

Xin Qi Shen Dojo

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

Spring 2007

© 2007 A.T. Dale

*Beginners move from their hands
Skilled students move from their
center
Masters move as center*

It's movement. It's energy. It's attitude.
It's shin shin toitsu: mind and body as
one.

Look at any video of the really great
masters. It's very obvious who has
mastery, who just has skill, and who is
merely a great technician.

In the dojo library we have videos of:
Morihei Ueshiba, K. Tohei, T.T. Tchoung,
Mr. Yueng, Feng Zhiqiang, Harris sensei,
Huang Xingxian, Zhen Manjing, and many
others. Watch them do applications;
casual, effortless, efficient, and in control.
They barely move while the ukes fly
around. The masters are the center of the
tornado while the ukes get to deal with the
force.

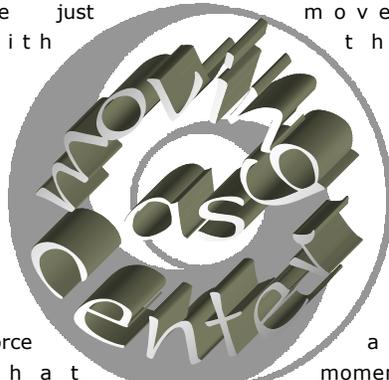
This "Being Center" occurred to me as I
was studying DVDs of the disciples of
Ueshiba. Some labored doing a technique,
others pounded their uke to the mat, while
a few moved less yet were dynamic and
showed great power. The crude ones
looked like they were manipulating,
handling, and throwing the ukes. The
'masters' were moving casually with no
seeming effort. The ukes were flying.

As I looked at masters Tchoung, Feng, &
Yueng the same thing was apparent. As
the attack was launched it was as if the
uke was absorbed, swallowed by the
master's movements. Though we can talk
about the physical body dynamics and
manipulating someone's center, there's
more to it. Security, attitude, comfort.

First what I noticed is these masters don't
look like they are imposing a technique on
uke. Aside from the waza looking
effortless, the nage doesn't move much.
To quote Zhen Manjing, "the meat comes
to the hook!"

Looking at people do applications, I see a
greed and desperation in doing the waza.
The masters look like they don't care.
Instead of doing a technique they are
actually surfing the force of the attack and
moving and directing it to the easiest spot.

Harris sensei does the same thing. As
those who have been uke for him know,
every single move you do is the wrong
one. It's like being on roller skates pushing
against a wall, there's no grounding or
place to use your power and strength. I
remember at one session Dave was
playing with an uke when the uke asked,
"would you do that again?" Dave couldn't
since he didn't know what he actually did.
He just moved
with the



force at
that moment.
Each time you surf or ski is a new
situation, your reflexes respond. Each
time you come down the hill, even on the
same slope and run, it'll be different.

We learn techniques and forms to
understand proper body movement and
alignment in addition to dealing with force
and balance. What I see is that after
learning a trick/technique, few study it.
Few work on finding out ways to polish it
and make it easier. Most look at the result
instead of how to polish their own
execution of the movement. Few approach
it like a musician going back and studying
the scales, polishing the coordination and
smoothness.

Tohei sensei would talk about the non-
fighting mind. Our primal reaction is fight
or flight. When a fist is made, ones
reaction is to get ready to resist. For some
there is a tendency to withdraw and

worry. If the fist isn't coming your way,
there's nothing to do, stay neutral.
Observe.

One Aikijitsu teacher would throw an open
blade across the floor in the dressing room
to watch the student's reactions. Some
would freak or over-react. The advanced
students would watch the direction of the
knife and move appropriately.

Moving as center is being here and now.
When practicing a specific technique, most
focus on the result of the technique or how
far, or where they want the uke to land
instead of studying and feeling the process
of the technique to find out where they're
working too hard or with too much force. I
don't look at practicing techniques as
learning specific movements to do in
certain situations. I see it as studying
various situations of power and force to
see and understand options. To study
ourselves.

The internal arts teach body movement.
It's like some Bagua and Taiji forms are
taught with specific applications for each
movement. This is what raise hands is,
this is the use of single whip. Master
Tchoung taught that each movement has
the possibility of being a throw, strike,
push, neutralization, or take down. "The
principle is one, the expression is many."
This was one of the frustrating yet
wonderful things of studying with him.
When we'd ask what use a movement had,
he'd show us about a dozen. For a
beginner it was confusing but eventually it
was wonderful.

Instead of seeing a technique as a
conveyer belt or one-way street, try to
view each part of a technique as an
intersection or the hub of a wheel with
possibilities of moving in any other
direction into many other things.

Basic Dojo Club
Dues \$85 monthly

Mirror Cells

*Watch the DVDs
Study the Masters*



First of all, google 'Mirror Cells' for a real scientific explanation of the term and research. Basically, when we see someone perform a movement, technique, sport, or pattern we're familiar with, it generates activity in our brain and eventually in our body. Watching someone do something you are familiar with, you can feel the movement and the effort. The longer you have been in the particular art the great you can emphasize and know what the person is experiencing.

As you internalize the movements of the various form and arts, each year, your ability to feel someone's movement or understand just what they're doing increases. I'm not talking about the mere physical movement but also the energetics of their actions.

As you deepen your art it's even more important to watch some of the highly skilled teachers, masters, and true artists of the art. It may not be apparent but you will observe subtleties that you may not understand at the time but your body wisdom will know or understand. Eventually these movements will slowly be incorporated into your own art.

Xin Qi Shen Dojo's library has over 200 DVDs and videos covering the entire spectrum of the internal arts. Masters like: T.T. Tchoung, Gao Fu, Mr. Yueng, Feng Zhi Qiang, Tien Xiao Chen, Chen Xiao Wang, Chen Zhen Lei, Zhen Manjing, Huang Xingxien, Tao Ping Siong, Ma Yu Liang, Fu Zhong Wen, Tung Ying Chiea, Tung Kai Ying, Wang Xujin, Liu Jing Ru, Liu Jing Liang, Zhang Jie, Dave Harris, Vladimir Vasiliev, Morihei Ueshiba, Kisshomaru Ueshiba, Koichi Tohei, S. Nishio, M. Saito, G. Shioda, Rod Kobayashi, M/ Saotome, Kuroiwa, Bernie Lau, Don Angier, and many, many others. With the addition of Youtube, access to all the masters is unlimited. (Computers are wonderful when they work!)

I remember spending hours watching my video collection of the founder of Aikido. We'd watch the techniques, the footwork, the basic movements, the posture. We'd also watch them backwards. In addition we'd watch the space as he moved through it and how the group moved as one. These are just a few pieces of what can be studied. However, most of what we really learn is beyond our comprehension, we absorb it through our watching and feeling.

Now this doesn't replace mindful practice, but as you advance it's an important study. Don't engage your brain too much: watch and try to feel their movements. This also relates to being a good uke (partner). As you experience the technique by a master, teacher, or advanced student you are downloading the proper feeling and technique. This is another reason for being a good uke while practicing techniques. This is different from freestyle, countering, and sparring. As you practice techniques your study is learning and polishing the movement. If you try to out do your partner, resist, counter, or figure out how to get away that's where your attention is so your not 100% feeling, receiving (uke) what your partner is doing. This is why, if you look at the top masters in their youth were also some of the best ukes.

Sun Style Taiji Quan Sun Style Taiji Quan



Classes start
Sunday, March 11th, 10-1pm

2nd Sunday every month

Contact Jake for more info:

(206) 941-3232

*When I was a kid we didn't have access to
as much information, history, and study
guides!*

*We are very lucky to be able to buy two of
the most complete resources!*

Aikido Journal

for all about Aikido

Bagua Journal

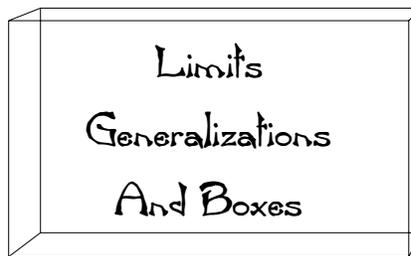
*contains more information and correct
history of the art of Bagua*

What box are you in?

One of my fortunes was to have the opportunity to study not just a variety of arts but also with different teachers of the same art. What struck me early on, and so much more now, is the blank statements made about other arts, other teachers, based upon misunderstanding, or not having any personal contact or real knowledge of what they were talking about.

Early on, as an Aikido student, I would hear how crude Aikijitsu was in comparison to Aikido. Sensei would demonstrate a technique in a crude fashion saying that's how *they* do it. Sensei would also demonstrate how a technique without Ki wouldn't work and how superior his technique was with Ki. However, he would do the no-ki technique incorrectly or out of context. It was only after meeting and studying with real Aikijitsu senseis did I understand that it wasn't true and I was fed bullsh**t. At Hombu they do it this way, we do it more correctly etc. Salesmanship!

The same is true of all the arts. Taiji instructors having no experience with Aikido, except on film, bad-talking Aikido's usefulness. Aikido masters talking about how Qi Gong has nothing in similarity with Ki Taiso. Bagua only



short energy, Taiji only soft, Xing Yi only hard, Aikido only throws, Taiji-Bagua-Xing Yi the only internal arts. The founder of Aikido said Aikido was 90% strikes! Bagua master Cheng Ting-hua was a Shuai Chiao expert before starting Bagua. You have some branches of Cheng Bagua saying all applications are *only* throws.

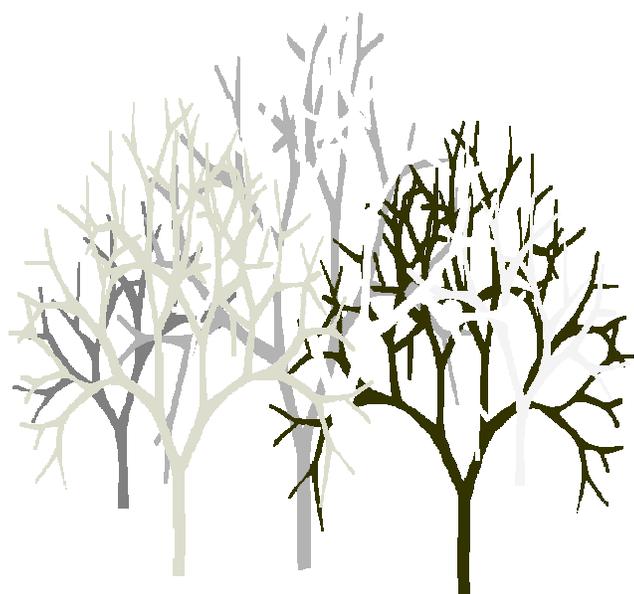
It's not that our teachers purposely lie to us, they may be merely repeating what they've been taught and not researched any further, a lesson for all of us to know before we speak. We tend to believe them, then repeat what we've heard and perpetuate misinformation. I was lucky with some of my teachers in that they would show a variety of possibilities for a movement or form instead of just one.

In push hands and applications, Tchung would demonstrate a move as a throw, as a lock, as a strike, as a push, as a neutralization. Then say, "you yourself!" As Master Yueng says, "All same."

Instead of the forms, postures, and transitions being one technique, a one

way, each part of a technique can be an intersection with options of moving in several different ways, that's skill. That's also part of Being Center. To see a great example of this check out the club DVD on the applications of Grasping Sparrow's Tail by Harris sensei. Harris sensei goes through a countless array of possibilities with the full range from leading and striking to throws.

If I think of a push and merely as a push in the form it definitely limits my effectiveness and adaptability. A push can be a strike, it can be a way to steal balance, it can be a lead, a fake, a test, it can be a way to get your partner to grab your hands, it can be a way to make contact for a grab. One of Tchung's favorite techniques was from the appearance of doing a push, using his fingers like claws and use nerve techniques on the ribs. He would say that we practiced pushing in order to develop to learn proper strikes not only body mechanics. Learning how the body needs to connect to the feet, letting the power express in the hands fully without hurting our partners. Pushing air doesn't do that. He would also talk about studying ourselves in the process, not the techniques or how far we could push.



The Tao of Pruning

Saturday
March 24th
2-4 pm, \$25
dojo@wuji.com
Enrollment limited

Presented by Andrew T. Dale WCN
(Washington certified nurseryman)

A workshop on the basic principles of how to prune by understanding the basic growth habits of plants.

We will take a stroll, pruning our way through an established landscape in the Magnolia area of Seattle.

Address and meeting place will be given on registration.



**Xin Qi Shen Dojo
Principles & Philosophy**

Nurture excellence.

Seek to improve the art and improve the standard.

Shoshin: Beginner's mind. In a beginner's mind there are many possibilities, in an expert's there are few. Approach each lesson and practice as a beginner, never assume you have it.

Keep thoughts and comments positive and healthy. We create the atmosphere and our life's environment. Build the world you want.

Respect the founder, the art, your teachers and classmates, but think for yourself. If you cannot do this you're studying the wrong art or with the wrong teacher.

The principles remain constant but the methods & styles vary. Our goal is to learn and integrate the principles of the internal arts, not the merely the shell of the movements.

The study and practice of the internal arts is to become independent, centered and free in mind, body, & spirit. The art should help you to express your true self.

Always examine what is taught and what you are told. Don't dismiss what you don't understand but don't accept it blindly.

Train diligently, refine your body, mind and spirit. This is your responsibility, no one else can do this. Take responsibility for your training and life. Your study and practice should be enjoyable and enhance your life. If not, find one that does.

Argue for your limitations and sure enough they're yours. Don't say "I can't" unless you've really tried over and over again.

Don't compare yourself with others or their accomplishments. Compare yourself with yesterday and seek to improve.

Lessons are not bought. Club fees are for membership. You do not shop for the next lesson. If you cannot trust the teachers to teach sincerely and correctly then find one who does. This is more important than lineage or style. Study with the teachers.



White Crane Cools Wings?
Brush Knee and Push?
Retreat To Ride Tiger?
Oh, White Bear Does High Five!