

I am super proud.



And, it's no surprise to club members or those who have had interaction with the club over the years. I am certifying with no hesitation that Joel Hartshorne should be titled:

Sifu

Sounds good?

Sifu Joel Hartshorne :)

SIFU: Father/teacher/mentor/master

I have trouble with the word 'master' since I consider my teachers MASTERS and I can't imagine reaching their skill level, but I will keep trying. To me, the word SIFU indicates one who has not only the basics but also has embraced the art and seeks to further their research and development, enhancing the art. It's not a calculated thing but one of love for the art and an extreme interest in its depth.

I call Joel 'Mr. Bagua'. This is due to his passion for the art and relentless pursuit in refining each movement. However, he also has that same passion for Taiji, regardless of style. His mind is always researching and working on what the movement can be or is. Let's face it, he's obsessed. This is a real artist, not a technician.

Joel has been a member of the dojo since 1983. He moves like silk, his applications are strong and gentle, and he is kind. PERFECT! Willing to share what he's figured out and able to communicate it to others. He is mostly responsible for our Bagua Sanshou Form due to his creativity.

I AM BEYOND PROUD. - Andy

Last year, for many of us, was the year of destruction. Year of the snake, shedding old skin. This is the year of the horse, galloping forward into new, positive ventures. Frankly, I don't believe in astrology, but.... Looking back at my own history it seems every 12 years (year of the horse) great changes have happened and become a positive change. Not easy, but positive.

The dojo is going through a similar change. After 40 years I will be closing the dojo but I will keep teaching classes in Seattle. We'll see how it works out. Over the last few years we've missed spring and summer classes in the park. Well, we will go forward to it and enjoy the trees and grass again. This change will mostly likely happen April.

A.T.Dale Internal Martial Arts

Spring 2014



WHAT INTERNAL MEANS

As I've been teaching these arts for over 40 years I've seen trends and various tendencies that seem to prove true year after year.

What teaches the 'real' or the 'secret' of the art as I know it? How can get the message through? How to improve the health and quality that the teachings of the internal arts dictate.

What I've learned over the years is to try to open up the mind or mind-set of the individual learning these arts. I'm not trying to blatantly offend anyone but there is a pattern here. I've been at this for a while and you may be the exception to what I've experienced.

As the Tao Te Ching and the Taiji Classics say: "Seeking the far you are oblivious to the near." When I have students mostly interested in the application, I'll do some of that but generally I know they'll miss the mark. They'll miss the development possible by studying the internal martial arts and potential skill levels. Simply, those focused entirely on the application are looking for special techniques and how to conquer the enemy by 'tricks' instead of developing skills of adapting and surfing, letting the training take control. The idea is that if the opponent does this, I can do this to control the situation. The idea that a particular technique will cover it. In fact skill should take

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over and the appropriate action will result. IT IS SURFING!

When I teach someone with hard style or fighting background I tend to un-emphasize the martial aspect since that is all they will focus on. They don't seem to care about the body dynamics and coordination of what will produce the power, only about the result or how powerful they are doing the technique.

On the other hand, when I have students only interested in the health or spiritual aspects, it's the reverse. Actually it's mostly about their thoughts and what they imagine, disregarding their body/mind/and energy coordination. Waving your hands and dancing through a movement maybe good exercise but only minimally works energy or focuses the mind and intent. Thinking about moving your hands forward is very different from focusing on pushing someone on a swing or down the stairs! Closing your hand is very different from thinking about grabbing and pulling something.

The bottom line is the internal arts focus on 'Intent leads energy.' How to maximize our body/mind/energy movement and coordinate them to be our most efficient. Regardless of what we are doing.

Now, if you don't care about developing skill it just doesn't matter. Any movement is good for you in comparison to sitting on the couch. Hell, going for a walk is excellent for your body/mind/spirit. The internal arts all focus on your mind and intent. Hence the common phrase: 'meditation in motion.' It is a coordination, training, and discipline of all: body/mind/energy/spirit. If you go for a walk, leave your phone and ipad home.

So, what do you want from these arts? To stay healthy? (physically only? Mentally calm? Increase qi and energy flow for helath?) To experience the deep levels these arts can lead you to as far as health, awareness, healing, or spirituality?) To become safe and an accomplished martial artist? (fear no one?)

We are the drivers in our own lifetime car. We can direct the direction we're going in and it's important to know and, most importantly, know what to get rid of in our journey. Find a good teacher that walks the talk and you can trust to lead you there. Find a teacher that moves the way you'd like to move. Find a teacher that is kind and cares.

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CLUB CHANGES

As we move to the park I will try to keep the schedule the same. Eventually, smaller classes will be eliminated and maybe other sessions will be offered. We've lost many members over the last year due to moving, family stuff, finances, and seeking other interests. The club no longer supports the overhead and expenses of keeping the storefront going. This spring and summer we will be in the park. I have several options (all in Ballard or Greenwood) for next autumn and winter. Currently:

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

PROMOTIONS

As the closing of the 'official' school comes near, I'd like to make a formal declaration of a few promotions.

LET IT BE OFFICIALLY NOTED:

Nidan (2nd degree blackbelt)

David Sherman

Yondan (4th degree blackbelt)

Mike Ullman

Burk Dowell

Sifu (master/father/trainer)

Joel Hartshorne

Advanced Bagua Teaching

Jim Harmon

Intermediate Bagua Teaching

Alek Swanson

Intermediate Yang Taiji Teaching

Edmund Ng

