



Xin Qi Shen Dojo

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

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Moving Beyond Form

Xin Qi Shen - Body Energy Spirit

Qi Xin Shen - Energy Body Spirit

Shen Qi Xin - Spirit Energy Body

The wonders of the internal arts, for the dedicated practitioner, move far beyond the mere exercise of the movements and attending classes one or more times a week.

These arts are the physical manifestation of the Taoist philosophy. They are a series of hand-on exercises we can practice to understand the Tao. How to practice non-action, harmonizing with nature, understanding our own nature, nurturing a non-fighting mind, merging with the flow of the universe.

"To flow with the universe is to find peace and contentment, to resist the flow is to fight and find difficulty."

This all takes study, practice, and work to arrive at understanding, knowledge, and non-action. In all fields of art or skill there are the basics to master.

Just as pianists must practice their scales in order to develop physical coordination, flow, and an understanding of the piano, our solo forms do exactly the same. Looking at an accomplished piano player as well as a Taiji practitioner it all looks so easy. This easy, or non-action/non-effort they exhibit all comes from years of disciplined and mindful practice. You just don't sit down at the piano as a beginner and play Jazz.

Xin is the first level of our practice. This is not only learning the physical movements but studying the body mechanics and structure they require and teach. Once the basics are somewhat understood we need to move past the technical to the flow, to the energy, to the coordination of the physical elements.

Qi is energy. This can also mean flow. In our forms this also translates as studying the transitions of the movements since the art is more than the postures. Everything becomes a transition. In our forms this could be the continuous flow of the ripple of power moving up from our legs to be expressed by our hands. This is internal arts practice and study. Move past the forms and postures to study the inner connections, and flow of power. The differentiation of yin and yang, the relaxation and firmness of each movement. The energy forms the postures, actually creating the forms of our practice. Just like the air inside a balloon expands the balloon to its determined shape so does our energy shape our physical postures.

After years of practice and study there isn't any movement that isn't an expression of our inner energy or our spirit. This is our life. As we practice we are actually cultivating our own spirit, our own uniqueness. This is reflected in how we live our lives, how we handle ourselves, how we react or flow with life's situations.

Why wait? Though you may only practice your forms in class or during your special practice periods, expand your practice to daily life. Stand centered and comfortable, relax and practice dealing with situations with calmness and clarity. Do you fight situations or try to maintain your center finding the path of smoothness?

Corrections / Catch-Up Sessions

Starting in May, the fourth Sunday of each month, 10am - noon will be an open session to club members needing to catch up or need corrections on forms we're working on in class.

It's not limited to just one form or art.

You must sign up for this session at least a week prior. Email me. Three or more are required for this session.

The sign up sheet is on the club bulletin board.

The session in fee is \$10.

What's Up:

- Moving outside in May
- Beginners welcome to join first week of the month.
- New club DVDs.
- Sunday morning correction session. See bottom of this page.
- Bandon retreat August 5,6,7th. Be there!



Workshops:

- Teaching Sessions 1st Sunday every month. 10-Noon.
- Next Xing Yi sessions May 21st. There is a partner form review May 15th, 10am (\$20)
- Bagua Intensive June 19th.
- Check insert or wuji.com workshop page for details.

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Bagua Classics

Bagua Practicing Guidelines

THE NINE ESSENTIALS

1. *Empty/Collapse* - the waist empties downward. Don't push your belly out or pull your stomach in. Tuck your pelvis.
2. *Hollow* - the chest should feel hollow and empty, like an empty barrel. Don't push your chest out.
3. *Lifting* - the tongue lifts to the rook of your mouth, your spinal column lifts upward, the perineum lifts.
4. *Wrapping* - the elbows wrap inward like holding a tray overhead.
5. *Relax* - the shoulders, the mind, the chest, and your breathing should be relaxed.
6. *Hanging* - the elbows look as if they hang like wind chimes.
7. *Contract In* - the shoulders are rounded but not hunched.
8. *Rise, Drill, Fall, Overturn* - all must clearly be distinguished in all movements.
9. *Never Disregard The Above* - without correct practice you will be wasting your time.

THE FOUR VIRTUES

1. *Natural & Relaxed* - the hand and feet should extend naturally and flow smoothly.
2. *Reversal* - the chi and mind are withdrawn internally. The outside reflects the inside movements.
3. *Harmony* - the chi flows smoothly and evenly with the movements.
4. *Blending* - the chi, mind, spirit, and body are all united at the dantian.

THE THREE FAULTS

1. *FORCING THE BREATH*
2. *USING STRENGTH*
3. *ARCHING THE CHEST*

This is labeled a 'Bagua Classic' since it stems from the Bagua tradition. However, just like the Taiji Classics all the internal arts share these core principles. What pertains to Bagua also pertains to Taiji.

There has been interest in a session on the practical application of the writing in the Tao Te Qing, Zhuang Tzu, and other internal classical writings. If you're interested add your name to the list on the bulletin board.

Your movements form and change like snowflakes that come drifting down from the sky.

Your energy rolls and moves like the current of a deep river.

Your steps are like treading in mud.

Your forms proceed like a current of air, whirling, twisting, coiling without cease. Soft but powerful.

Hands and arms form crescent moons.

In the beginning seek the posture of emptiness, wuji, the mind is empty and tranquil. This only comes from standing and walking the circle, not from the changes.

Make a big circle at first, with small accurate and controlled steps. After years the dantian will gather qi and you will naturally circle faster and smaller.

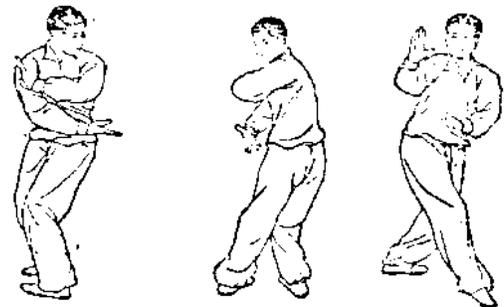
Keep the tiger's mouth open in the palms with the eyes looking over the fingers. Palms, chest, and hips feel empty.

Distinguish clearly Yin/Yang. One foot is always empty.

The energy, intent, and method must all be perfected as you practice, practice, and practice.

When you are very busy just walk the circle - empty your mind and gather at the dantian as you walk.

Emptiness encompasses everything. It is timeless as well as complete. Seek wuji.



Advice and suggestions:

Less is more

If you feel overextended or there's too much to practice, return to basics. Stand and simply walk.

Accuracy is important but relaxation comes first. We slowly work towards accuracy and perfection as we continue to practice over the years.

Andy

Madame Gao Fu

She raised the standard.



If you visit the web page memorial for this great lady, one thing is consistent with everyone's tribute: What a great person and great spirit she was.

Though a master of Taiji Quan, I and

many others prefer to call her Madame Gao Fu. More than a 'master,' she had a quality and grace that went beyond her skill as a martial artist and teacher. She had a classiness and humanity was ever present.

As a martial artist she sought perfection. She worked her forms and movements beyond what most of us would have patience to do. Her second Chen Taiji teacher Tian Xiaochen's forms, according to his classmates, were considered to be exactly like Chen Fake's. He was responsible for Madame Gao's form work whereas Master Feng guided her to internal energy, applications, and weaponry. As anyone who took private lessons from her knew, she expected and coached toward perfection.

As a teacher her patience was immense. She wasn't in it for the money, she wanted everyone to understand the depth and joy of the art. She wasn't interested in teaching people how to do the form, she wanted everyone to understand that the form was an expression of the dantian and the movement of internal energy.

Apart from all that: What A Lady! Where to begin? Her sense of adventure lead her to several different countries. On her first visit to Seattle she told me she'd like to visit many countries. Would I like to be her translator when she visited Norway? She wanted to see how people practice Taiji around the world and how interested they were. She mentioned at one point that those outside of China seemed more passionate about the art. Her open mindedness lead her to Neighbors, a Seattle Discothèque,

which she enjoyed and kept trying to introduce visiting guests to. I remember after a discussion her comment on her adventurousness was, "I may be old but I don't have an old mind."

One of the consistent features of great masters and people of the past is their interest in learning and expanding their understanding. Gao Fu was no exception. From early on, knowing I was a student of Master Tchoung Ta Tchen, she expressed interest in meeting and visiting with him. The same thing happened when she heard of Gi Gong Master Yueng. After meeting Master Yueng, the two of them were like brother and sister.

More to the point, she had style and class that comes from inner centering and strength. A humbleness that wasn't pretense but from the heart. With all her skill, knowledge and background, she still sat back and was modest in all occasions. I've been present on occasions where lesser skilled 'masters' would ramble on about their understandings and teachings and she would just smile.

Though we've lost a great teacher, I believe we'll miss her mostly for her spirit and personality. The likes of which I don't know if I'll encounter again.



The April issue of T'ai Chi Magazine has several articles in memory of Madame Gao Fu. In addition there are some great pictures of her.

**Summer is time to practice outside
and more often.
Come to the park!**

Stuck In The Past

With Madam Gao's passing it's been a time to remember and reflect. As I've been going through some old files I've found notes from classes and workshops I took while studying with various instructors.

There was one central teaching that kept popping up.

Madame Gao: "If the forms reflect the inner energy it's Taiji regardless of style or what is practiced. If the movements lack internal energy, regardless of how perfect the form looks it's not Taiji."

Master Tchoung: "The forms may change but the principles we study and practice are all the same."

Master Yueng: "All Same!"

Ikeda Sensei: "A strong technique doesn't matter, study the principle and idea behind the technique."

Saotome Sensei: "Move yourself, not your partner."

As we get into the history or 'style' of the art it's easier to get further away from the basic teachings and concept of the art and into the stylization of it. "This is old style. This is the new improved version. This is the original. This is the one the original was based on." Etc.

Watching the videos of the founder of Aikido reminds me more and more of the current Taiji or Bagua world. There is an idea that there is no way to improvement upon the old form or the way it was taught.

Having video of the Aikido founder from 1935 to 1968, he and the art he created evolved from very strict postural forms to a smooth, free flowing movement. However, those who studied with him in the early days claim they learned the true and original Aikido. Looking at their art, it's frozen in the time that instructor studied with the founder.

The same is true of the internal arts. Followers are getting stuck on the era of the forms they are learning instead of the core principles those forms teach, and the purpose of the art.

Blurring the lines

In the time of Bagua master Cheng Ting Hua there was an enlightenment that one art didn't have it all! Cheng Ting Hua was open to, and friendly with, masters of various martial arts. He attracted students of Shui Chiao (wrestling), Taiji Quan, Xing Yi Quan, and others. In his exchange of information he was perhaps the first to suggest cross training and sharing students with other masters. This is where the title of 'internal arts' came from. Some say the name came because it was a brotherhood that shared students in the 'inner group'. Other say the name arose since the principles of the various arts (Taiji, Bagua, Xing Yi) all focus on the internal training and energy aspects of the arts instead of brute force and directly engaging an attack.

The directness of Xing Yi, the evasion of Bagua, the softness of Taiji, each improved the other arts. As I practice and teach the various arts it becomes clearer to me how they compliment each other as martial arts. Also, since I've trained in several, it's becoming harder to keep them separate in applications and training. The Roushou class is a good example of this.

Now this isn't to diminish the brilliance of each art since we can just study one and still gain great skill, health, and

centering. Also, just dabbling in each art doesn't develop skill or mastery. Like many modern martial arts that claim they take the best of the traditional martial arts, what happens in my opinion is that the arts they borrow from end up just lightly represented and understood. This is fine for those who just want to beat someone up. However, to go deep into the mind-body-energy-spirit training of the arts requires a deep and consistent study of one complete art. Then venturing to another art there is a basic understanding, a deep understanding of the similarities instead of the differences.

As I look at the arts it occurs to me that the *differences* in the arts I'm familiar with is the garbage, and the similarities between them are the real art. All the good stuff is the same regardless of art. As I mentioned in a previous article, Karate and Budo Master Teru Hayashi moved with the smoothness, looseness, force, and grace of a Taiji, Bagua, Xing Yi, or Aikido master.

Each has its strong points. Bagua and Aikido are excellent in teaching footwork, palm applications, and a moving center. Recently during the instructor's class we've been working on Aiki Taiso (Aiki exercises) and since I haven't been formally teaching Aikido in years I was able to see how valuable the exercises have are making people move and stay centered on their feet.

The mental training of changing directions and keeping a clear mind also came to light. Xing Yi really emphasizes long energy and accelerated coordination. Xing Yi and Wing Chun excel on forward extension and centerline focus as does Aikido weaponry. Taiji's strong point is in refining one's total body coordination, rooting, and studying listening skills. Qi gong methods bring the mind's attention to internal friction and blockages that hinder any martial application.

Simplistically, in Taiji you stand and yield, Wing Chun you stand and pressure forward, Xing Yi you blast through, Bagua you slip by, Aikido you steal their center and blend. Each is excellent, but as a martial art each is a different tool in your tool box. A hammer doesn't make a good substitute for a screw driver and vice versa. Xing Yi or Wing Chun you blast the attacker, there's no thought about stealing balance and just neutralizing the attack or controlling the attacker, just blast them. The idea of volume control isn't there. If your father-in-law gets drunk and becomes unruly, blasting him doesn't make for a good future relationship.

As we're working the applications in the various classes we'll be blurring the lines for a greater mixture of movement training patterns to improve your abilities and range.

What's Important?

To become a copy of your teacher or a perfect stylized representation of the art your studying? Or understanding, expressing, and researching the principles they are supposed to teach?

As I look around the club at students attending workshops, the one observation I note is muscling applications, not using technique. This really reflects on poor footwork and relying on stances instead of moving from your center.

When a person uses their physical strength they have to take a stance to work their physical strength from. This is different

from having the power ripple up from the ground, through their legs, directed by their waist, and expressed by their hands. If you have a moving center you don't need a big stance to focus power and natural strength.

Watching videos of several Aikido masters also showed the same thing. Those of high skill had their feet under them, no wider than shoulder width while the others posed in stances as they threw their attackers.

Lack of technique reflects itself in muscling the applications. Lack of center reflects in wide stances. In solo forms wide stances serve as a good exercise and stretch, but are not efficient in applications. Especially when dealing with more than one attacker.

Bagua is the art that is based on footwork and movement. Aikido also has this emphasis. Studying the Aikido tapes I'd forgotten how many good footwork patterns are in the Aiki Taiso (blending exercises). Aiki footwork is to develop a moving center and a clear centered mind. Switching direction and body position, focusing on a new directions without hanging on to the last view is very important as martial art training.

I will be adding many of the Aiki Taiso footwork patterns into the Roushou and Bagua application training sessions so we can benefit from a greater range in maneuverability.

Movement of Aiki this July

Monday 6-7:00 pm

Wednesday 7:15-8:45 pm

I will be expanding the club's curriculum by adding Aiki: do/jitsu to the session. This class will replace the current Tuishou and Sanshou sessions on Wednesday nights. This session will eventually be an Aiki Riai session mixing partner work with the short staff and sword to work on the principles of Aiki. Burk's tumbling session will be highly helpful.

If you're interested email me and let me know.

If successful we just may need to get more mats, however I do intend for this class to be adult friendly so there will be other options out of techniques aside from forward tumbling.

DOJO STUFF

DVDs available:

- Aiki Leading Workshop
- Chen Taiji Quan
- Bagua Palm Changes
- Bagua Weapons
- Bagua 64 Palms 2 disks
- Yang Taiji Quan
- Bagua Wu Xing
- Qi Gong Systems 2 disks
- Master Tchoung
- Master Gao Fu
- 1994 Club Demo

Look for:

- Mr. Yueng dvd
- Bagua basics dvd
- Yang Weapons dvd
- Roushou dvd
- Tuishou dvd

The Usual:

CLUB INFORMATION: do I have your current email, phone, and address?

PLEASE pay on time! I'm still trying to catch up on dojo expansion and construction.

WORKSHOPS! Be sure to pre-register to ensure the workshop will happen. A deposit of 1/4 should accompany your signup.

What you should know:

Two Powers
Three Bows
Four Techniques
Five Curves
Six Harmonies
Seven Stars
Eight Energies
Nine Palaces

Congratulations!

Tom and Bill



Tom Flener and Bill Ross are the first to have completed training in the push hand drills combining both Yang and Chen Taiji Quan. Being observed and tested for the last year I am proud to announce they have achieved Teaching Certificates in Taiji Quan Tuishou.

Those interested in Roushou Teaching Certificates requires demonstrating all the Roushou drills listed on the handout. Quite a few club member should qualify for this. Testing can be done prior to the monthly teaching sessions.

May 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	Xing Yi Review	16	17	18	19	20
21						Xing Yi Workshop
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	Tumbling	30	31			

June 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	Teacher's Session	6	7	8	9	10
11						Qin Na Lau Sensei
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	Bagua Intensive	20	21	22	23	24
25						
26	27	28	29	30		

擒拿 Qin Na Workshop

with
Bernie Lau



and
Andrew Dale



Saturday, June 11, 2005

1:00 - 5:00 pm

Qin Na: The Art of Seizing

Open to all levels this workshop will cover the basic wrist grabs and holds from Qin Na and Aikido moving onto the innovative locks and pins of Ichō Ryū Aikijūjitsu.



Where:

Xin Qi Shen Dojo
8316 8th Avenue NW

Seattle WA 98117
(206) 234-6604

Pre-registration required.
Checks made to A.T. Dale

For more information:

www.wuji.com