a university and saying that? Or taking piano lessons and saying, "Oh, I just want to learn Beethoven's 5th, I had piano lessons when I was in high school."

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Do you know what ballet performers do before a show? Do you know what concert pianists do before the performance? Do you know what opera stars do before a concert? They work on the basics! Ballet performers practice their bar exercises, pianists warm up with the scales, singers practice their range. Even at the start of their practice they work on the core basics, polish, polish and polish them some more.

It's interesting that many martial artists, once they've learned the basic stepping, hand exercises and drills, don't drill basics but merely practice forms! As they start practice they tend to move directly into their forms, go through the entire routine and keep going. Seldom do practitioners take pieces of the movements, or the basic exercises, and drill them. Many don't know how to practice. Look around, those you see drilling basics are usually the most skilled at their art.

Need I say more?

Andy

A Visit From Master Feng Zhiqiang



Photos courtesy of
Kim Ivy

Wow, what a pleasure! Master Gao Fu's teacher, the last living disciple of the great Chen lineage holder Chen Fake (1887-1957), and the last of his generation in Taiji Quan. Looking like a man in his 50s no one would guess he was in his 70s. Especially when he tosses young, big, strong guys around like children. Master Feng is very well known for his exceptional tuishou (push hands) and there's no question why. His touch is

light yet not attacking or with a sense of danger, when he wants to move, he moves and you fly. Aside from that I've never felt a human being feel more solid or dense like a mountain. I guess that's the result of years and years of rigorous daily training under one of the best Chen Taiji masters does.

Feng reminded me much of Tchoung Ta Tchen in his attitude and movements. Both are very casual, natural, and don't waste any effort. Straight and forward, bam—you fly. Nothing special, nothing flowery, no apparent effort.

SMILE!

How many times do we need reminders? Master Tchoung, Master Yueng, and now Master Feng . . . Smile and relax your face as you practice. Master Feng demonstrated how some practitioners make fierce faces or hard looks as they practice thinking they should 'look' like a martial artist. "This blocks energy!" As you smile it not only relaxes your gaze and face, opening the flow to qi, but it also opens your heart. It nourishes your spirit. As you practice you should have a very pleasant feeling and this should be expressed by your look as well as your movements. Master Feng emphasized our Taiji practice is practicing the movements of the Universe. Taiji is Dao. Our practice is large circular movements, everything in nature moves in cycles and circular patterns. As you practice, feel this connection.

TUISHOU WITH THE MASTER

At the generosity of Madame Gao Fu and two others, a few of us had the opportunity on Feng's last day to take a boat tour of Lake Union with master Feng. It was a beautiful sunny day and a chance to really meet the master. As I was on the upper deck there was a hand on my shoulder and it was very clear who it was, I was stuck. He turned me around and offered to push

hands . . . WOW. His touch was casual, light and soft, his core solid. I've tried to find words to describe the feeling of his root and core but I can't. It's like trying to make the same ends of a magnet touch. I couldn't find any sense of there being a center, just a never-ending core, force field. What I did experience was a gentleness, the sign of a great master in my opinion. He came down to my level and played with me. We went though the four hands, then he invited me to try to get him. No such luck, every effort of mine slipped off like water rolling down an umbrella. Every once in a while he would toss me back, fortunately not overboard. He wasn't even trying, it seemed like he was half asleep as we pushed. Instead of a workout it was like a great massage, no force, no power, an extremely pleasurable experience. The flow and the gentleness of an ocean wave. As we pushed I found that contact with him relaxed me more and more, gave me a root (not that it helped), and a idea of what I need to strive for. They say that a picture is worth a thousand words; contact and touch then must be worth a billion.



THE FOUR ENERGIES

Master Feng talked about the four energies being misunderstood. He said the common understanding is very limited and incorrect.

Peng-Lu-Ji-An are directions of pressure, not confined to particular postures. *Peng* is upward, *An* is downward, *Ji* is forward, and *Lu* back or to the sides. So depending upon the body area being used the energy is still being manifested. *Peng* being upward isn't just with the hands or arms. It can be an upward motion with the shoulder, fist, head or knee. *Lu* isn't just with the palms or inside of the arms, but can also be a hook with the foot, a shoulder rolling in or back. *Ji* likewise isn't just a specific hand position but can be done with fists, elbows, hips or knees. *An* has the same possibilities. Palms, fists, arms, foot or sitting are all *An*. On this same theme he talked about teachers needing to teach the principles of the art not merely movements and forms. We need to understand the principle behind the movements so we can self-correct and improve.

(Continued on page 4)

EVOLUTION OF A PRACTITIONER

It has been my fortune to be around martial arts masters who follow the Tao, listen to their own Tao and creative sparks, then flow with the natural order. Master Tchoung would say, "the method can change but the principles always remain the same." I've seen Aikido Master Koichi Tohei evolve his Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido, master Yueng exploring and moving along with Tian Shan Qi Gong and applications. I've seen 20 + years of Master Tchoung maturing his style of Taiji Quan, and now the flower of Chen Taiji into Chen Hun Yuan Xing I Taiji Quan (Chen Original Essence, Will Intent, Taiji).

It's changed! A statement most teachers hear as they refine their teaching and practice. "Taiji is Dao" is a common phrase Master Feng used. As Dao it has the cultivation of the individual, it has 'wu' martial purpose to keep the body safe in practice and in life, and it is medicine in keeping the body healthy. "The three are one!"

He feels the fa-jing and extreme stomping of some practices injure ones' energy and body, especially the joints. As he's adopted the softer and smoother training his health, he says, has improved greatly. In my opinion, the Hun Yuan Taiji Quan seems to be moving directly toward a Qi Gong practice with martial background instead of a martial practice with Qi Gong background.

If we look around, as we look at life at various ages it seems the common theme. As young kids we seem interested in testing our strength, proving ourselves, feeling important, and being noticed. As we mature and get older our priority changes. We become concerned with taking care of business, participating in events, community, and family. As we get wiser our efforts move in the direction of helping others, teaching, nurturing, unity, cultivating life, and improving the quality of life. The destructive and competitive tendencies of youth stay in the playground as we travel the course of life.

From fighting methods to nurturing life. Children maturing into adults, adults maturing into elders.

HOW MANY TIMES?

As in the earlier article about what the masters do, the basics are never obsolete. One of the reasons some instructors seem more polished than others usually corresponds to the amount of beginning classes they teach! As you look around the club at the advanced students and assistant instructors here's one question you might ask them: "How many beginner's classes have you taken?"

Most of the advanced club members have willingly gone through the beginning classes at least three times. If you notice them during class they also seem to eavesdrop on the beginning instruction.

Think about it . . . When you are first taught you can only remember so much. You are bombarded with movements, theory, and the principles of the art. Much of what is taught slips away since there isn't much room in your memory for it. Also, you will primarily focus on learning the movements the first time, so the principles and theory may be missed or not given as much attention as the physical learning. Quite often you'll hear: "You didn't teach us that." or "I've never heard that." Though each beginning class is taught differently, usually to the character of the beginning group, much of what



is taught is missed the first time around.

The first time you go through a class you are learning physical movements: general, basic movements. The second time you are able to appreciate and focus on the principles or the transitions of the movements, the refinements of the physical movements. By the third time in a beginning session, a student's attention isn't on the instruction but on the instructor.

This is where the quality learning begins. This time the focus is on the energetic of the teacher, the art and core, not the outer shell. This is something a teacher can't teach. It's how they may express the art, express their understanding of the art. Even if a teacher could try, they really can't teach this level, it must be stolen by the student.

Sometimes what I think I'm doing, I'm not really doing! Perhaps my teaching hasn't caught up with my personal advancement or development. Perhaps I'm focusing mostly on one element. Studying the teacher is the difference between a beginning and advanced student of the art.

Before this can happen the basics must be there with a strong foundation so that it's part of your body wisdom. At this stage it isn't learning, it's refining.

**BASIC CLUB FEE
INCREASES TO \$65
SEPTEMBER**

There will be no increase on additional classes.

Basic fee \$65
Two sessions \$75
Three sessions \$85
Four session \$95

MONDAY ROUSHOU

New session will start, consistent attendance is required.

CLUB SHIRTS AVAILABLE

Blue & Maroon
T-shirts \$15
Sweat Shirts \$25
Hun Yuan Qi Gong Books \$15.00
Club Video Tapes \$25.00
Dojo Calendars \$15.00

2002 BANDON

Will be August 2-4

DOJO CALENDAR AVAILABLE

A 12 month calendar featuring pictures of the clubs teachers and grandteachers, fiends and events.
\$15.00

Xin Qi Shen Dojo Moving!

Starting September we're moving into the corner unit (Roy's Glass Shop). The Glass shop is has decided to move and Thorlund Investments are permitting us to move into the space :)

Our new space is one and a half times larger than our old place. In addition the rent goes up one and a half times. Another plus side of this is no longer needing to limit the enrollment to our most popular workshops. I will also be able to run beginning and advanced classes at the same time, or have a practice area for members as there is an ongoing class.

Last winter the club grew to the point that I needed to have waiting lists for some of the classes. With the rent increase I'm hoping club membership will grow to cover the rent and expenses to fix the new place up. Currently we'll move in as is and then slowly fix the place up. Fortunately it's not in as bad a condition as our old unit was last year.

It's even more important now that members pay on time!

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