

A THOUGHT: DAO OR DOGMA

The Dao flows, changes, adapts, yields, grows, nourishes, is in change. The only constant is change. It's not DOGMA it's creativity / ART!

Considering this is the core of the internal arts, I find it weird hearing things like: "The form must be just so. Exact." "This is right/this is wrong." (I'm not talking about body structure or function here) "If you don't look like this then it's wrong." "If your thigh isn't parallel with the ground it's wrong." "The hand must be just so. If you can't do it this way it's no good." "The forms don't change. I do it exactly like my teacher." "Master . . . 's form was exactly like his teachers."

Is this good??? Is this the Dao or Dogma? How does this express the principles of the art that are based on the Dao? Keep in mind, a person made this stuff up. And individuals have passed it on so we don't really know what the original was like.

When Master Gao fu visited Master Tchoung Ta Tchen and saw he had made the Yang Taiji form symmetrical her comment was, "You changed it." His response was, "I improved it!" It amazes me that Taiji Quan, regardless of style, is traditionally one sided! It's the only martial art I know that does this. As a fighting art, that is a major weakness. T. Y. Pang after doing the left side of the Yang Taiji Form lectured that traditionally it was expected for a 'sincere' student to practice all movements right and left. Well then, why isn't it taught?

I look at Youtube videos of several master demonstrating forms and I wonder . . . Can they do that punch left handed? Or any other movement on the left side? I've heard theories on how the forms are based on the organs and meridians and how they are meant to keep things in balance. Well, originally these arts were to defend the village, to fight, or for self-defense. I just can't imagine back then, when it was life or death, they were consciously trying to design a fighting art that was 'health' or Qi oriented. It just happened they were. I know teachers that are meticulous about tracing this meridian or only will practice facing a particular direction. Much of the symbolism and health aspect came in the late 1800's when high class and retired people were trying to deny the fact they were studying a 'fighting art' and making it a refined, self-nurturing process (which it was, but through a fighting art). Also, as the masters got older they're attention turned more philosophical and incorporated their insight into their teachings.

If it's structurally healthy and strong, abides by the principles, and has function, it's correct.

A.T.Dale Internal Martial Arts



Autumn 2010

*Back
in
the
dojo
September*

Except morning classes

*Xin Qi Shen Dojo
8316 - 8th Ave NW
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What's new this September?

Thursdays:
Bagua Old 8 Changes /
Sanshou 7&8 beginning & basics

Tuesdays:
Basics of Qi Gong

Mondays:
Partner work 7:30 - 9:00

Saturdays: October
Chen Taiji Pao Chui
beginning & basics

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Yang Taiji Quan:

Monday 4:15 - 5:45 pm
Tuesday 7:20 - 9:00 pm
Wednesday 9:00 - 10:30 am

Chen Taiji Quan Pao Chui:

Saturday 10:30-noon

Bagua Zhang:

NEW Tuesday 8:00 - 10:00 am
Thursday 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Taiji Sanshou Beginning:

NEW Thursday 7:30-8:45 pm

Sanshou Intermediate

Monday 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Sanshou Advanced

Saturday 9:00 - 10:30 am

Qi Gong:

Tuesday 6:00 - 7:15 pm

Roushou:

Wednesday 6:00-7:30 pm

Starting September I will be offering private lessons before Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday classes. Booking must be a week ahead.

Sunday Workshop

The Dojo Elite!

Sunday, October 3rd

A day to experience the numerous talents of the dojo long term and senior instructors. I thought it would be a great session for instructors to share their unique insight and exceptional talents with each other and club members.

Take advantage of it if you can. *Coordinating dojo members is like herding cats! You'll have the opportunity to learn and experience the talents of:*

Don, Joel, Bruce, Burk, & Tom.

All, long term students and each with their unique outlook and talents.

To be honest, each have skill and talent they really aren't aware of. In my opinion that's the mark of real skill and talent (yet they are oblivious to this).

Challenge them! Come with questions and enthusiasm.



HELP THE DOJO OUT

The economy has hit us all :(

Please post available newsletters, posters, and workshop handouts where appropriate. Due to time off, children, job changes, vacations, the economy, and . . . enrollment has suffered.

I'm, begrudging, re-thinking the dojo set-up into quarterly courses instead of monthly payments. **I.E.** a course on sword, pao chui, san or rou shou. What's your opinion? Email me. I need to make the dojo more 'user friendly'.

The Secrets

Visiting with an old classmate I heard an interesting perspective.

"I wish I was part of the inner group, you guys got the secrets."

There was no inner group. He shared and taught openly to everyone. It's just those that listened with beginner's mind, and practiced what was taught, developed skill.

I've seen this over the years in classes I've attended. I've even seen it in our own club at times! On the one hand you have students too young to understand the depth of what's being taught. On the other hand some filter what is taught into their own perspective or previous training. A good example of this is a student that taught Xing Yi Quan. With a Karate background he assumed he understood what the master was teaching since it 'looked' similar to what he knew. So he taught Xing Yi movements in a karate fashion. The internal principles weren't there.

Some are so wrapped up in what they are doing they ignore the lesson, some dismiss what is said since they believe they know it and continue with what they were working on.

As a teacher it's frustrating. As I watch and study the members in practice my focus is how to improve what you are doing, expand your range, or move you to the next level.

The resistance is impressive. Are you following the lesson plan? What the rest of the class is doing, or are you tuned out? Have you mastered the lesson so you can disregard it?

I often talk about being a good uke, but what about being a good student? Not for the teachers sake but for yours. As I lead the various classes in form, some don't follow but do their own thing. Why be in the group? Try to surf the teacher's moves. I've learned most from following Master Tchoung or Gao Fu carefully. I know I'm not at their level but at the same time I do believe I can teach much through motion and form. "Give yourself up to follow others." If you're not following you've tuned out.

When studying from master Tchoung, especially in his last few years, I was proud that I could still surf his form. I could feel his movements and even with my back to him I could feel the flow and energy of the forms. As I'd turn around I'd be and the right spot in the form. During the Yang Taiji session as I turn and see Don, I yield, I follow his form (very close to my own), but I give up and flow with his movements. I can learn from his timing. The same in Chen when I turn and Tom is in front of the form. I follow instead of doing my own thing. I've learned a lot.

The martial aspect of this is increasing our awareness and listening skill.