



Xin Qi Shen Dojo

WUJI.COM
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LEARNING FROM THE BEACH

What a lesson in the Tao; being at the beach. The ever changing sand and water continually moving and changing. The in and out of the tide, the shifting sands of the beach due to the wind. The over-powering force of nature. Separately, each is very soft and gentle. Concentrated they become an enormous force of power, of Qi in motion. At times quite and calm, at other times forceful like the strong waves crashing upon the rocks wearing them down. It's time to realize that softness, peacefulness, and calmness do have a potential of enormous power. Like the Taiji classics say: "From true softness comes real hardness/power." *The power of wuji.*



WHY DO WE PRACTICE AND STUDY?

It seems like a dumb question but it's very important. Why in the heck do we practice and study?

Well the answer is as easy as the question: We like it! It improves our lives. It's our personal (national) health care option.

Life is too short to add more work and more stress. It's important to understand what make us happier and healthier. Though the internal arts are excellent health arts if they don't make life easier are they really healthy? There are many studies as to how these arts keep us healthy, reduce stress, improve balance for the elderly, etc. that's all good but what does it do for me now?

Practice time should be an oasis with a little bit of a challenge. The challenge is so we can't focus on anything else such as our daily life. But it should be a sanctuary from the rest of our lives. A place and space where we can center and calm. Yes, the applications and self-defense aspects are important in the art but then again if you're practice for that possible need to use the arts then you might need therapy or a body guard. I'm not that old, but as I get older priorities have changed. With the lack of health insurance, or the high cost for those who can afford it, it's important that we live safe, healthy, and happy lives.

What makes you happy? What keeps you healthy?

These are our goals and priorities, to improve our life.

*If it's not
fun, it's best
left undone!*

It was the best weather we've had so far! There was a full moon and a super low tide during our visit. If the tide was any lower we'd been able to walk to Face Rock.

Sadly, Joel's knee was injured late Thursday (midnight) while he, Gene, and Derryl were pushing hands. Fortunately it wasn't super serious.

As usual, even though we all taught different things, we all seemed to be in sync with each other on the principles without any planning. That's what happens when the emphasis is on the principles of body movement, not the stylized patterns. Next year we've planned it for mid August since that will be another low tide time and it's probably the only time I'll be able to get away from the new business. Make your reservations early!

Bandon Pictures: www.wuji.com/PhotoGallery/2007 Bandon

A RECORD!

This summer 28 dojo members learned the Partner Cane Application Form! In addition some members started working on the left side, then progressed into mixing left and right in addition to the variable striking targets. I think this is the largest group learning one form. What this means is that you will always be able to find someone to practice it with.

Congratulations :)

This form has 4 levels:

1. The basic right side set pattern.
2. Variable striking targets
3. Switching left and right
4. Changing form placements.



Dowell Sensei Aikido Instructor of Xin Qi Shen Dojo

Starting September Sensei Burk Dowell will be the primary instructor of Xin Qi Shen Dojo's Aikido program.

Burk will be continuing the dojo's progressive Aiki program combining the elements of Aikido, Aikijitsu, Bagua, Rosuhou, and Taiji softness. Dale sensei will visit once a month with a focus on particular aspects of Aikijitsu, counters and reversals. Promotions and ranking will continue as usual (testing in February set by Dowell sensei). In addition the fall of 2008 we will have an additional black belt exam for shodan (David Sherman) and sandan (Burk Dowell and Mike Ullmann). Congratulations and good luck Burk!



FINALLY THE BAGUA 64 PALMS!

The Basic session in Bagua starting September, for the month, will be on the Bagua stepping patterns and basic drills. Starting October for the next three months this session will be focused on the first section of the Cheng Ting Hua 64 Palms. This set was created by Liu De Kwan who made 8 sets of changes based upon the 8 basic energies of Bagua Zhang.

Liu De Kwan is listed as a formal student of Bagua founder Tung Hai Quan but actually he was taught by Cheng Ting Hua who was chief assistant to Master Tung at the time. There is something about protocol and official-ness in martial arts tradition (I don't understand) that it's not good to be known to study with someone of your equal or less, even if they have knowledge you don't. Several Bagua masters are listed as disciples of Tung Hai Quan when they actually studied with either Yin Fu or Cheng Ting Hua. (Master Tchoung Ta Tchen said he learned push hands from Zhen Manqing. When I asked if he studied with Zhen he would always say they were good friends and Zhen helped him improve his Taiji.)

Back to the 64 Palms

Liu De Kwan, after learning the traditional Bagua thought that the movements didn't contain enough obvious applications. Eventually he created his own Bagua form which he primarily taught. It's clear Liu was also very skilled in Xing Yi Quan but the 64 palms also show a great deal of Taiji influence. Rather than just movement patterns, his changes, unlike most styles I've seen, are more like a Taiji form and a collection of applications forms.

Normally the 8 sections, 8 changes are each taught with a signature ending of one of the 8 primary energies/applications. As I teach section one I will be ending each change with one of the 8 signature endings. Considered an advanced set I see this form as a good applications and exercise combination. We will work on this set with applications until December. If there is interest we will continue onto section 2.

Goodbye park, until next spring

evening class move inside

It's common for us to feel calm, energized, rested, and healthier after spending time in a wooded area and park. Qi Gong specialist talk about the healing Qi of the forest or new ager's talk about the abundance of negative ions that are related to a well-being feeling.

I saw a program discussing research on the benefits of being in the woods and forests. (I didn't get the name of the university) They discussed that the air in a wooded area, especially in pine forests, has many airborne micronutrients. It's like a nutrient inhaler. One of the comments was: *"next time you have a headache go for a walk in the woods."*

Anytime we can practice in fresh air we should! It's common now to hear talk about don't practice in the wind, don't practice in the hot or cold. Well, where do you think the Taoist practiced? In a climate controlled caves? Or only during certain seasons? Or when it was nice?

Gao Fu talked about studying with Master Feng in deep cold snow in the park. When she first taught in Seattle we met at the University of Washington Arboretum, it was very cold.

You don't get stronger by avoiding difficulty. A plant raised in a greenhouse needs to be hardened off before being moved outside or it'll be stunted or die. In the greenhouse it grows abundantly but weakly since the cells of the plant don't have to deal with wind or temperature fluctuations.

If it's very cold, windy, or raining it makes sense to move inside. But in moderate weather, dressing warmly and layering enables us to practice and get stronger. It's beneficial; thickening our blood, hardens us off in contrast to that super comfortable controlled, climate controlled room. With the trees, shrubs, and ferns around there is an energy exchange, a good current of air, and a time to get away from our cubical and four walls.

I've noticed each year how often prospective members are more concerned with the look of the place instead of what they are learning. They don't even seem concerned with the credentials of who is teaching. It seems that the concern is that the place looks right ☺.

This all goes back to why we are studying and practicing. WHY? To get healthier, to take up time, or merely to be trendy.