

## Art Vs Sport: Finite vs Infinite

Things have changed! Change is good but it's important to know what direction the change is in. I tend to see things as art or sport. Art being a form that has an infinite expression, whereas sport has the goal of winning. In the early 1980s when many of the Olympic and World Skating Champions turned professional the exhibitions and professional competitions were amazing. Since they hadn't put any rules, requirements, or restrictions on them everyone took their art to the next level whether it was artistry, choreography, or athleticism. They were able to go beyond the confines of the rules they had to adhere to while in the sports world. Even though they would declare a winner (many times it was a draw) you just can't compare Apples and Oranges. Eventually they had to standardize it so it could be judged fairly as a sport and many of the old timers (30 something) stopped competing and the range of the skating diminished. Many of the current martial arts evolved from some practitioner talking the standard and making it their own. Many times breaking traditional rules to do so.

Anytime you have a sport win or loose situation things become limited in many ways. Rules, Restrictions, Classifications, or a goal line. Sport does have growth within its field, but in order to be fair or safe it also has restrictions. Art has no restrictions. In sport if you break away from the limits, or stray from its parameters then you're cheating and wrong. In Art there are no limitations. Actually the limitations are our own imagination and thought process. In art you study the basics and classics to go beyond them. They are merely guidelines to get you started. Keep in mind the internal arts are all based upon a series of classical writings with guidelines on correct body movement and use of coordinated power.

As the martial arts become popular and more profitable it's important to notice the difference between the traditional art, the modern, the commercial, and sports versions. Originally these arts were training methods to improve ones martial skill. A new style would emerge due to a master doing something differently than his teachers or lineage. Now they're becoming styles to copy. With the modern or true styles there is only one way the art should be done or look. Variation, even if it adheres to the classics, is considered wrong. Function is no longer the criteria whether it's correct or not. If your form is longer than 2 minutes you loose. If you don't display the flexibility or athleticism of your competitor you loose.

Looking at the Taiji arts they've become 'standardized'. The official 'Yang or Chen single whip should only look this way. Fit this mold or you're wrong. One instructor years ago would measure how far the student's hand was from his eyebrow to see if his 'White Crane Cools Wings' was correct.

These are arts based upon Taoist principles of health, body awareness, alignment, and function. What this means is that each of us will exhibit these forms and exercises differently. They are training methods to enable us to express ourselves strongly, safely, and creatively. Since we are not all one person, one body type, or personality, trying to make one person look exactly like another fits into the sports realm. Art is creative, ever growing and changing. In art it's important not to look like all the rest! Not painting by numbers.

*"True winning  
is winning over  
the mind of discord  
within yourself, not  
winning over another."*

Morihei Ueshiba  
Aikido Founder



## Dale Sensei returning to the plant business

### EMERALD CITY GARDENS!

Look for the grand opening March 1, 2008. Starting in January, Andy & Jay will be taking over the spot that was Fremont Gardens, 4001 Leary Way NW. This will be a neighborhood nursery focusing on all organic supplements, small space (patio, deck, parking strip, and city gardens). In addition there will be indoor plants, containers, indoor and deck water gardens.

For updates:  
[www.emeraldcitygardens.com](http://www.emeraldcitygardens.com)

What this  
means  
page #2

Cleaning up old files I came upon several notebooks with notes I took while studying with various teachers and attending workshops.

Trying to read my own writing, and wanting to get rid of extra stuff, I've decided to include many of them in this newsletter.

It's interesting looking back at some of my notes and comments. At the time, not knowing better, being inexperienced and limited, I believe what the teacher or expert said. This actually refers to a weekend workshop I took with a noted master. Much of what he taught was more about how important he was than

the art he was teaching. After studying with Tchowng his skill didn't impress me but, at the time, I thought he was holding back. Also, he was famous so I assumed he really was good. So . . . I believed what he taught, wrote it down, and followed it for a while. Even then, it just didn't feel right.



**Master T. T. Tchowng**  
**November 10, 1984**

Here are a few of Sifu's teachings:

Softness, relaxation is the secret. Better to err on the side of limp than use strength.

Tuishou isn't to exercise applications but to practice fa-jing. Applications come from the sanshou and situation applications.

Ding Gong (Zhan Zhuang) helps develop fa-jing.

Qi Gong, Ding Gong, Kung Jia (form)? If time is limited it's better to spend a longer time on one than divide it between the two.

Ding Gong and Sun Lu Tang Bagua are the same! (This refers to the inner palms.)

Chen Taiji Quan only teaches softness to the advanced students.

Correct practice and constant practice is what makes mastery.

My secret is coordination of breath and movement. This is why many don't develop skill or power from their Taiji practice.

The principles remain constant, the forms can vary.

Forms are the alphabet, pushing hands is learning to write, sanshou is conversation.

Practice to make friends and improve health.

Think for yourself!

## Master ?

I paid a lot of money to attend a three-day workshop with this master. This didn't include the hotel room!

This was a friend of Master Tchowng's and very well known. Harvey Kurland, Nancy Foster, and I spent the weekend studying Chen Taiji with him. He was very personable and engaging. He treated us well since we were Tchowng's students. I was waiting to be impressed! Once in a while he'd do a move of fa-jin but it was nothing compared to what I'd seen Tchowng do. Everyone else, however, was in awe and impressed. I assumed he was holding back for some reason.

This was my first experience with Chen Taiji. I didn't like it and came to the opinion that Chen Taiji was hard style and not real Taiji. (Madame Gao Fu corrected that assumption.)

One thing that angered me, since I was paying for the class, was he had me lead, even though his student and instructor of the school was there. I was young, athletic, and my ability of memorizing movements put me in front of the group. He would show a move, have me do it, then go sit in the back of the room as I would lead the group over and over again! Once in a while he's yell out, "Lower, lower body." I had no experience in Chen Taiji. What I did was basically Bagua in Taiji form. After this session he offered me a teaching position (in Chen Taiji) or to be a branch of his school.

Two of his lessons were:

1. Yang Taiji only circulates qi, Chen Taiji develops qi. (WRONG!)
2. Double weighting is an important principle of Chen Taiji (WRONG!)

## A CHANGE IS COMING

As many know already I'm co-owner of the new Emerald City Gardens in Fremont. I just had to get a real job!

The frustrations of trying to be a teacher and keep the school running (business) these last few years has been quite a workout. It's difficult to focus on teaching and student's progression while

also concerned about the bills.

Starting in January, Xin Qi Shen Dojo will slowly (over the next year) progress from being a club into a school. What this means is that there will be definite classes (1 hr sessions) on various forms or arts instead of the evening (3 hr) of Bagua, Taiji, Aikido, etc. My goal was to make this a training

academy for the internal arts instead of a space offering classes. I've struggled trying to make this happen since we moved into this space. *Things change.*

Though I will continue to teach in a limited capacity, the dojo will be offering more classes by the senior instructors, as well as offering lease space to other arts to keep things

going.

Springtime I'll be scarce but Summer and winter I'll be available and offering classes, workshops, and lessons. I feel I've passed the arts onto the senior members of the dojo so, though I need to get a job, all is in safe hands and available for future students.

(Continued on page 4)



**Ikeda Sensei**  
**4-14-1984**

Keep a connections with uke's center always.

Ikkyo - move like you're about to punch your uke.

Your body moves as a unit.

The hands are an extension of your center and body movement.

Move easily yet strongly.

Learn the basics, then find your own way.

Ikkyo, nikyo, sankyo are the lessons, study the principle, not the technique.

**A Tohei story:**

I had heard stories of Tohei sensei's ki power from Aikido students passing through our dojo. One mentioned a demonstration she witnessed where Tohei on his back and had five big guys hold him down. "His expression went calm, then with no sign of movement they all flew off him in every direction."

Before dinner at sensei's house, I had the chance to ask him about it. At first he looked puzzled, then started to laugh. He said people see what they want to see. In Hawaii they were always trying to trip him up. They asked what would he do if held down, pinned to the ground by five people. He said, "I don't know, let's see." At first he said he lay there relaxing wondering what to do. Then he noticed by relaxing he was able to get some slack. He then wiggled to get more slack and then started to kick, roll, and wave his arms. The five guys jumped off!

*Have You Stopped Learning?*

It's a common trait that after doing a certain task or thing, we become so accustomed to it we go on automatic. After driving a particular route we phase-out as we drive it. We no longer see the scenery along the way, we either blank out or we spend the time thinking about something else.

This is the same with practicing our forms. Once we've memorized the forms into our muscle structure we no longer stay alert and aware in practice. I see this often with senior members during some classes. As I lead a form, sometimes I'll do variations of basic movements, change the pace, or stylization of the movement. The only ones who pick it up, follow, or ask questions about the change are usually members having just learned the form.



**Shoshu Koichi Tohei**  
**1982 / 1983 / 1984**

*Tohei sensei is one of the most charismatic people I've ever met. Even in the middle of an airport people noticed him. He was able to make me relax beyond anything I've been able to*

*do since. I would sum up his style as carefree and powerful. I had the opportunity to ask him questions outside of class, any questions, and he surprisingly answered directly and honestly, breaking many myths and stories I had heard about his skill and power.*

Relaxation and natural movement are the most powerful.

If I hurt you, scold me. Aikido is not to hurt each other but to improve ourselves.

Deal with the person, not the fist. The mind has no weight.

What you practice the most is how you will live your life. Practice tension and fighting and you will be tense and fight. Practice to relax and you will relax and be healthy. Practice keeping your mind positive and you will live positively.

I don't teach Aikido. I teach how to teach Aikido. This way it will continue strongly and flourish in the future.

The mind rules the body. Our face and posture reflect our mind. Practice to be positive and calm and you will radiate true beauty.

Ki is that which binds all things. It is the source of the universe.

1. Keep One Point
2. Keep Weight Underside
3. Relax Completely
4. Extend Ki

If you have one you have them all

Tohei coined these four principles as the way to be truly strong. A close examination of them and his ki testing show them as a simplification of the internal arts principles of: The six harmonies, five curves, three bows, suspend the head top and all the rest.



**Shihan Mitsugi Saotome**  
**1986**

Strong People are usually kind, generous, and polite!

Make friends with everyone.

Too much emphasis is placed on stopping when working with ken.

Always natural movement.

Practice from your spirit not your body.

Understand the original concept of the movement not the technique. Your goal isn't to have a strong nikyo but to understand how to stay safe and strong in that situation.

Don't be punched before the punch hits you! People are in pain even before the fist arrives.

Confidence in your center, attain harmony.

Aikido is offense and defense at the same time.

Permitting grabs is training, not martial arts.

Hanmi is towards partner's center regardless of empty hand or weapon.

When attacking, keep yourself safe.

Always extend toward uke.

Each technique uses a certain hand.

IKKYO - wrist hand

NIKYO - wrist hand

IRMI NAGE - head hand

SANKYO - inside hand

Move yourself, not your partner.



**Soke Don Angier**  
**3-22-1986**

*teaching since 1955*

*started in 1949*

Aikido is taught backwards! Learn it as they learned it. The efficiency of the technique was first, smoothness was last.

Hands never grab, they push.

Shihonage & kotegaeshi - the secret is in buckling the knees.

Step to the point of triangulation.

Weight underside is just keeping your scapula down.

Hand grabs are from trying to keep the samurai from grabbing his sword.

Bone connection. Commutively lock your uke's bone structure.

A real student of the martial arts must have the same commitment as a concert pianist.

Mediocrity is not acceptable if you're sincere.

To disturb balance is to draw uke outside their circle of strength. Breaking balance causes them to take a step.

Principles of Aikijitsu:

1. Arms always push
2. Legs always pull
3. Lead uke to the void
4. Triangulation
5. Steal balance
6. Use weight, not strength
7. Mind like water, never expect
8. Don't double weight in arms
9. Never use primary power

**CHANGES**

**DOJO DUES**

With the dojo smaller we have to limit the number *per* class so unfortunately there has to be a fee change. The basic club will stay the same but additional classes starting January will be \$20 extra per session.

This still gives a deal to current dojo members but keep in mind, with enrollment limited, each class participant limits new member enrollment and full club dues.

**OTHER CHANGES**

The newsletter will not disappear but it will no longer be quarterly. As

time and inspiration permits it will still be out from time to time.

The Dojo Library has been slowly shrinking. Over the last year I've tried to convert many of the valuable VHS tapes to DVD. I've only been able to do about 1/2 of the collection. Unfortunately the reason for the shrinking library is due to some forgetting to bring back what they've checked out. I no longer have time to follow up on check outs.

Do You Have Any Library Media At Home?

Stay tuned to [www.wuji.com/classes](http://www.wuji.com/classes) for 2008 schedule and new classes.

**2008 Club Fees**

- \$85 - Basic Fee
- \$105 - 1 additional class
- \$125 - 2 additional classes
- \$135 - unlimited

**NEXT SUMMER**

- Yang Taiji - spear form
- Bagua - Circling Sword
- Chen Taiji - Broadsword
- Aikido - All Jo forms