

## 2011 The Loss of 4 Masters ☹

Last year 4 exceptional masters of the martial arts died. I do want to emphasize the word: *MASTERS*. Two I had the privilege to train with, the others I only knew through reputation and friends.

Grandmasters (and I don't use the term lightly) Koichi Tohei (10dan Aikido, founder of Shin Shin Toitsu Aikido), Wally Jay (founder of small circle jujitsu), Sid Woodcock (master of Aikijitsu, knife, firearms, and explosives), and Robert Smith (responsible for the western world in discovering the internal arts and various great masters and teachings.)

These masters were not martial artists but artists! They took their learning and training and moved it to the next level. Each transformed the art into who they were and, along with their creativity and wisdom, created either a new art or took their art to the next level.

This is real/true art!  
GROWTH, CREATION, EVOLVING  
Triangle, Circle, Square  
Fixed, Fluid, Change

All learned the basics, respected the basic training and then when to the next step. Harris Sensei was among this group and studied with several of the above.

We must learn the basics! We must follow the rules and the core in order to improve the arts. These masters did. Then, their own intelligence and creativity moved it a level beyond. ART IS CREATIVE, MOVING FORWARD, EXPLORATORY.

We all have to deal with daily stuff. The one thought that has been bugging me is that if certain mundane things didn't matter, what would things really look like? If the artists (all aspects\*\*\*) and the creative geniuses were open to peruse their inclinations what would the world look like? There are people out there with exceptional abilities in every field that are distracted by survival (aka. just making a living).

Just a thought.

\*\*\* check out Burk's art at:  
Endolyne Joe's, 9261 45th Ave SW Seattle, WA  
Beautiful.

The loss of these masters is the loss of a bottomless source of creativity and uniqueness. I knew Harris sensei since about 1970. Over the year I saw him develop his art, and skill almost yearly. He was awesome back then but it seemed like each year his skill grew and grew, becoming more refined and subtle to the point it looks like

A.T.Dale Internal Martial Arts

## Winter 2012



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### Certification Clarification

As you've gotten dojo form completion certificates you'll notice that there are various 'level's designated. Here is an explanation:

Basic: you just learned the complete form

Intermediate: moving through the form easily or second time through.

Advanced: fluidly moving through the form, easily.

Instructor: understanding the applications of the form  
Master: a clear grasp of the form, applications, and various functions.

Sifu: able to free flow with the form and it's applications spontaneously.

A big congratulations to the following for studying diligently and completing the various forms and styles. The complexity of some of these forms are very difficult, especially the Bagua Sanshou.

### Bagua Sanshou

Bill Ross  
Don Scott  
Tom Flener  
Bruce Brown  
Debbie Doyle  
Edmund Ng  
Ruth Pattison  
Adam Gehrke

### Foot Trapping/ Lion Plays with Ball

Chin Na/  
Interlocking Rings  
Taiji Dalu  
Don Scott  
Tom Flener  
Debbie Doyle  
Ruth Pattison  
Bruce Brown  
Edmund Ng

### Yang Taiji Short Form

Hitomi Kuefler

### Basic Bagua teaching certification

Ed Baxa

### Chen Taiji Paochui

Tom Flener  
Don Scott  
Russ Fish  
Debbie Doyle  
David Miller  
David Anderson  
Ruth Pattison  
Joel Hartshorne

### Bagua 8 Wang Xujin Changes

Jim Harmon  
Peter Hranek  
Don Scott  
Ed Baxa  
Clay Germano

# Congratulations!

## **Approaches to learning #2:**

In my 40+ years of learning and teaching, I've noticed several different ways of learning forms and studying the arts. We all have our way of learning things, for me, Sensei Harris helped a lot. Early on, as we went out after a training session, he gave me a series of questions to answer. After completing them, he looked at it, then put the results on a graph. (I still have it somewhere.) It showed I learn mostly (not completely) by getting the idea of the lesson, rather than following the step-by-step instructions. This helped me to "translate" what my various instructors were teaching into my view of things.

Some things that work for solo forms don't work for applications. Even if your partner punches slowly, there is no time to intellectually understand the situation and figure it out. This is where basic drills come in. The route of over and over again train muscle memory, not mind thinking. This is why we should do drills for hours.

Today it was fun watching Debbie moving from one partner drill to another. Though the drills were different (Interlocking drills and Bagua partner form), I saw her naturally respond to a punch from the other form naturally. Though it wasn't the movement for that specific form there was a body wisdom that took over and she surfed the move. :)

I strongly believe that the way to get applications is to do simple moves several billion times. Each movement.

### ***Seek the near, not the far!***

One of my frustrations is that when working on partner drills or applications is that some, before having the basic movement perfected or even understood, will try to move on or try to figure out other or counter-movements. There is no understanding that unless the core movement is in muscle memory instead of mind memory, it doesn't matter. There is no skill development or intuitive, muscle memory learning. What happens is these individuals go on the defensive when attacked instead on the offensive. Too slow! It's like knowing what a car is, not knowing how to drive, yet planning on going on a road trip.

What I'm trying to say is that we need to focus on the simple, basic drills. Understand that in order to develop skill is repetition a million times. I can show you many counters for a technique but you can't really learn them. You need to be at a skill level where you can understand the technique applies so the counters are apparent, not calculated or thought of.

## **Approaches to learning #1:**

It's important for each of us to find our own way of learning. But at the same time we need to stretch and challenge ourselves to expand.

As I observe club members learning forms and applications there are a few noticeable variations.

1. foot goes hear, hand does this.
2. closing their eyes and trying to remember the lesson.
3. I think it's something like this.
4. I'll never get this, it's hard.
5. let me just do this one thing, over and over again :).

For a beginner, too much input is TOO MUCH! We do need to take things slowly and clearly so that we can learn and in-print it into muscle memory. (However, some of you think you're beginners but not! After 5 years of study you are not a beginner!)

Some of these techniques may work only learning solo forms compared to partner applications or vice-versa. In applications it's important to start with the simple drill and do it over and over again. Don't close your eyes, unless that's part of the drill, but be there and deal with the punch. Don't try for the full movement if it's over-whelming, just start simple then move on.

The more we tackle the less we get, or the longer it takes us. We need to let our partners know when we're in over-load. "Please, let's just do the first part. OK can we move to the next."

My goal for you is to develop skill, not tricks. I watch, study, and listen. I can see most of the time, whether you are getting it or not, or if it's on its way.

In applications, thinking doesn't help! One step at a time, each with many repetitions so that you don't have to think, just feel!

## **Muscle memory**

## **Taiji Joint Hands**

**Wednesdays, 7-8:15 \$25@ session  
until March 7th**