



XIN QI SHEN DOJO

8316 8th Ave
NW
Seattle,

Think For Yourself, Respect Yourself

Part of our dojo philosophy is: *Respect your teachers, respect the art, respect your classmates, respect the founder but think for yourself.*

One common mistake for those studying the martial arts is to assume that the instructor 'knows all'. They look at the teacher as someone whose expertise extends to all matters, not *only* the art they are learning. In my mind being centered means thinking for yourself and making your own decisions. To me this is freedom. It's also being an adult.

Too often students project a wisdom onto their teachers that may not be there. Teachers who advise on diet when they have no background in the field, are just giving their 'opinion'. Sifu told me this, sensei told me that I should do that in order to have a better relationship, etc. Those are not "teachings," but opinions.

QUESTION AUTHORITY

(Even if you need a translator to do so!) And when taught, examine what, how and why it was taught that particular way. Sometimes beginners are taught a certain way while advanced members are taught differently. Sometimes one person is taught one way (to their talents and nature) while another member is taught completely differently.

In general, beginners are given basic, easy to grasp ideas. As student advance they receive more depth of instruction, that is, when they are able or ready to deal with it. I.E. if a person is having trouble with right and left foot there isn't any need to discuss energies or intent.

Some of my teachers insisted that I use my own mind to figure out questions I had. Though they'd answer questions they would also ask, "What do you think?" One teacher told us not to trust his teaching since it might be outdated from his actual techniques. 'Steal the art from me' is what he'd

(Continued on page 2)

2001

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Welcome to another year!

Wow, I still find it hard to believe it's the 2000s. However, with the start of this century luck and fortune has rained upon the club. We now have a more 'official' space, one in which all members have contributed and are able to use more fully. The dojo has the addition of three excellent teachers: -John Kanetomi, Bob Iden, and Kim Ivy-who add to the quality of our practice as well as the invaluable input for the advancement of the dojo.

In the new year we have bimonthly visits from Master Gao Fu for Chen Taiji form corrections. What I'm most excited about is the opportunity to have expanded workshops with highly talented teachers. This fall we have a push hands seminar and a Qi Gong festival planned. Workshops include Master Yueng, Master Gao Fu, John Camp, Bob Iden, Michael Gilman, and more.

I'd like for you to take a moment and reflect on what you were working on last year. What were the difficulties, the challenges. Look at how far you've come. Progress in the internal arts is very slow and gradual, it's not noticeable until you look back. We study these arts for self-improvement, exercise and inward growth. This is a life-long process, one of refining ourselves. The bottom line is we're never satisfied, so take a moment to congratulate yourself on another year.

The dojo as it is now is the result of all our efforts. Look what you've help create.

On another note with the opening of the dojo and having a store front place the responsibility and workload has increased quite a bit. Scheduling classes and managing the members of the class (which are larger now), setting up workshops, updating the web sites with links, newsletter, workshop and class information has been quite a job. So . . . the newsletter will now be quarterly to enable me to get stuff done and perhaps get back to the book I've had semi-ready in the computer for 4 years.



This is Master Kuo Lien Ying in the *Embrace The Post* meditation posture.

The standing meditation postures, Zhan Zhuang, has long time been and are considered the secret of all the internal arts.

The first part of the zhan zhuang is to work on correct body alignment and structure. If the body isn't correctly balanced these muscles are the first to 'burn'. Once the posture is correct the standing helps strengthen the smaller muscle groupings and connections necessary for the body to remain stable and develop gentle strength.

The next step is to open the channels of energy by adhering to the 3 bows (also known as the 5 or 7 curves). By doing this the energy of the body flows freely and strongly.

From here the emphasis changes depending upon the system, art or purpose of the meditation. Some methods focus on emptiness, others on the tan tian, and others on breathing. It really doesn't matter as much at this point, perseverance and diligent daily practice of standing will develop and increase one's qi.

Andy

(Think For Yourself: Continued from page 1)

say. Another teacher told me is this enlightening yet true example:

As he was visiting the U.S. and teaching a seminar he kept correcting the chief instructor of the club because the instructor's alignment was off, his shoulders were slumped, he was bent over, and moved very gingerly. The chief instructor had been to China to study with my teacher's teacher. Apparently he copied the Master, following the forms and receiving little corrections. But he followed and copied the best he could, mimicking the movements. He came back to the US and started teaching the forms he learned in China. After being corrected several times the instructor said to my teacher, "This is the way the master did it." Well, the master was 75 years old and in poor health at the time. His movements were economical, and that of an old man. This instructor wasn't copying the form but the old man.

When studying any art it's important to use your brain to analyze to a degree what, how and why certain things are taught if you want to really get anywhere. In a beginners' class movements are usually broken down and made easy to learn. An advanced group may do the same movements with power, quickness, fluidity, or fa-jing. If you never got to an advanced session you wouldn't know! If the instructor is ill, has a bad back or some other ailment the movements demonstrated are hindered by this. If a teacher says, "never do this" is it

never-never, or practice this way until the movements are better? If an instructor says, "this is good, this is bad" ask Why? Is bad, bad or just not as good? You may go flying off a wall but at least you'll know, so if and when you teach . . . YOU'LL know.

Also consider the cultural, religious, and historical background of your teacher. I've mentioned in the past that some Aikido teachers insist that if you don't study Shinto you can't understand or be any good at Aikido. This is their belief, not fact. Just because the founder of Aikido was a Shinto priest doesn't mean everyone must be. Also Shinto was *his* belief and he did not insist his Aikido students study Shinto. At the same time, since he was Shinto much of his symbolism and descriptions came from his Shinto background to describe what he was doing. This is the same as some Shaolin Kung Fu teachers insisting their students have to become Buddhists. It may be their belief, or just good marketing, since it adds to the mysticism and ancient flavor of the art.

Your teacher may be a master of the art, or of several arts, but their mastery isn't yours. We each have to figure it out for ourselves. Learn, study and train hard. Follow the principles of the art but do not follow blindly. A robot or a puppet isn't an artist.

As Grandmaster Tchoung would say: "The methods can change but the underlying principles are constant. Make it your own."

Andy

A Teachers Gripe Session

SECRETS TO SHARE

Over the last year some of us teacher types have gotten together and shared some things during gripe sessions (not the monthly teachers sessions). Things we wish for, things we try to improve, misunderstandings, and things we *suffer* through. I thought I'd spill some beans to help perhaps motivate some students to become mindful or considerate.

As an instructor it would be great to only have to focus on teaching, training and correcting. But . . . a class or club situation is a very complex mixture of people, moods, and personalities, not to mention physical abilities. Though not all of us are full-time instructors it's important to know the reason a person does teach is because they love the art and to teach. Contrary to popular belief, it's not for the wealth, fame and notoriety that you'd expect!

Some of the common statements we get when someone hears we teach full time:

- You're kidding, right?
- You can make a living doing that?
- Wow, how easy.
- Oh, that's not a real job.
- Oh, so you play instead of work.
- That's not really work.
- You've got it easy.
- Boy, you don't have any responsibility.

WISHES:

- When class is over, have it over. Not being followed to the car or door with more questions.
- Before class starts have students practicing, not chatting or waiting for the class to start.
- Not to be besieged with questions while preparing for the next class.
- Have students try to figure things out before asking questions.
- Not have someone want *deals*, \$\$, on lessons.
- Have students realize they may not be the only ones in class.
- Students would listen and practice, not share

what their other teachers do or did. Or to comment on the instruction during class. Never hear, "You changed it," or "That's not the way so and so did it." Students would understand the meaning of a dedicated practice space. The care and nurturing of the energy and atmosphere of the place.

HOW TO:

- Mellow out a students who think they're martial arts heroes.
- Tone down an overzealous student.
- Deal with students who have an odor.
- Deal with a student who interrupts another's lesson or question without losing the pace of the class or lesson.
- Keep the class on track when two students are intent upon their own conversations.
- Get a student to work within their abilities.
- Get a student to work up to their potential.
- When asking for questions, not having a student make a speech or rephrase what was said.

Some of the items above may seem simple but, one of the difficulties is handing the situations while a class is in session, keeping the class going without wasting time, sidetracking the practice or losing track of the lesson.

DID YOU KNOW

- Did you know that perhaps the last thing an instructor wants to discuss when off duty is martial arts?
- Did you know that instructors get calls at home regarding class & forms? (Even in class when there is a schedule posted!)
- Did you know some people believe Qi gong classes should be free since they teach healing? Or think you're slime if you make your *living* teaching full time!

Now you don't want to get paranoid about your manners and attitude in class, just thoughtful.

That's actually part of the martial arts:
AWARENESS.

Andy

CLUB FEE INCREASE FOR EXTRA SESSIONS

Basic club fee will stay \$60 monthly for one style. In the Chen and Bagua sessions we've maxed out the space. We now have a waiting list for these classes. The one option is to divide the class time in 2 and have two separate classes, each an hour long. Since the two hours are crucial to training and gaining depth in our practice I choose to keep them 2 hrs.

I can't offer a deal on the second or third class any longer. Starting March extra sessions fee will increase \$5.00 so if you're paying \$70 monthly it'll be \$75 and \$80 will be \$85. Still a deal. If this is a problem what about focusing on one art for the next year, then switching the following year?

WINTER INFORMATION

Open or closed? If for some reason we have snow or very bad weather . . .

You can call the dojo # 283-0055 and I should have a message as to cancellations. Or, you can check the web at www.wuji.com/info.htm or give me a call at 234-6604.

2nd, 4th, 5th FRIDAYS

Taiji Mike (Mike Hall) and Anne have opened the dojo for club members to practice. In particular it's so the push hands group can get together for more practice.

PARKING AT DOJO

During daytime classes please be sure to park across the street or around the corner. Two of our neighbors require easy access for customers, hence the limitation on parking in front of the dojo.

CLUB SHIRTS AVAILABLE

Blue & Maroon

T-shirts \$15

Sweat Shirts \$25

Taiji Man shirts soon available

DOJO CHANGES

Now that the club has stabilized there will be no separate beginners sessions. New members to the dojo will join the ongoing warm-up practice. This will permit a better workout during the first hour of class and keep our practice sessions well rounded.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

The minor changes are:
Monday Aikido 7-8, 8-9
Aiki Jo - 1st & 3rd Friday

WHAT TO EXPECT WINTER

Aikido group:

Kaeshi waza & Jo

Aiki Small Circle

Chen Taiji continuing group:

Chen 48 this winter

Chen sword next summer

Chen Pao Chui fall

Yang Taiji continuing group:

Tuishou & Da Lu winter

Yang Sword next summer

7&8 next fall

Bagua continuing group:

Xing I-Bagua this winter

Bagua Staff next summer

DOJO CLOSED

August closed

Due to workshops and retreats in the end of July-Sept there will be no official classes in August. However, I do plan on a two week intensive.

The first will be a week long of Roushou, beginning to advanced free hand practice drills.

The second week will be a Aiki jo and Bagua short staff intensive open to all, beginning-advanced.

These sessions will be at Discovery Park.

FEES & DUES: SUPPORTING THE DOJO

Some of the new members, and those who were part of the past Saturday classes, are having trouble understanding the flat monthly dues / members fees regardless of attendance.

In our culture we tend to see things as purchasable. Buy this, rent that, how can I get it cheapest, is there a deal? This attitude has filtered through all our interactions. Unfortunately, many schools are marketing the arts this way and the focus is no longer on the art, the philosophy and teachings but on selling lessons.

NURTURING AND SUPPORT

The idea of supporting or nurturing something is a look toward the future. It's a building process which is very different from a purchasing process. It's an investment in order to gain interest.

Xin Qi Shen is a dojo, not a school, not a series of classes, or merely an exercise club. A dojo is a particular place where the you have the opportunity, privilege, and fortune to study all aspects of an art. Physical, mental, philosophical, spiritual, martial. It's not a supermarket, but an institution. The fees you pay are not only to keep the instructors there but to keep the place open, to improve and expand the place. You don't pay for classes and lessons, you pay to make sure the place continues. This is very different from quarterly or drop-in classes. One important point to keep in mind is that the monthly fee enables classes to be kept at a reasonable size, maintaining depth of instruction instead of cycling through beginners and beginning classes just to make money.

Xin Qi Shen is a library of books and videos, a center for study, practice, research, and instruction of the internal arts. One of our strongest points is making it a center so members have access to grandteachers and highly skilled individuals. In just four months members have had the opportunity to study with Master Gao Fu, Master Yueng, Bob Iden and Gao Li Ting. In the next few months, in addition, we will have Dave Harris, Michael Gilman, Kim Ivy and John Camp. We're just starting.

Andy



Sanshou practice

FORM COMPLETIONS

Congratulations to all

Aiki Jo & Partner Jo

Mike Ullmann
Francine Seders

Yang Taiji Long Form

Bill Galloway
Mike Hall
Barry Latsky
David Chaus
Anne Walker
Jim Doulong
Belinda Frazier
Barbara Osinski
Ruth Pattison (instructor's level)
Russ Fish (instructor's level)

Chen Taiji Sword

Francine Seders
Derryl Willis
Tom Flener
Kim Ivy
Russ Fish

Bagua 8 Mother Forms

Joe O'Malley
Nora Lih
Brendan Mattson
David Miller
Rikki Scandora
David Wheeler
Joel Hartshorne (instructors level)
Chris Laliberte (instructors level)
Russ Fish (instructors level)

Wuji.com
8316 8th Ave NW
Seattle WA 98117

