

## Please! DON'T CHECK YOUR BRAIN AT THE DOOR!



A dojo member (Anne) came up with this phrase: *'Don't check your brain at the door.'* It's perfect on so many levels! Very often students, once entering a dojo, disengage their brain and accept everything that is said and taught. Where else would you do that?

You are in a class with an expert in what they teach, right? And sometimes students assume the teacher is a *master* of life and has wisdom about everything. Honestly, people are people regardless of their skill and talents. We all excel in some areas, idiots in others, and mediocre on many things.

Over my history of studying these arts I was told and taught many things. As a sincere student I trusted what I was taught and told. My teacher wouldn't lie to me, would sensei? Well, it's not that simple. When I first started teaching I would repeat what I was taught, what my teacher taught, what the lineage said. As time went on, and research into the past expanded things weren't exactly so.

We trust our teachers to tell us the truth. What if they weren't told the truth? Or perhaps just a legend of the history? This has happened often in the martial arts and still is happening today as much history is being re-written.

Club members are probably tired of hearing from me: "This is what I've been told, I don't know, I wasn't there." But that's the fact for most of us. Several things I've been taught and trusted as history eventually, with research, wasn't true. Only legends and stories rewritten in book after book.

So what I'm saying is let the art speak for itself. The stories are great and encouraging but practice the art because you like it and it makes your life better, or you're having fun studying it.

The teaching and information you're taught isn't necessary wrong but don't accept it entirely since we really don't know. We weren't there! We know what we were taught, what we've read, and what makes sense to us. Doesn't it matter more what you get out of practice?

In the arts there seems to be a priority of the legacy instead of what can this do for me. Studying any art, we are all decedents of its founder. BFD Practice for yourself and your enjoyment, or find something else you enjoy to improve

## A.T.Dale Internal Martial Arts

# Winter 2014



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2013 was a difficult year for many of us. Let's leave it behind and focus toward a positive, hopeful, and prosperous 2014 and year of the horse.

One of the positive events for the dojo was Karin Collins offering her classes at the dojo. This eased-up much pressure on me and the extra bonus was being able to see Karin a few times a week instead of once or twice a year. The same holds true with Ken Wright who is teaching pushing hands, along with Karin, on Saturdays. Both talented, skillful, and super nice.

With Emerald City Gardens nursery closed and when I can complete the business aspects of it I'll be able to focus all my efforts back to the dojo :) I should have more physical and mental energy for dojo related stuff and events such as workshops, instructors training, private lessons, or even visiting!

I'll be doing my best to make Bandon Retreat happen this year. We've books a room at the Sunset Lodge for July 11th-13th. For those who can't go I'd like to try to resume the Seattle and local area group workshops. This will include dojo instructors and local teachers that are focused on the internal arts.

In the past I would organize a weekend Internal Arts Festival at a local park featuring several instructors. It was cool since you could sample the teacher's style and method of teaching. It was a 'meet the teachers' sort of thing. Once the dust settles from the closing of the nursery I hope I have the brain power to put it into action.

## PROGRESS AND MARKETING

Maybe since I'm a lousy marketing person, is the reason why this urks me. Growing up in a time when we sought out instructors and really wanted to learn the martial arts, there was no hype. As the years have gone by I've seen quite a bit of crap slowly arising and the focus moving away from teaching the 'real' art toward the making money from it. I know some will have issues with this but please question what's important.

Traditionally the martial and qi gong arts were not a business, they were passing on a tradition, a skill, and a family legacy.

It really gets to me when looking at current advertising and the marketing just to sell classes and to become famous or rich.

When I was a kid . . . . The signs and posters would say: 'Karate', 'Tai Chi Chuan', 'Chi Kung'. In current times you'll see: 'Traditional Karate', 'Original Tai Chi Chuan', 'Healing Qi Gong'.

The hype names: Traditional, Original, Family Tradition, Authentic, Healing, Ancient, Empowering, Modern, Improved, and many, many more have no relevance on the teachings of the art, the lineage, the credibility, or the authenticity of what is being taught. They are merely marketing tools. When I see these words I usually think of a scam. It's like, "order now and we'll send you one free." The thought that goes through my head is that they must be over-charging for just one.

When I first wanted to learn Taiji Quan, I went to several schools to watch. There weren't many at that time but I looked at the class, the students, and teacher. One of the most 'official' schools in the area wasn't very inviting (actually hostile) and had attitude. (I know, same thing.)

I was lucky to stumble onto several great instructors and eventually friends. There was no hype, no selling. Meeting Harris Sensei was typical. A nice friendly meeting and then his showing what he did, no selling of his art or school. Meeting Master Tchoung his comment was: "Taiji good for you." It was: 'This is what we do, what we like, what I learned'.

Engage your brain! When I hear someone listing 'Healing' I automatically think there must be 'Unhealthy'. When I hear traditional I automatically think 'untraditional'?" How can that be? It's all based on the core, even the 'untraditional'. Think about it; if you are practicing Taiji or any of these arts . . . . If you follow where you learned it and the ancestry it will all eventually lead back to the Chen Taiji Village! Bagua will lead back to Tung Hai Quan. This is true of all arts. If you're learning an art, the lineage may not be 'official', but you are of that tradition.

To be extreme, I wouldn't be surprised to see the phrases of: 'Super Healing', or 'Internal Healing', or 'Hidden Teachings', or 'Secret Family Style' used as a promotional gimmick.

*WORDS TO BE AWARE OF:*

OFFICIAL  
HEALING  
THERAPUTIC  
EMPOWERING  
SECRET  
ANCIENT  
ORIGINAL



Original is interesting considering these are physical art forms and everyone interprets them as their body can. Take the Chen Taiji Style, the original Taiji Style. Well, within that there was small frame, medium frame, large frame. Which was the original?

### CLUB CHANGES

To encourage enrollment and make the dojo more 'user friendly' I've modified class schedules a little.

#### CHEN TAIJI (Sundays)

10-11 am beginning (qi gong & basics)  
11-12 am form work & sword

#### YANG TAIJI (Tuesdays)

7-8 pm beginning (qi gong & basics)  
8-9 pm form and continuing

#### BAGUA ZHANG (Thursdays)

7-8 pm beginning & basics  
8-9 pm form work  
9-10 pm advanced

### MORNING SESSIONS

#### SUN TAIJI (Tuesdays)

9-10 am all levels

#### YANG TAIJI (Wednesdays)

9-11 am all levels

#### BAGUA ZHANG (Thursdays)