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NEW FOR 2010

In order to make up for classes missed due to holidays or other reasons, and to offer a free glimpse into what the other classes are doing, there will be various free sessions offered. These free sessions will be held on months where we have 5 weeks of training instead of 4. You are welcome to bring friends to these sessions or anyone interested in what we're up to. Signing up is required since we had 30 last time.

January 30, Saturday 10-11:15 Chan Si Gong

March 3 Wednesday 6:30-7:45 Roushou

And more to come.

Sanshou Workshop

January 16th, 1:30-4:30 \$45

NEW CLASSES

Basic Bagua
Tuesdays 8-9 pm
(Joel)

Emei Qi Gong
Tuesdays 6-7:15
(Andy)

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Xin Qi Shen Dojo

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Yang Taiji Quan: Monday 4:15-5:45 pm Tuesday 7:15 - 8:45 pm Wednesday 9:00 - 10:30 am	Xing Yi Quan: Thursday 7:30-9:00 pm
Chen Taiji Quan: Saturday 10:30-noon	Tuishou: Tuesday 7:30-9:00 pm
Bagua Zhang: Tuesday 8:00-9:00 am Tuesday 9:00-10:00 am <small>advanced</small> Thursday 6:00-7:30 pm	Roushou: Wednesday 6:00-7:30 pm
Qi Gong: Tuesday 6:00-7:00 pm	Sanshou: Monday 6:00-7:30 pm Saturday 9:00-10:30 am

A.T.Dale Internal Martial Arts

Winter 2010



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Happy New Year

It's time for all of us to embrace a new year, a year that will bring greater health and prosperity.

Part of this is our own intent and efforts. But before we can have intent we need to decide which direction or what to aim at. We need some kind of a map to be sure we're on course or to understand why we're heading in the direction we are. It doesn't have to be a specific target but our intent needs a direction to help pull us along, even if life gets in the way.

The popular theme is to make a New Year's resolution, then after a month forget it or give up on it. Instead, what about deciding to treat ourselves, family, and friends better? I don't mean being nicer, but perhaps striving to be healthier, whatever you perceive that to be.

I often hear from past club members how they keep planning on coming back and resuming classes. How they miss it. (I also

hear this from members not coming back due to guilt.)

What about practicing on your own until time permits you to regain classes? Now don't set the bar too high or you'll feel too guilty about missing practice and then give up. What about once a week, a half hour of form or qi gong to start with? If that's too much then 15 minutes. Or 15 minutes Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays? See, there's always a way to do it if it's important to you and makes you feel better.

Let it be an oasis away from life if you can. As an old Buddhist text says, "An inch of meditation is an inch of Buddha." One drop of water in a cup of tea may not seem to make a difference but there is a slight change. Each drop of water creates greater changes. One moment of relaxation, exercise, and calmness is the beginning.

We need to replenish our energy storehouse after this last year and build it up so we have greater reserves.

Magic and Supernatural Powers

A neighbor of mine is an amateur magician. His skill is such that I have no clue as to how he does stuff. It looks supernatural and defying physical laws but I know, all his actions are based on perfected technique and skill. Skill, at a high level, so casual and natural that there is no apparent effort or noticeable work. It's magic.

Recently I was with a couple of seasoned martial arts practitioners and long time students of Dave Harris. We were talking about Harris sensei and how easy or magical his movements and applications looked. One commented that he had the power of 'Empty Force.' The other said he didn't believe in magic and that Dave's technique was the magic. There was a slight uncomfortable moment.

On YouTube there's a video of an 'Empty Force' master accepting challenges. He put up a prize for anyone not affected by his power. Up until this time it's clear this individual only practiced with his own students who were susceptible to his personality and teachings. The result was embarrassing. The master would wave his hands and maneuver as

the karate student punched him (over and over). It reminds me of some Aikido classes I've been in where my uke would fall down before I completed the technique because they were trained to do that.

A good explanation came as I was watching a video I have of Dave. He explained the progression from technique to leading (what I'd call empty force). First, Dave would do a technique and show the body dynamics. Next he would do the same technique with subtlety and smoothness so it looked flowing and easy. Then he would improve the timing so there was little or no contact. His moves were smaller and looked like he wasn't physically doing anything or even touching the uke. Aikido people call this 'no touch throws.' This is what I'd call Empty Force, magic!

Now what I consider empty force isn't only backed by the physical technique but there is body language and quite a bit of psychology at work. As the attack happens, giving the uke the impression that they're going to meet resistance, or that they're going to be hit (to get

them to block or react). This is also amplified by the sensei knowing the timing and reactions of the uke. As Dave would say, it also requires an all out committed attack. As a teacher and student work together longer there is a greater reaction to the teacher's movements. This is why in some classes the students look like trained monkeys or fall with just a little look from the sensei.

Dave's movements were backed up by clear technique and skill. His 'Empty Force' was based on technique. When a movement or timing was off or didn't work, Dave would still continue with no problem since the basics were there.

I don't discount the idea of Empty Force but to my experience and understanding much is smoke and mirrors. What we think we see isn't really what's going on. Unfortunately in current times it has become a good marketing gimmick to the susceptible, or hopeful, that one day they'll be all powerful and be able to ward off attacks from across the room and be in complete control. This becomes 'Empty Promises.' If it sounds too easy



or good to be true it probably is. Regardless of field, the ease and skill by which a master does something is always backed up by intense practice. That's the magic, or perhaps the secret.

The real empty force as I stated is based on technique and skill. While visiting with Steve Smith he put it very clearly. Some masters can sense a person's structure, patterns, and weaknesses by touching them. Dave could do it from across the room.

WHAT TO EXPECT THIS YEAR

Tuesday night Yang Taiji will now be 7:20-9:00 and will be merging with the Tuishou session. With the help of Don, Bruce, and Barry the session will be split between form and Tuishou.

Morning Bagua:

Joel will be resuming the morning Bagua session: Tuesdays 8-9am / Partner Bagua 9-10 am

Thursday Bagua class will continue with the 8 changes and start working on the Bagua partner drills.

Xing Yi session will continue to work on the 5 Elements and animals but also on the Liu Bin Bagua Wu Xing Yi form.

As old-timers know, starting May we move outside. This enables us to work on weapon forms since there is plenty of room. I'm up in the air as to which forms we'll be working on. Partner

weapon forms has been suggested since it's been ages since we've done them. Some ideas are:

*Partner Cane
Partner Knife or Sword
Double Swords
Chen Taiji Sword
Bagua Cyclone Knife
Yang Sword
Chen Spear*