



# INTERNAL WUSHU ARTS NEWSLETTER

A.T.Dale - P.O. Box 77040 - Seattle WA 98133 - (206)283-0055 - subscriptions \$12/yr.

## SATURDAY CLASSES

Feb. 4 - Los Angeles workshop  
 Feb.11 - free hands 10-12, \$15  
 Feb. 18 - 7&8 10-12, \$15  
 Feb. 25 - short staff 9-11, \$10  
 Mar. 11 - group practice 9-11 free  
 Mar. 18 - 7&8 10-12, \$15  
 Mar. 25 - short staff 9-11, \$10  
 Apr. 1 - tuishou 9-11, \$10

## SUMMER WORKSHOP

Sat & Sun - July 1 & 2nd  
 Mt. Vernon WA  
 \$60 per day/ \$100 both days  
 Each day will be divided into three parts. I will be focusing on adapting our studies of chi kung in order to boost our practice in

forms and tuishou work. The theme this year will be "LISTENING ENERGY".

## NEW AREA CODE



My number in Mt. Vernon is now (360)428-5974

## MORNING CLASSES

Bring gloves and a sweater. We will start moving classes outside weather permitting.

## CLASS RULES:

1. Relax
2. Practice if you're not receiving instruction.
3. Practice softly, gently, and mindfully.

4. Don't rush. This applies to your learning as well as your forms
5. Talk during class should be either instructions or questions.
6. Move to another room if you need to visit.
7. Ask questions
8. Help one another
9. No pain, don't force any movement.
10. Club fee is due the first of the month. Please pay on time.

## SIFU'S BOOK

Sifu's book is expected to be available during our March visit. The book will be \$30.00 + 2.46sales tax(shipping extra). If you have signed up for the book or want a copy I need your money NOW. I can't front the money to cover the books. Keep in mind that this is the only book on our lineage of Yang Tai Chi Chuan, written by its Grandmaster, and is in limited quantity.



## GARDEN LOVERS

Avant-Gardens is having it's open house March 4&5. I-5 to exit 224, turn R, turn L, turn R onto Hickox Rd. 1795 Hickox Rd., Mt. Vernon (360)428-5974.

## CLUB ITEMS

Club T-shirts	\$15
Chi Kung Book	\$8
Misc. Videos	\$35
'94 Newsletters	\$5
'93 Newsletters	\$5
Sifu's book	\$32.46

## TUISHOU

### THE EIGHT TEACHERS

1. softness
2. emptiness
3. hard
4. solid
5. neutralize
6. counter
7. what if?
8. our partner

While we're pushing or being pushed we can adopt any of the first six characteristics and learn from them and the actions and reactions that result. Our partner is always our teacher by permitting us a chance to practice, observe, and receive their efforts.

What if? is to be open to experiment and try any movement regardless of the possible weakness.

In tuishou we have the responsibility to be careful and safe. This means using 'listening' energy in order not to use excess or inappropriate force while working with our partners. It is our responsibility to keep ourselves safe in practice also, don't expect your partner to 'take care of you'. It's nice when they do but slips do happen once in a while and this is a martial art!

Beginners can teach you patience, advanced students can teach you to invest in loss and let go. Someone your own level can teach you to be subtle. A hard forceful partner can teach you to be empty. A soft or empty partner can teach you to listen carefully and seek. A solid partner can teach you not to use strength, to use your legs and connect your body. A neutralizing partner can teach you to be clever. A countering partner can show you your stiffness.

## KOOTENAY RETREATS

### TAI CHI CHUAN

August 13-19

\$395 Canadian \$335 US

Don't miss it! This is a week long study and practice of Tai Chi with four instructors. This year Harold Naka, Harvey Kurland, Rex Eastman and myself will be the staff. Daily chi kung, form, weapon and tuishou practice. With lectures and group discussions on tai chi chuan. Enrollment is limited so send in your deposit ASAP.

### PA KUA CHANG

August 21-27

\$395 Canadian \$335 US

This is the first year Rex will be doing a week-long Pa Kua retreat. Mike Smith, Rex Eastman, and Bob Algera will be instructing.

Send to:

KOOTENAY TAI CHI CENTRE  
 Box 566  
 Nelson, B.C. V1L 5R3  
 (604)352-3714

## Oh knock it off!!

Instead of being in the here and now, one of our primary areas to get stuck in is the past; what we should have done and why it's too late now, we're too old. Well in the internal arts age doesn't really matter since we're developing skills that aren't based upon athletic ability. So... you're never too old! The most common statement I hear is, "I started this too late" or "I'm too old for this." I've even had a 21 year old whine about being too old and regretting not having started younger!

*A young swordsman came to a great master asking for instruction.*

*"How long will it take me to master the sword?"*

*"20 years" says the master.*

*"What if I practice very hard?"*

*"25 years" says the master.*

*"What if I practice day and night, even harder?"*

*"30 years" says the master.*

*Perplexed The Young Swordsman Asks, "Why Is It The Harder I Tell You I'll Practice, You Give Me A Longer Time In Order To Master The Art?"*

*The Master Looks Up And Says, "With One Eye Focused Upon Your Destination There Is Only One Left To See And Learn From The Present."*

Youth may actually have a detrimental effect on achieving skill in the internal arts. By youth I guess I'm referring to the characteristics of impatience and seeking superficial prizes (the forms, the weapons).. 'I've studied this, this and this, I know this form, and this form...' As far as age being an asset instead of a detriment two masters come to mind as good examples: Master Gao-fu and Master T.T. Liang both who started in their 50's and have achieved very high levels of mastery. The bottom line to achieving any mastery in the internal arts isn't age but dedication to practice and *MATURITY*.

As we look at true masters of these arts, most of them are in their 70, 80 & 90's and still going strong. Vital and healthy, they just get better and better - softer yet stronger. And here as young twerps we're saying, "I started too late". There's something being missed here; the forms and physical workout is only a part of the practice. Only when we can stop chasing these forms and take the time to listen to what our practice has to teach; do we advance. I personally see youth (yes I'm a youth!), as a disadvantage. It slows us down. Our age makes us blind to certain depths of the art that enable us to access the higher levels of skill and understanding. Seeds are

self contained, each holds the entire program for the tree it will become if it gets the proper planting, nutrients, water and light. I believe each posture is the same, the nurturing of it is paying attention and listening to it as we practice and study. If we don't have the time to nurture it properly (water, food, light) then it's doesn't have a chance to grow.

As with all our studies excess effort and desire creates obstacles in our way to what we are trying to achieve. The harder we try to relax the less we can RELAX, so we try harder which results in frustration and tension. Generally speaking patience and self-knowledge are what I see as key factor of maturity. Realizing that you just can't push the river to make it go faster. Coincidentally these are the principles that make this art effective in health and self-defense. It's "Listening" energy that's important to develop.

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*He who knows others is smart.*

*He who knows himself is wise.*

*laotse*

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It's more important to enjoy the journey. In our youth (either in age or in the short time we've been studying the art) we'd like the instant gratification our society pushes. In the natural process of life it's not possible, everything has its own growth pattern and timing. When things are forced to mature or grow faster than normal we end up with a weakness or a weak link. Plants forced into premature growth either in greenhouses or due to excess fertilizers are not capable of withstanding real weather conditions such as storms, droughts etc.

Much of what we practice, study and learn is planted like a seed inside our being. It will have it's own timing of growing depending upon our own life's situations. We come to class and practice relaxation and centering, we get a taste of a deeper relaxation than we've encountered before. The next day it's back to our daily life with stress, decisions, activities etc. The relaxation we had the night before is just a memory. That's not really true, the seeds of relaxation have been planted inside us. If it get nurtured properly daily it will sprout and then become more influential in our future actions, becoming more and more a part of us each practice session.

Add a drop of water to a cup of tea and there is no apparent change even though there is a very small change. Over time as more drops are added the change begins to be noticed until, after much practice/time the



cup looks like it's only holding water. Change happens slowly, naturally.

Younger members are too concerned with the next form and eager to show off their new form. After learning a form, instead of spending time researching and listening to what the form has to teach it's on to the next, the next, the next. It's as if there is a deadline they need to meet to complete the form, system, style or to reach the end for the prize. What happens is much acquired superficially and nothing really understood or appreciated. There also is this idea that they'll perfect it later, there will be more time later. It just doesn't happen since later there is too much to practice and still too little time. I say this about myself since I've been quite a form collector over the years. Completing a form leads to a self-delusion of knowing the form. After 25 years I still don't really know the depths of the various forms I practice. Actually there is one form that I feel I have some depth to (I think?) . I'm in the process of dropping some so I may have the time to research the basics and gain depth to what I do have. How many hours in the day do you have time to practice? (by practice I mean with quality) How many things can you divide your attention and effort toward and still keep up the quality of what you are doing? How many books can you read at one time and keep them straight? Each loaf of bread needs a certain time in the oven for it to bake, take it out too soon and you have warm batter. The older the student the greater the ability to focus and enjoy what they are doing now, no rush, the postures of their current movement and the current form and in no hurry to move on. Maturity has the gift of seeing depth not just the surface. This attitude permits a greater understanding and feeling of each movement so the practitioner can penetrate deeper levels us younger members can't see yet or we skip over. At 50 mph you can see as much of the scenery as at 5 mph.

The internal arts are deep and subtle, they are mind, body and spirit discovery. Each of these has it's own timing and levels to penetrate. Force and speed create resistance. As with water, the slower water travels upon the ground the more time it has to penetrate into the ground it passes.

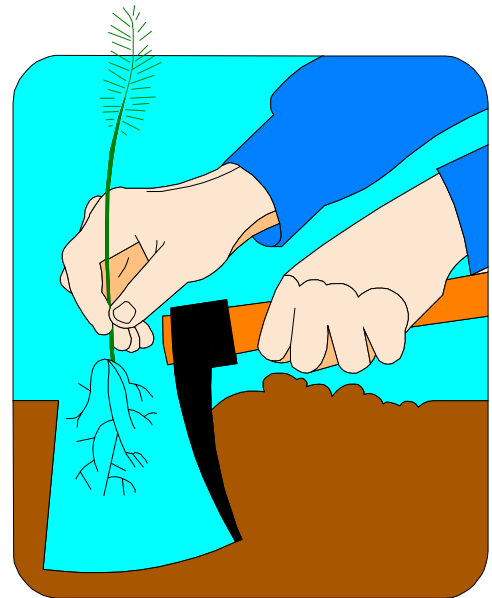
As I watch someone practice a movement their timing of the movement and transitions tells me whether their concentration is deep, if they are 'listening' or if it's superficial. The individual postures may not be as low or pretty as a younger member but there is quality (this isn't a performance art). It's easy to see if a students is focusing on the energy flow, muscle flow, or only the movements. In a kick where the foot is slapped it's easy to hear how deep the relaxation or the concentration is by the depth of the sound of the slap or stomp of the foot. The more strength being used the lighter the sound and no real power to the movement.

Let's forget about forms, systems and completion of them. How strong and stable are your basics? How well do you do the forms you currently know? As I ask myself this I go back to the beginning and start over. Teaching isn't practicing! I have so much work and so little time. CORRECTION: I have a life time.

Studying and practicing these arts for 30 years doesn't matter if the quality of those years was poor. I've seen quite a few people with only 3 years of practice having greater skill and depth than some with 40 years of practice. I've seen this in Tai Chi Chuan, Pa Kua Chang, Chi Kung and Aikido.

Now - you may not be able to do low stances or a deep Snake Creeps Down but this isn't a performance art. Do you do it correctly and are you learning from it? Do you understand how to practice? Do you give each form its proper time to bake?

Now since this is the start of a new year pick one of the forms you know and spend this year to perfect it. Invest your time and effort for greater interest. Dig deep into something you already have.



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# TEACHINGS OF KUO FENG CHI

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## **RELAXATION & SLOWNESS**

These are the secrets of the internal system. To gain a foothold a novice takes a standing posture in order to quiet his nerves, relax and soften his muscles. This phase is largely mental, spiritual, the mind can will relaxation and softness. With practice and concentration all distracting thoughts will be shut out, your nerve-ends sharpened but at ease, and your whole being peaceful and sublimated. An old Chinese sayings is: "To stand still results in the mind's settlement, mind settlement in tranquillity, tranquillity in a sense of security, security in wholesome thinking, and wholesome thinking in great accomplishment."

Slowness refers not only to action but also to a state of mind free from any impatience and anxiety. By beginning slowly the novice will have time to seek, listen to, feel for, and apprehend the quintessence of boxing and to adjust his body limbs to test the reactions from the various muscles.

## **THE MIND (1)**

Consciously or subconsciously all physical functions are directed by the mind. Training the mind slowly enables one to transform internal truths into external boxing forms. If a beginner lays too much stress on physical performance, he will fall short.

## **THE BREATH**

Sink your breath to your navel, which will permit you to breathe normally even in the midst of strenuous movement. Practice itself will harmonize action and breathing. The internal stresses naturalness. Watch how a child breathes and then do likewise. A novice should not fuss about breathing; gradually and naturally it will take care of itself.

## **USE OF STRENGTH**

It is easier for a weak person or one who knows nothing of boxing to learn the internal methods. Such a person is not preoccupied with past instruction and has no reservation on the advice given. Our strength is reserved inside and evenly distributed. It is always living and highly volatile. there are three requirements in order to develop a promising embryo in the internal boxing: slowness, softness, evenness of action & breathing.

## **SUBSTANCE AND FUNCTION**

An ancient boxing classics states: "Boxing is like taking a walk; striking an enemy is like snapping

your fingers." The substance of the internal boxing is on the mental, not the material, it brings health with it. The internal studies the theory of change, and the interplay of yin and yang and how to win by wisdom rather than tricks. Its desire is to win without a hot fight, but to win so that no doubt lingers in the mind of the attacker.

## **CONCEPTS NEEDED FOR TRAINING**

Wu wei is to become like a blank piece of paper. Every internal student tries to achieve this. It brings harmony to life. This process requires time and energy. These arts stress *I* (mind). From *I*, action comes and is dominated. To remain still although your body moves. The idea is formed, and if you want to move, you do; if you want to stay still, you do. If you want to be hard or soft, you will it. To the internal the spirit must dominate the body. First adopt wu-wei and wang-o (forgetting self).

1. Boxing requires movement but first the internal requires stillness;
2. To defeat the enemy requires strength, but first the internal requires softness;
3. Fighting requires speed, but first the internal requires slowness.

If a person desires to learn internal boxing with the maximum speed and the greatest efficiency, he has to heed all the above.

## **FINAL WORD**

For your body to accept the gift of the art it must not only be disciplined but also must be re-made. It involves initially relaxation and softness, from which later springs true hardness. Do the exercises slowly so as to enhance feeling. Think and feel mightily as you move. Pause at the end of the movement -- inaction aids relaxation. The more you relax in the first phase, the more strength you will have in the second.

Kuo Feng Chi was one of the Pa Kua masters Robert Smith studied with in Taiwan.
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