

## DO YOU HAVE A DIRECTION IN YOUR PRACTICE?

*"If you're unsure there is no direction,  
at the moment of commitment, the  
universe conspires to help you."*

Once again, the beginning of a new year gives us motivation and a reason to get back on track or start another track. It's time to put together our road map for the next month, months, year, or years.

When it comes to training in the internal arts we have many choices of levels to reach toward or not. However, it's important we know and accept our choices. If I decide I just need a little workout, meditation, and improve my health, then years from now I shouldn't be disappointed if my application or teaching skills aren't very good.

If I want to become a teacher I need to know more than the forms. If I want to understand internal energy then I need more than solo forms. Even for health if I want to get anywhere I need consistency in practice and do the extra work to get me moving in the proper direction.

Some of you have been around for years and have collected many forms and styles. What or which do you practice? After working diligently on the basics of any art things become, "All Same!" as Master Yueng says. Whether you work on the basics of one art or the other there is still depth developing (if you have your basics). As far as refinement then you might spend one month practicing intensely a solo or weapons form. Or perhaps spend the month just working on all the sword forms from the various styles. Just focus and train. You can also spend the month practicing daily or, better yet, twice daily one of the qi gong methods.

Know what you want and aim at where you want to be.

### T'ai-Chi for Geniuses

*(A Practice Companion for the Genius in Everyone)*

by Gene Burnett

Lori now calls it: *'The Book of Gene.'* It's an excellent guide to study and practice. We have copies available at the dojo or you can go to: [www.geneburnett.com](http://www.geneburnett.com)

### Asian Mind-Body Techniques

#### Revealed:

*Secrets for Reducing Stress and Improving Health*

by Harvey Kurland

Harvey gives detailed explanations on the benefits from practicing the internal arts as well as history and theory.

Available at Amazon.com

A.T.Dale Internal Martial Arts



# Winter 2011

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Coming this spring

## JANUARY - APRIL

- Bagua - we'll be working on studying the Inner Palms in detail, continue with the Liu Bin Old 8 Changes and linking form. (see article)
- Chen Taiji Quan - we'll be starting with more Chan Si Gong, 96 form, and continue to study the Pao Chui section 2.
- Yang Taiji Quan - Long form and push hands.
- Qi Gong - will continue featuring Chan Si Gong, Nei Gong Bang, and Aiki Taiso.
- Sanshou - Thursday class will begin to work on section B of 7&8. New members will learn section A.
- Yueng Quan/Roushou - will continue Wednesday nights. All levels.

## Schedule

Yang Taiji Quan:	Thursday 7:30-8:45 pm
Monday 4:15 - 5:45 pm	Sanshou Intermediate
Tuesday 7:20 - 9:00 pm	Monday 6:00 - 7:30 pm
Wednesday 9:00 - 10:30 am	Sanshou Advanced
Chen Taiji Quan Pao Chui:	Saturday 9:00 - 10:30 am
Saturday 10:30-noon	Qi Gong:
Bagua Zhang:	Tuesday 6:00 - 7:15 pm
Thursday 6:00 - 7:30 pm	Roushou:
Taiji Sanshou Basic:	Wednesday 6:00-7:30 pm

Private lessons offered before Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday classes. Booking must be a week ahead.

## BAGUA INNER PALMS

It's very common for beginners and seekers to 'overlook the near to seek the far'. Fancy forms, complicated applications, and impressive performance posturing.

These have nothing to do with developing real skill and function of the arts. Just like a basketball player never outgrows shooting hoops. The drills may not be impressive but this is where skill starts.

Traditional Bagua doesn't have standing meditation practice like the Taiji styles, instead we do them walking. These are our Inner Palms. (some styles have adopted standing.)

Instead of merely standing we hold various postures while walking a circle. This has greater difficulty than standing, since they also train our moving center while we study our alignment and principles of the art.

### THE TAIJI/BAGUA TREE

With the importance of our core principles of practice I decided to make an easy diagram of the important points pointed out by the various classical writings of Taiji, Bagua, and Xing Yi.

As a horticulturist it made

sense for me to use a tree. With the roots and stem, being the most important of the principles, then branching into the next most important and so on.

This gave me a map of priority to study and easy to remember.

As a classic says: from

While walking the circle there are so many things to practice mentally, energetically, and physically. Without the change of postures we are able to refine the three curves, five bows, six harmonies, relaxation, suspending the head top, etc.

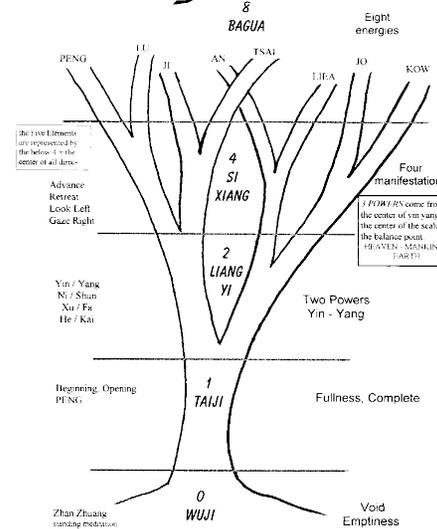
This only happens after our practice goes beyond a mere few minutes. Unfortunately we don't instantly relax or soften. This is a continual practice and study as we practice. We are studying ourselves. The longer we spend on holding each posture the more we learn and integrate into our muscle structure. Getting tired then stopping isn't an option for skill development. It's only after you're tired and sore that the lessons sink in and you learn internally.

The Inner Palms are called that because they force us to work on the internal of the art. They are not flashy, impressive, or fun but that's the training, not the party. I really enjoy the meditation and calm that comes from a long practice of simple circle walking.

Wuji (0) comes Taiji (1), Taiji is the mother of Yin/Yang (2).

Softness and Peng (fullness) are constants as Master Gao Fu would say. From here we study the interchange and transitions of Yin/Yang in their many expressions.

## Taiji Tree



### Think for yourself

I've been in the martial arts for over 40 years. In that time, in addition to learning martial arts I've been taught and have learned lots of miss-information or incorrect history.

Taiji was created by Chang San Feng . . . Really? Were you there? How do you know aside from what you've read? In reality we don't really know, all we know is what we've been taught and take it at face value. That's why, often, when talking about history, legends, and the art I'll start by saying, "I wasn't there but this is what's said."

Legends, fables, and stories are nice to hear and pass on but we also need to stay centered and clear. Especially now-a-days people are just repeating what they've been told or heard without knowing how accurate the source is. They'll spout some history to

verify what art or form they are doing. They will list great masters of their lineage. Now, if your father was a great dentist does that mean you'll be?

The important thing with the internal arts is that they are based on a series of classics and writing that give guidelines for correct practice. Regardless of the accuracy of the history or legends it's the principles of the internal arts that don't change. They are what determine where our practice is correct or not. Also, those we study and learn from should be 'walking the talk and the writings.'

I had heard many things about the marvels of Taiji & Bagua, but after seeing Master Tchoung able to do what I read I knew he was the one to study with. He 'walked the talk.'

It's not enough to go to class and be corrected. It's important to understand what and why the corrections are. By understanding this you will be able to correct and refine your own practice. Making the art yours. What I loved about Taiji was that once you learned the basic form it's yours. It's something you take with you and you don't need a special place or mats to practice. Now, for skill development you do need to know what is correct and what's not so each practice makes you better.

Learn the principles, read the classics and the writings of the past masters.

Tai Chi Chuan Qing	Song of Form and Function
Tai Chi Chuan Lun	36 Songs of Bagua
Insights to the 13 Postures	Bagua 48 Methods
Song of the 13 Postures	Song of Bagua Zhang
Yang's 10 Important Points	To name a few.