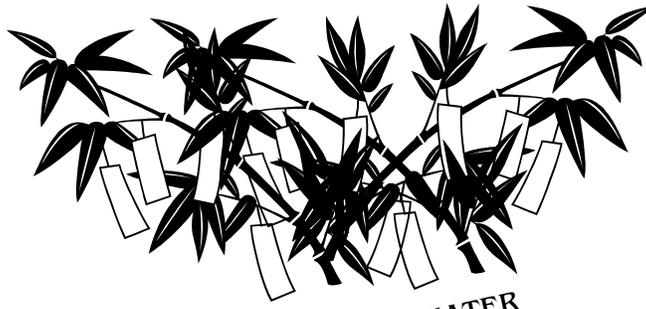


Xin Qi Shen Dojo



MIND LIKE WATER
 MIZU KORORO

It's the nature of a calm mind to reflect, observe, and learn. It's the upset mind that gets overwhelmed, panics, and jumps to assumptions. Just as a muscle gets stronger with exercise, the mind also becomes stronger with training. What we practice the most we will get stronger at. As we practice and reinforce calmness and relaxation we'll get stronger at maintaining it. If we don't practice it doesn't develop. The key word is practice. In a shallow pond, the wind ripples not only the surface but most of the water. If we practice, our pond digs deeper and deeper so the wind doesn't effect the depths. We have many sayings to this effect such as "An empty bucket makes the most noise." They why is it that we don't practice centering, calmness, and relaxation more? If we don't practice it doesn't develop.

Calm waters are like a mirror. They reflect objects clearly. They reflect things without judgments. They reflect things exactly as they are. They don't discriminate on what they reflect.



softness

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CONGRATULATIONS!

I've been teaching 'officially' since 1974. In this time the dojo has gone through a few name changes but all in all the dojo was 28 years old as of February. I feel very happy and lucky being able to do was I love and share what I love with like-minded individuals. Personally I don't like the word students, I prefer the word classmates, or companions in the arts. In this time many have come and gone. Some go and come, disappear and come back. It's said that if you study the arts for at least 3 years you're in it for life regardless of whether you are attending a formal class or not. It takes a minimum of 3 years to develop basics, and a lifetime to polish and perfect them. The strength and uniqueness of the club isn't merely me but the accumulative practice of all its members. I would like to take this moment to acknowledge current long time members and pillar helping keep the character of the dojo.

20 years +	15 years +	10 years +	7 years +	5 years +
Mike Ullmann Joel Hartshorne	Bruce Brown	Francine Seders	Rush Fish Sonia Cole Ruth Pattison	Anne Walker Jim Doulong Tom Flener Barbara Osinski David Miller Joe O'Malley

What is the advanced class???? Who is eligible? When will I qualify? What is worked on? What's different about it? Go away, it's a secret!

Not really. The advanced class isn't a class on forms or techniques like the standard classes. The emphasis of the advanced class is to push members out of their comfort and thinking range. To let our training show itself without the interference of our mind. The advanced class moves fast with no or minimum explanation or instructors. It's the 'shut up and do it' class. There is a mixture of Aikijitsu, Aikido, Taiji, Bagua, Xing-I, Yueng Quan and the kitchen sink, empty handed or weapon, all applications, training, and teaching techniques.

Attendance is by invitation. Members invited to join this session are required, at the least, to know partner work in one of the arts, but knowing partner work isn't enough. The most important element is being a good 'uke'. An *Uke* is the Aikido term for partner and means 'receiver'. A good *uke* is one who, as an attacker and partner, gives honest force so ones' partner can learn, understand, and polish the application being worked on. Being an uke is one of the most important techniques and levels of advancement in all the arts. Examples of a bad uke would be showing your partner all the other possible techniques associated from what should be practiced (also know as showing off). Talking instead of letting your partner practice. Resisting your partner's attempt at the technique instead of giving them 'honest' force. Countering or jamming a partner's movement.

Also along the line of being a bad uke is using too much force or strength on your partner and not being sensitive enough to your partners reactions. Or having variable speeds or levels to perform the movement depending upon who you work with. What is looked for in regular classes is how well members listen to and following instructions when doing partner work.

In addition to the partner work requirements body language and integration of basic internal principles are also important. Do the majority of a member's action originate in the feet or do they use local strength or force in movements. Do they over-reach or stay within their workbench most of the time. Do they move safely for themselves and others (knee and body alignment). Do they double weight often or are fluid on their feet and in control of movements and balance.

One of the characteristics of the advanced session is NOW, quick, don't think. Members are expected to move, move, move and the six harmonies are expected to be constant for most of the time. If a student doesn't

have strong basics then being pushed fast and hard will only strengthen bad habits instead of alertness and developing skill. Part of this session is 'Randori'. Randori isn't freestyle but multi-partner attacks within the given exercise or attack. This forces the student to expand their alertness in many directions and stay mentally and physically fluid. So instead of one person punching you in the face there may be 2 or 4 coming from different directions and though the practice may be semi-slow there is no, "wait I'm not ready." The Randori is also done with clubs, sticks, or knives which increase the intensity of the practice and alertness. Randori requires that the members be over their feet with correct alignment to avoid self-injury and also a measure of control as to not overreact to the partner's attacks.



You don't qualify for this class, you grow into it. During the clubs various classes it's your actions and behavior that shows where you are.

Some may talk about understanding flowing with a partner's attack or yielding to it but don't demonstrate the 'understanding' in their actions. Knowing doesn't translate into doing. In the martial arts alertness is one of the most important requirements. This shows itself clearly in class all the time. How often have you turned around to find the class already onto a certain exercise? How often have you been engaged in a conversation with someone and missed the lecture and instruction going on? Do you use time for workout or visiting? Do you chat as much as you practice? Do you put energy into excuses why you can't instead of just getting down to practice and study? Are you gentle in your partner work and applications? Are you respectful to your partners?

Actions speak louder than words. And . . . Actions under stress show what's actually been studied and integrated instead of what we think we know. Don't show your skill, your skill will show as you move.

It's the teacher's responsibility to keep the class and students safe and to learn correctly. In a group situation, when doing partner work, the class is restricted by the level of safeness of the members. In other words the group won't work on a potential dangerous or lethal technique if a member isn't responsible or in control enough to handle the particular technique. This is the reason for the advanced class.

In addition to the teachings of the advanced class, it's an opportunity for me to work solely with members who have an educated body wisdom. There is no need to talk about basic postures, alignment etc. Just do it!

ADVANCED CLASS

Skill. Are You Seeking It?

Is your teacher any good? Does your teacher have the skill of an internal artists or just a teacher? Can your teacher guide you to skill? As I look at my teachers and as I started these arts I had one idea, "That's what I want to be like when I grow up."

If you are seeking skill in the internal arts, as an internal martial artist, these are important questions. First of all remember your teacher can not give you skill, that's up to you, your training and dedication. Is your teacher skillful? Are they teaching sincerely? Are they giving you the tools to develop skills?

If your teacher is skillful how did he/she get that skill? Are they teaching as they were taught? Are they teaching just forms or teaching training methods?

If you are seeking skill in the internal arts it's important that you train the entire art not merely go through the forms or follow your teacher. You train to become your best. You should not merely be following forms or mimicking your teacher or the forms. Use your brain, learn and gain insight. Practice sincerely, diligently, mindfully, daily.

If your teacher is skillful how did they get that way? "Well, when I was first studying we did 1,000 repetitions of each exercise each day." Is that true? If it is, and your teacher has great skill I guess that's the formula for success. Does your teacher conduct training and classes the way they were taught and trained? Do they merely talk or do, to they teach or train? Do they talk about what they could do or can they do those things? At age 65 Master Tchoung put me to shame during training. I was around 17 and this old guy made me look feeble.

Many times teachers teach lighter and easier than they were trained in order to keep enrollment up. The majority of those studying the internal arts are there for health and exercise reasons so the teaching method and approach is easier and gentler than many have trained in. That's why it's important to know how they actually trained and practiced in addition to knowing their history and just what they've gone through in order to gain the skill they have.

Keep in mind that part of their skill may be due to personality and natural aptitude but that isn't as important as perseverance and dedicated training. What did they practice? How hard did they practice and train? How often? This is the formula to attain the skill they had. What they are teaching or how they are teaching may not be the complete story or formula to success. Also you have to be your own teacher. Early on I had one Aikido teacher of high skill but he didn't really train us hard. After a bit of frustration as few of us decided to train as *we* thought we should be trained. That was what made the difference. Then our teacher began to push us harder. My realization since was that be really have to become our own master and responsible for our own advancement but with the guidance of a teacher.

Many of the great masters, as they got older, modified they're training and teaching habits. Part of this was due to insight on their behalf and economy and age. Their art and movements became more refined, circles smaller and more efficient. However, all this is based upon years of their basic training. They have attained skill and after that refinement don't need the hard training anymore to keep their skill level up. As they teach the students learning during this time don't have the training and tools necessary to attain a level of high skill.

It's up to you! It's up to us.

The Tuning Fork

We come to classes to practice and study but why? Self-defense? Fighting? Healing? Immortality?

I think the bottom line for attending classes over a period of time is: We feel better. *If it's not fun it's best left undone.* Even if your practice is toward self-defense, most people wouldn't continue if the sessions weren't enjoyable and give us a feeling of well being.

I think the real core of practicing the internal arts is the 'tuning fork' aspect. Instead of really learning new stuff and more things to do, the arts teach letting go of the unnatural. Letting go of the excess use of strength and force, the excess thinking, the accumulation of more. The arts bring us back into ourselves, our own thoughts, feelings, physical balance and our sense of center (security).

Each class, each practice is actually experiencing a tuning fork helping everything get back in tune. Regardless of the promises that may be listed in writing and articles of the benefits of these arts or the goals. If practice doesn't make us feel better then find another activity that does.

Practice helps calm the waters of our mind so we can see, feel, and think more clearly. This feels good. Physically our muscles, ligaments, and all internal systems get a physical tune up with each practice. Moving our body easily without pain or stiffness is a great joy.



**XIN QI SHEN DOJO
STUDENT DESCRIPTIONS**

BEGINNER - new member

STUDENT - members 6 months or more. Working on basic forms and movements.

INTERMEDIATE - students, over one year, working on forms, partner work and weaponry. Intermediate students demonstrate working on the principles of the art, not merely the movements and forms

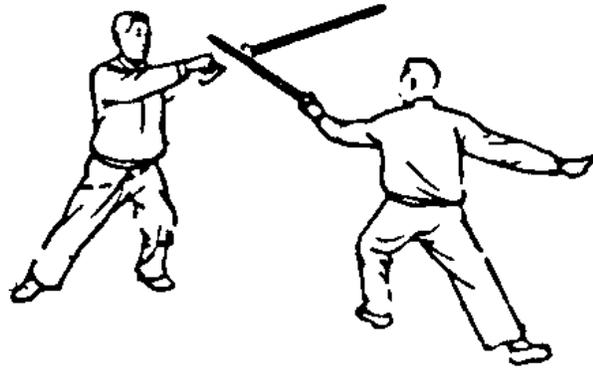
ADVANCED - students whose body language demonstrate consistency in basics body alignment and principles of the art, smoothness in movements, and gentleness in partner work.

INSTRUCTOR - students completing the entire system including: qi gong, solo forms, partner work, weaponry, and fast forms. Usually 5 years or more.

CONGRATULATIONS

Master Gao Fu finally has received her Green Card!
HEN HAO!

Also to Tom Flener for being the 12 person achieving a teaching certificate from the club since its beginning in 1974.



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