

RUTS AND HABITS

As I wrote in the last article, we need to stretch and expand ourselves in all areas. I wonder if the reason some of us are lefties or righties is because it's easy and we're too lazy? There's also lots of traditional superstitious mythologies in most cultures about being left-handed. My grandfather and mother were forced to learn to be right handed as youths in school.

Those who have a passion for playing music don't consider it unusual to be required to use both hands. Have you ever heard, "I'm a right-handed piano player?" Potters may favor one side but need both to act in harmony for them to create their art. If you ever drove a manual transmission it really didn't take long before you were able to use your left foot for shifting gears, did it?

This comfort, of having something consistent and set, keeps us locked-in (for good or bad) to certain patterns.

If I'm used to doing the form only right sided I'm locked into a long, one direction/hallway. If I learn the form left I now have a wide, two direction hallway. Though this is great using our less dominant hand doing the forms but it's still just a larger box we're in. Changing sides now-and-then throughout the form stretches us even more since we're following or creating and changing the patterns we know. Even though changing more often, creates its own, but larger box we're in. The next step might be mixing forms or directions, just making up the next movements, or . . . trying to do the form backwards! (*I know, it'll reverse your Qi! Maybe that'll be good for you.*)

Fixed - Fluid - Change

These are the progression levels in Bagua Zhang.

First: your movements and postures are set to develop structure and strength.

The physical training.

Second: you practice fluidity. Smooth and quick footwork with change of directions. The energetic training.

Third: is change; mixing various forms and movements. Being creative with what you know and trying to think outside the box. Your spirit should roam free and explore.

WORKSHOPS

KNIFE THROWING

August 27, 2017 (Sunday)
Burlington (limit 10) Cost \$70

We have a date set for Sifu Restita DeJesus' workshop on Knife Throwing ☺ (*It comes in handy when people run away from you!*)

Restita is highly skilled in several martial arts.



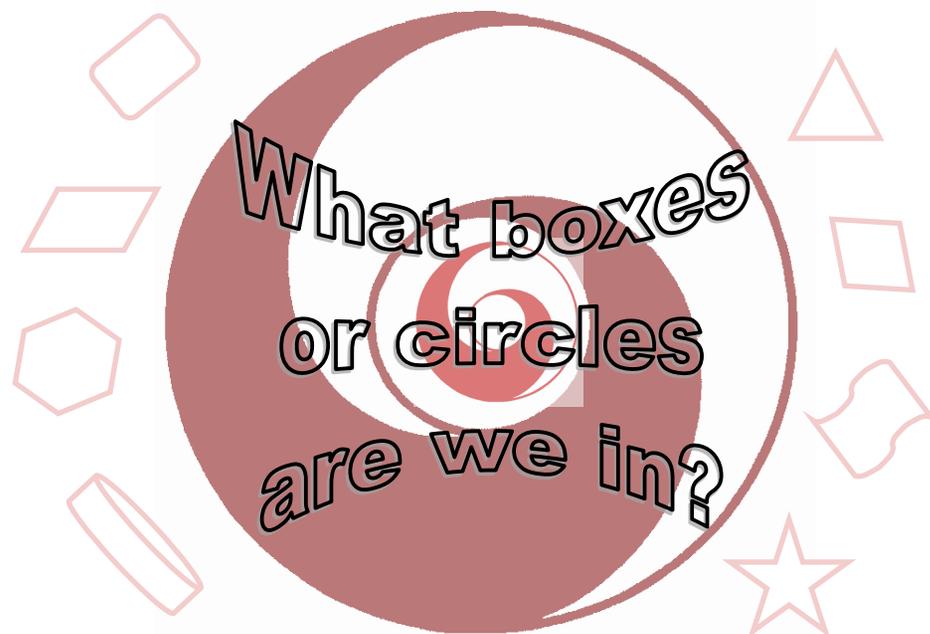
She is awesome with a bullwhip which I hope we can schedule a future workshop.

You will need to have your own equipment to attend. Screaming Arrow Knives on Amazon. Also needed is either softwood rounds or floor puzzle mats.

Sifu Restita DeJesus is Master Instructor of Seattle Wushu.

Taoist Movement Arts

Autumn 2017



BURLINGTON

Kalahi Martial Arts
Academy/Maiben Park

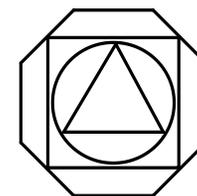
Bagua Zhang

Tues 10:15-11:30 am
Sat 8:30-9:30 am

Tues 5-6 pm

Taiji Quan

Tues & Thurs am



Though each one is larger than the last, each has its outline, it's restricted.

SEATTLE

SUNDAYS

Sanshou 9-10
Chen Taiji Quan 10-11
Yang Taiji Quan 11-12

MONDAYS

Sun Taiji Quan 9-10 am
Bagua Roushou 10-11
Bagua Zhang 6-7:30 pm

WEDNESDAYS

Yang Taiji Quan 10-11 am

Healthy Mind & Body

We've seen many reports and documentations on how good Taiji is for physical health. Everything from improving balance and bone strength, to benefiting the immune system. Did you know doing something relaxing is good for your health?

But...

WHAT ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH?

After learning the forms, your focus should be on relaxing and feeling your movements. This exercises your mind, brain, attention, and spirit. This also increases mind/body coordination and the bond that strengthens our nervous and muscular systems. Ideally merging them closer and closer.

However....

Most Taiji methods seem to embrace the right dominant side instead of being balanced in its practice. How many of you Taiji people practice punching left handed? Do you practice *Grasping Sparrow's Tail/Lazily Tying Coat* left handed? Even *Single Whip*? Try it! I've heard many excuses for why this is so but most are either from copying traditional practice (*because it's wrong to change*) or superstitious reasoning: "*The Qi won't flow properly.*"

As a student of Grandmaster T.T. Tchoung and his teachings, it has influenced my life, thoughts, and outlook. Especially how I teach, and what I think is important to our training to increase our **overall** health and skill. His genius in creating the symmetrical Yang Taiji Solo Form is brilliant. (he was the first to do this!)

Did you know that Taiji Quan is the **only** martial art that teaches empty-hand solo forms one sided? In the last few years there are some that are adopting double sided practice but it still isn't common in Taiji. The majority of martial arts, internal and external, emphasize right and left *except* with most weaponry.

WHY?

MIND-BODY-SPIRIT

Now to my point: We've all heard that some of us are right brained, others left. Some of us are right handed, others left. We have the analytical side and the creative side. Some of us tend to be creative some are technical.

身心合一

MIND/BODY UNITY

Mind and body are *elements* of our greater wholeness, they are not independent! They are the Taiji symbol, Yin/Yang intertwined and inseparable. Each effects the other for health or not, for good or not, for happy or not.

USE IT OR LOOSE IT!

Your body, your muscles: if you don't work them or challenge them they stiffen and you loose your range of motion. If you exercise and move about moderately all stays in moderate shape.

The same holds true for your mind. If

you're mentally active and curious, your mind grows stronger just like a muscle. Muscles and mind need constant exercise! There has been research that shows those who are mentally active are less likely to show



Diagram of Chan Su

Spiraling energy, the twining of one's energy and muscles. We need to cross-wire our brain also!



symptoms of Alzheimer's. Even though they have it! The brain, being active, creates new connections when the usual ones break down. Keeping the brain active (exercising it) keeps that muscle strong.

I've read that as we get older it's good to learn another language. Learning another language not only effects the mind but also our senses, our body. It *stretches/exercises* us on many levels.

ALL SAME Master Yueng's quote

Due to Master Tchoung's teachings and influence, it started me doing all the weaponry left handed. Now, it doesn't matter or feel awkward using the sword, broadsword, or spear left handed. In his Yang Taiji solo form we switch right to left, then left to right, and back and forth throughout the form. It seems very natural and easy after a while. Nothing special.

I've incorporated this to the Chen, Sun, and Wu Taiji forms as well. It just makes sense. The last form I learned from Master Tchoung, which he learned from Master Wu Tunan, was the Wu Broadsword. What impressed me about this form was there are moments where you'd switch hands with the broadsword. It felt natural. This is why I've spent the last few years re-working the Taiji and

Bagua weaponry to integrate the two sides without modifying the character of the original forms. Beginners who learn them this way think it's nothing special while advanced members who didn't, find it quite difficult since they are locked into a one-sided weapons form.

Aside from its physical benefits it stretches and challenges our brain, mind, and intent. Perhaps harmonizing left and right brain. Though I've practiced for years left and right weaponry, the Wu Broadsword taught me the importance of switching back and forth continually instead of performing the forms all right sided, then left side. Those who saw my Broadsword on Ice might notice that's what I was doing. The real reason for that was it was the only way I could do certain jumps and spins!



A CHALLENGE!

Even if you're comfortable with studying weaponry right and left, or if you're a new member, here is a exercise for you to expand/stretch/challenge your mind, body, spirit connection:

Practice writing your first name in your opposite hand. The difficulty is because the mind/body harmony, the mental/physical, muscle/nerve coordination isn't there! Challenge your limitations.

Increase your mental/physical/emotional/spirit muscle to an area beyond its understanding and comfort.

Exercise your body/mind/brain coordination :)

If you're already ambidextrous then take up juggling.