

Marketing the arts

What is real?

The sad thing for me is looking around at all the marketing gimmicks and seeing how it's all for money at the expense of the arts. Now, I understand that we need to make a living and advertising is a big part of that, but then there are special words to make the art and the teachers very 'special' regardless of their skill or understanding. Also, I've seen many sincere students and teachers fall to the gimmicks and move on, spreading much misinformation.

A good example is from the Bagua Journal years ago about the origins of Bagua Zhang. One lineage claims to date back further than Dong Hai Quan (the founder) to his Taoist teachers. They also claimed they had the real stuff and secret teachings that Master Dong didn't get. In researching this they found it to be traced to a village storyteller who had learned a little Bagua and used this line to impress the students. He actually learned Bagua from Cheng Ting Hua, student of Dong Hai Quan. However, all those who studied with him passed on their history honestly since this is what their teacher taught.



We need to examine what we're taught and keep a little skepticism. Taoist Taiji, does that mean there is non-Taoist influenced Taiji? Christian Taiji? Taiji principles are based upon the Tao Te Ching, a Taoist text. Healing Qi Gong? Does that mean there are non-healing Qi Gong's? My understanding is all Qi Gong is healing. Spiritual Qi Gong? What religion? Medical Qi Gong? Are you a doctor? Secret Taiji? Are you allowed to share it? Real Taiji compared to the fake or low fat Taiji?

Now all I'm saying is use your brain. When I first starting teach I would spout what I was taught whether it was real to me or not. It was what I was taught, not what I understood or was my personal experience. After a while I started questioning much of it and started only teaching what I knew for sure. That which I wasn't my experience I would comment that it was what I had heard. Our teachers most likely aren't lying to us, just passing on what they've learned. However, though the information might have been sincere, was the information correct?

Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	SATURDAY
9:00 - 10:00 am			Yang Taiji		Advanced 9-10:30
10:00 - 11:00 am					Chen Taiji
11:00 - 12:00 pm					10:30-noon
4:00 - 5:45 pm	Yang Taiji				
6:00 - 7:30 pm	Sanshou	Yang Taiji		Bagua Zhang	
7:30 - 9:00 pm	Roushou	Taiji Tuishou	Roushou	Xing Yi Quan	

Xin Qi Shen Dojo

Summer 2009

What Matters?

Study? Reading? Discussing?
Or PRACTICE?



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Dojo saved for one year

If you haven't heard yet, the dojo will continue for one more year.

Due to the economic situation it hasn't been easy to find anyone to rent the space. Legally my lease is up in 2010.

With the upcoming rent increase, low enrollment, and high insurance, I had hoped to get out of the lease early since it wasn't affordable anymore. Last year many students either moved, changed jobs, or had kids and left.

Well, with the difficulty of renting the space the landlords gave me the option to lock in a reduced rent rate for the remainder of my lease so I took it. The fee structure will change. You can help by promoting the club to cover expenses and keep us going.

The bottom line is you, your interests matter, and the purpose of studying these arts for you may be different than their intended purpose: defending the village!

I've come across many practitioners, teachers, experts, and masters. In doing so, what I call masters are very few since they were masters of the art. They're not experts on the art, i.e. knowing all the history, theory, and philosophy. They walked the talk

whether they knew it or not. Experts in my opinion know volumes about the art but rarely, don't or can't walk the talk. They know the theory, the history, the masters but it's all in their head. They haven't trained either enough or deeply to achieve the skill they talk about. Some of these experts may not even practice the art!

Teachers of the art, in my opinion, are on the road to mastery since they are sincerely sharing and

working on the basics as they teach. I believe you can't continually do the basics and not advance in the art.

Practitioners fall into all the groups above. There are some that are flakes, some that study theory more (than practice), some that dive deep into practice, and some just work out.

So in brief, where do you want to go? Mastering the art? Knowing about the art? Meditation? Or just getting some exercise?

It's up to you.

Do It Now!

Things may change

Just to have the luxury to practice daily for at least an hour.

There was a time when I could workout at least 3 hours a day, seven days a week. (I'm currently coasting on that practice time.)

I had access to good teachers and didn't have a job to interfere with my studies. That esd the time that I build the foundation for what I have and can do

now. I had a few friends that were also in school so we'd get together and practice any time we had free.

Well, life comes along, jobs, and family get in the way. Finances get in the way. Make the most of what you have now. Not that you may have to cut back, but to build the foundation for mastery of the art.

I mentioned last newsletter about comments I heard after Dave's death. About

wishing they'd studied more or hadn't postponed their return to classes. Master Yueng is completely retired but I'm still getting emails and calls from people wishing they had taken advantage of his teachings when he was available.

The dojo came close to disappearing. What would you miss? What didn't you get from the vast resources?

Xing Yi Quan: this fall!

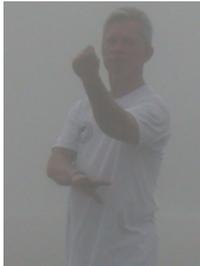
After many requests I'll be offering a Xing Yi Quan class this fall for a limited time. Though I enjoy Xing Yi practice I find teaching it very frustrating.

Xing Yi looks very simple, and to the outsider looks hard style/ karate-like but actually the very opposite. Like all the internal arts, the emphasis isn't on the outward forms but on the inner connection, coordination, intent, and especially relaxation. It's difficult to teach principles since it's like trying to describe a flavor to someone who hasn't eaten the particular fruit.

I learned Xing Yi from master Tchoung who was a friend and student of the great Wang Xujin and Yuan Dao. It contains 5 basic movements to train and study

various ways to apply natural power. In addition there are several animal forms to expand on the five basic movements to expand the range of movement and intent. Tchoung taught several non-traditional Xing Yi animals which I hadn't seen until studying with Master Zhang Jie. Master Zhang taught the Bagua/Xing Yi Wu Xing 24 movements which had many of the -non-traditional movements Tchoung taught.

We will spend one week on each element. From there we will work on the various animals and proceed to the Bagua Wu Xing form. We will also work on several partner exercises taught by master Tchoung.



Bandon!

August
21-23rd

Play
Practice
Train
Vacation

Family friendly
retreat and
workshops.

New Class fees



As you read, we're back at the dojo for one more year. Though the rent came down, the dojo enrollment went down close to 50% When we had an enrollment of 50+, it was great having the leeway to keep things flexible and encourage cross

training or encourage members to take several classes per week. With the space limitation and the low enrollment it was a difficult year.

Starting September things have to be stricter as to class payment definitions.

\$85.00 monthly = one class (1 1/2 hrs weekly) as usual.

Each additional class/session (1 to 1 1/2 hrs) will be \$20 extra monthly. This will be regardless if it's the same art or not. IE taking an evening Yang Taiji and a morning Yang Taiji will be \$105.

I will try to keep the club basic fee the same until January. I may have to increase the basic club fee depending upon enrollment. We'll see. Promote the club!

Group or Private Lessons?

Often I get request for private lessons. Somehow there is an assumption that private lessons are better than the group session. Sometimes it is, sometimes it isn't. It all depends upon the individual and what they want out of the instruction.

In a group session there are multiple questions asked that you wouldn't think of yourself. There are also others to watch and learn from. As I teach a group session it is very different from a private lesson.

Private lessons are good if the student does their homework and practices! I think it's a waste



Master Gao

of \$ just to copy a form (you're actually renting the form). I see private lessons as a way to refine what you have. If you're just learning a form it's OK but I can't teach depth of a form or movement until you already have or know it. My interest is in teaching the art, not merely the forms. Many asking for private lessons want to learn this form, or that form, not the art or on improving what they have learned. Ages ago I had one student wanting to learn our Yang Taiji style. It was clear after the first lesson there wasn't any interest in the art of Taiji, just learning the forms. For the first month I tried to teach quality in the movements but it was like talking to a brick. After that, since I agreed to teach the entire form, I proceeded to teach as fast as I could just to get it over with. I did corrections each session and

tried to do refinements, but they fell on a brick. Now, if I was in it for the money this would be a good gig since I could have expanded the time. However, it was grueling for me. All I wanted was to get rid of this session and work with interested students.

Another difficult lesson is those who want to talk about theory and principles without practice. I believe what I can see, not what I hear. If you talk about sinking and store, or softness and connections without displaying them it's all in your head. Until your body and form displays those elements we really can't talk about it since we're having a conversation in two different languages. I understand, they think they do. There are many who know the theory and history in depth but I look at movement and applications. If you don't walk the talk it doesn't matter. This is a physical art and the truth is in your movements.



SEPTEMBER MOVING BACK TO THE DOJO



Master Feng