

# Xin Qi Shen Dojo

WUJI.COM  
8316 8th Ave NW  
Seattle, WA 98117

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## 30 Years February

*Time sure goes fast!*

February will mark the 30th year after forming my dojo and taking out the business license (my 36th year in the arts). Though I'd been teaching a couple of years before, this was the actual step in setting up my own place. Though it seems like yesterday, there have been many changes in the arts and myself over these years.

At the time of establishing the club I was studying intensely with Internal Arts master Tchoung Ta Tchen, Aikido Shihan Yoshihiko Hirata, Bagua master Pang Tse Yao, Aikijitsu Master Sid Woodcock, Yueng Quan specialist Dave Harris, and a few others. (*I was young and didn't have a life!*) My goal



was to form a club that would include all the various arts I was learning and possibly blurring the lines between them. My goal was to establish an 'Internal Martial Arts School'. At this time Harrison had already named his school the NW School of Internal Arts so that was taken. Internal Arts Dojo was one idea but I didn't think most people would understand what the club was about. Internal Kung Fu Arts was another, but the term 'Kung Fu' was the Americanized term for Chinese Martial Arts. (Keep in mind this is way before the current Wushu popularity or even the existence of the sport of Wushu.) I focused on the term 'martial arts' which in Japanese is Bu-jitsu and Chinese is Wushu. I decided since most of the arts were Chinese to call the new club the "Internal Wushu Arts". Though this worked, for many years after I received ads and flyers for medical equipment.

As the sport of Chinese Wushu became popular I was getting quite a lot of calls from people wanting to learn the acrobatic martial art. As time went on and the Internet got up and going I was lucky to grab the web name wuji.com and change the business to that. However this still didn't let people know what was taught or the emphasis of the club. As with many martial art traditions I decided to name the dojo by the goal of its purpose: Xin Qi Shen. Body / Energy / Spirit. It almost became Body-Mind-Energy-



Spirit but that was too long and didn't fit the symbolism of the triangle-circle-square.

There are many variation of this symbolism but the one I choose was from a lecture by the Founder of Aikido.

- Triangle: stable base and strong stance & structure
- Circle: the flow of energy and movement
- Square: all sides are equal and balanced. Spiritual Harmony.

I'd like to thank all my teachers for making this dream possible, and all the thousands of students venturing into the club for making it a success

*Here's to  
another  
30 years.*



### INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION

Congratulations go to the following for training hard and diligently in the arts.

Eva Luna  
David Wheeler  
Tom Flener  
*details page 4*

### JANUARY

New Classes will be starting this January

The next beginning sessions will be in May

### CLUB CDS

\$25.00

Window's Media Format

CCD #1 - Chen Taiji 96 Form  
CCD #2 - Chen Taiji Weapons  
BGCD #1 - Bagua 8 Changes  
BGCD #2 - Bagua Weapons  
YCD #1 - Yang Long Form  
YCD #2 - Partner Taiji Form  
TCD - Master Tchoung Ta Tchen

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# CERTIFICATIONS, CONTRACTS, AND PAPER

After you've read the following remember:

## Skill doesn't just happen



Regardless of field, art, sport, or occupation we all encounter individuals with certifications, awards, ranks, and years that just don't seem to show in their behavior, actions, or any apparent skill. What's up? Are certifications worth the paper they're written on? What value are they really?

In addition to that, I've met many making claims something like the following:

"I've learned to circulate my qi through the small orbit," or "I can see energy" or "I've been practicing for 10 years," or "I've studied with many masters," or "I'm a formal disciple of . . ." or "I'm certified by . . ."

Why doesn't it show?  
Why isn't there any skill?  
Why aren't you healthier?

If your father was a good dentist does that make you one too?

Talk is cheap! Self-flattering or lack of self-awareness is common in all fields. 'Buyer beware' is becoming even more important.

What really matters? What I look for is: Sincerity, effort, and perseverance.

Aside from the annoying person who has natural talent, there are many simple practitioners who have more skill after a few short years when compared to some with 20+ years. My personal belief is that the 20+ person goes through the movements but don't practice or study mindfully or sincerely.

Some believe that if they take lessons from a lineage holder or a famous or skilled teacher it will result in them being skillful.

All that said, the purpose of this is to shed light on certifications. Now, similar to martial arts ranking, certifications are basically restricted to the particular club, instructor, or group. I'm not talking about 'business arts', i.e. groups that charge and make money by certifying and promoting students through ranks. Buyer beware again.



## Skill speaks for itself

One function of certification is to give members a sense of accomplishment. It's a statement by their instructor that they've achieved a certain level or have absorbed certain skills within the art and club.

The other function can also to be make the student work harder, to polish what they've learned. A sincere student usually doesn't feel they are good enough for the rank so they end up practicing harder to be worth it.

In our club, for instance, when you've completed a form or series and show you can do it, you get a certificate of accomplishment with four possible levels.

Ours isn't a blank certification, it's really a contract. The last paragraph says: "By accepting this certificate the above promises to refine and polish the above forms."



XIN QI SHEN DOJO LEVELS

- STUDENT
- INTERMEDIATE
- ADVANCED
- TEACHER

The first time through you'll get student level. This means you've completed the movements and have a clue about the form. You have a framework to practice from. It means you have a starting point.

### INTERMEDIATE

This is the next level. You have a good grasp of the movements and understand the physical form. Execution of the movements are clear and very correct.

### ADVANCED

The advanced levels means that your practice demonstrates you're working on the internal principles of the art. You are using the form as a study project and improving with your practice.

### TEACHER

This is issued for certified instructors that have been through the form many times and indicate a strong understanding of the internal and external and are able to help others correct their forms.

The paper is a way for your teacher to say, "You're on the right track"; it doesn't mean you're there.

As far as those who have to shout that they know something, remember the saying about empty buckets.

## Going Deeper

We've been at our present location for 3 years. Last August I signed a lease for another 3 years. Though our space is small, the plus side of this is that it will limit the club size, affording more individual attention from myself and the other assistant instructors. Future beginning classes will be limited and I may need to return to having a waiting list as I did the first two years.

2004 will mark an emphasis for me to work with intermediate and advanced club members to develop more depth in their practice. We will also be focusing more on partner work and applications. Next spring, once we move outside, the intermediate and advanced members will be working on the broadsword.

Starting in January there will be a series of 5 monthly (Jan-May) workshops on Qi Gong. You must be familiar with one, preferably two, of the dojo's qi gong systems. These sessions will blend practice in addition to studying the differences and specialties of the various qi gong systems. Permission is required to attend.

Wednesday nights 6:30-7:30 will be a session on the Liang Yi Quan, a blend of Taiji and Bagua. This is an advanced form from the Fu Family system. Class will be fast-paced and quite a workout.

Also on Wednesdays: 7:30-9:00 will be an intermediate push hands and sanshou session. Participants must know the first 8 joint hand drills. There will also be instruction on the partner Taiji form.

January 24th there will be a 4-hour workshop covering as many of the roushou application drills as we can fit in. This is open to all and a dojo discount applies.

June will be the next Internal Arts festival, stay tuned.

Is it Bandon yet? This year at Bandon I will be focusing all my sessions on the Taiji partner set and applications.

## MANNERS AND ETIQUETTE

Whatever happened to 'excuse me' and 'thank you'? As we become more self-absorbed, little by little there is less room for others. It's all about US.

With the lack of manners and etiquette, misunderstandings increase greatly. One of the functions of the martial arts is to be aware. To be aware of what's going on, the cause and effect of our actions, and learning efficient use of our movements, time, and actions.

First impressions many times are lasting. Our actions, especially our repeated actions, tell others who we are and about our basic character, right? Well, if we're self-absorbed it can also lead others to think we're rude or stuck up even if we're not. We either just don't know or are distracted from what's going on.

Here is the yearly dojo etiquette list:

- Entering or leaving the dojo: BOW or Nod. This is a reminder to yourself that this is a place where you are to refine your skill and train.
- Bow or nod to your partners when you do partner work. This is to say "thanks" and to remind you that they are doing you a favor, as you are them.
- If you aren't on time for class enter quietly and slip in. Traditionally you weren't permitted to practice.
- Pay attention! Class time is valuable. Chatting during class not only wastes your time but also that of your partner. Why should the instructor explain the movement again if you weren't paying attention?
- When in a group situation, follow the leader. As a form is led stay with the instructor as respect to them and those around you.
- Never touch another's weapon without permission. Grabbing someone's sword is like using their toothbrush. Ask permission first.
- What's next? If you can't trust

the teacher to know what they are doing, or that they have a curriculum, find another teacher. Asking for more is very arrogant.

- If you don't put effort into learning and practicing why should the teacher spend time with you?
- When helping each other, help. Show what needs to be shown, don't give a performance or a long discussion about theory unless you're teaching the class. Time is limited.
- If you miss a class ask a classmate, not the teacher. This will give the classmate a chance for remembering and the instructor can focus on the current lesson.
- Jewelry off during applications. Rings hurt, scratch, and get hooked on clothing.
- Clean! No one likes working out with you if you reek.

### TIME IS LIMITED

Though you may have lots of time to practice and study, many come to class as their limited time to practice. Respect this.

Lessons aren't bought, they're given. Traditionally students fell into these groups:

1. VISITORS: someone coming to class.
2. STUDENTS: More than just following, one who is studying what is taught.
3. FORMAL STUDENT: A student's actions show he's serious about learning the art.
4. DISCIPLE: One being trained in the lineage of the art.
5. ASSISTANT: Being trained as a teacher of the art.

Each level requires a deeper commitment on both parts, the student's and instructor's. Though many practitioners many say, "I'm a student of so & so," the instructor may just consider them someone attending the club.

## DOJO TEACHING CERTIFICATIONS

I am proud to announce that four more teaching certifications have been issued. These are teaching certificates numbers 17, 18, 19, 20 issued since the beginning of the club in 1974.

What does it take? To start with years of mindful practice, more years of polishing, and an attitude of not being satisfied with mediocrity.

Eva Luna - Chen Taiji Quan: Chan Si Gong, Chen long form, Pao Chui, Sword, Saber, Partner Saber, Push Hands. Eva is one of the few members who is able to do the Saber equally well left-handed.

David Wheeler - Bagua Zhang: Bagua Qi Gong, Zhan Zhuang, Inner Palms, 8 Changes (2 styles), Cane, Staff, Crescent Knives, Striking Forms, Roushou Drills.

Bruce Brown & Tom Flener - Nei Gong Bang. Normally classified under the Chen Taiji System, Bruce and Tom have gone beyond the mere movements and focused on the inner energies of its practice. Treating it as a separate art and focusing on polishing and going beyond the exercises.

Congratulations to all.

Xin Qi Shen Dojo  
8316 8th Ave NW  
Seattle WA 98117

## Thank you Joel!

Sir Joel of Ballard has given the dojo a TV with VCR player so we can use some of the video tapes to help with lessons. A very kind and thoughtful gift.

Thanks Joel

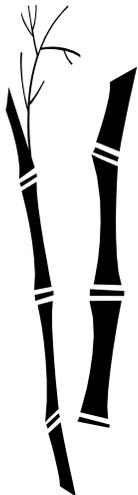


## CLUB NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

All the newsletters from 1998 to December 2003 are now online in pdf format and also available on Cd for \$10.00

Those not familiar with .pdf files it permits a publication to be saved and printed as the original. You can't view them online but you can click on the link and it will download through Adobe Acrobat (a free program) for your viewing or printing.

The Adobe program is saving me much time since I don't have to format a web version as well as a printed version. I'm in the process of converting all the 1990 newsletters as well.



### ***Song of the Thirteen Postures***

*The thirteen postures should not be done carelessly;*

*the source of the postures lies in the waist.*

*Be mindful of the insubstantial and substantial changes;*

*the chi spreads throughout without hindrance.*

*Be still, when attacked by the opponents.*

*Be tranquil and move in stillness;*

*your changes will fill the opponent with wonder.*

*Study the function of each posture carefully and with deliberation;*

*To achieve great skill and health is very easy.*

*When the base of the spine is straight,*

*the spirit (shen) goes to the headtop.*

*To make the entire body light and agile suspend the headtop.*

*Study carefully, extension and contraction,*

*opening and closing should be natural.*

*To enter the door and be shown the way,*

*you must be orally taught.*

*Practice uninterrupted,*

*and the technique is achieved by self study.*

*Speaking of the body and its function,*

*what is the standard?*

*The mind (i) and breath (chi) are king,*

*and the bones and muscles are the court.*

*Think carefully what the final purpose is:*

*to lengthen life and maintain health.*

*The song consists of 140 characters*

*each is true and the meaning is complete.*

*If you do not study in this manner,*

*then you'll be wasting your time.*

Though this is the 'Song of the Taiji 13 Postures' the teachings are universal to all internal martial arts. In the 1800's many of the Taiji, Bagua, and Xing Yi practitioners shared their arts, teaching, and underlying principles. The result was to turn out great martial artists and, according to history, very noble individuals. Sun Lu Tang, Gao Yi Shen, Fu Cheng Sung, and Sun Xi Kun were just a few of these individuals known as highly skilled in all the internal martial arts.

### **THE SONG OF THE THIRTEEN POSTURES**

This classic is pretty much face value, with little symbolism. The thirteen posters refer to the primary 8 Taiji postures and the 5 movement patterns. One theory is that Taiji originally was just a series of exercises (movements) drilled over and over again. As years continued, these movements were linked together and expanded into what we know now as Taiji forms.

The Source lies in the waist.  
The waist and tantien are the hub of our wheel.

Part of our practice is in differentiating Yin and Yang, substantial and insubstantial. Our practice of these forms is to move from one to another without friction or slack. This permits energy to move freely and fluidly.

Be still when attacked should be, "don't jump to conclusions, surf the attack", Move efficiently and with stealth so the opponent doesn't have a clue what you're up to.

If you practice mindfully you'll be successful in attaining skill and staying healthy.

Keeping your posture natural and balanced; movement is easy and quick.

Study the two powers open and closing, two of the methods we use to generate power until they are second nature.

Orally taught, to me, means being instructed and having contact with someone who is able to demonstrate the skills. Only this way can you understand and begin to develop the art. What we really learn is by exposure to this high level of skill.

Practice diligently and mindfully!

Let the mind/intent and breath guide physical strength and structure, don't emphasize brute strength.

If you don't practice correctly and mindfully you won't develop any skills.

In Chinese martial arts there were 'songs', actually poems recited to remember the movements or words that contained the inner teachings of the form. In Japanese martial arts these were referred to as Kuden, secret oral transmissions. Some were very obscure so that uneducated or non-members wouldn't know what the secrets were.