

NEWSLETTER

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atdale@cnw.com http://www.cnw.com/~atdale/ subscription \$15yr

TRAINING THROUGH BOREDOM

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Nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Perseverance and determination alone are omnipotent." - Calvin Coolidge

In a previous article I wrote about the constant repetition of a technique in order to get good. A problem that can occur with this type of training is boredom. My brother Joe tells a story about his early training with Peter Ralston. He and Peter would drill a blending technique. They would drill 1/2 to one hour every class. Joe was going to class 4 to 6 days a week. This went on for two years. Joe says he was so sick and tired of doing this drill and he would literally get ill just thinking about going to class and having to do this drill again. He was never so happy (except when he got married) as the day he went to class and they did not do the drill. Here are a few suggestions to overcome the boredom of constantly drilling.

1. USE YOUR INTELLECT - Use your mind to analyze the technique. Ask yourself how it might be applied. How can it be varied to be more effective? How can it be utilized to steal balance, finish a opponent, set up another technique? What techniques can be used to set it up or hide it? What types of opponents would it work against? What targets on your opponent can it be used on? The idea is that you should be evaluating the technique and it's usage. Think about it and analyze it as you drill it.

2. USE YOUR IMAGINATION - Use your imagination when you are drilling the technique. Imagine a movie scene. Make up some dialog "your Kung Fu is good but it is no match for the Black Tornado." Play with the drilling and make it a fun exercise. See how far you can do it in a straight line. Challenge yourself to do it around a tree 1000 times. See if you can make little kids laugh and dogs bark as you do it.

3. VARY YOUR LOCATION - Practice in a different place. Instead of the park, practice in your garage. Instead of the Dojo, practice on a hill. Practice along a river bank. Practice in the woods. Practice in a swimming pool. Change the time of your practice from night to early morning. New locations have different energies and feeling that you can utilize to put renewed vigor into your practice.

4. VARY YOUR PARTNERS - If you are practicing partner drills, varying your partner will definitely alleviate boredom. This will cause you to vary the way you drill to match the new partner. If you practice alone, do your drilling with another person present. It can add a new energy to the exercise. Do it with a new girlfriend, boyfriend, mistress, or lover and impress them with your fabulous skill.

5. TEACH IT TO SOMEONE - You don't need to be a teacher to teach someone the drill you are doing. Teaching it will help you analyze it and hopefully reach a deeper understanding of it. I hope these are helpful ideas to keep you going. I believe it is critical for success in the martial arts to be persistent. "



MASTER GAO FU

***arrives mid June ***

OUTSIDE SESSIONS

Be sure to bring a sweater (perhaps gloves) to practice considering the occasional cool breeze at Discovery Park. Also remember the code: car on street we're in the park.

SATURDAY SESSIONS

In June we will be moving outside until fall. We will move to the area by the tennis courts on 50th and Woodlawn Ave. This is the area directly east of hwy 99 just off of 50th street. There is one parking lot and one circular drive around.

SUMMER RETREAT

July 25,26,27,28

Visiting instructors so far: Michael Gilman, John Camp, Bob Iden, myself and some surprises visitors. In the June issue I will have a list of the instructors, approximate times and sessions they'll be offering.

KOOTENAY TAI CHI

SUMMER CAMP

August 24-30th

\$425 Canadian \$360 US

This summer the guest instructors will be: Harold Hajime Naka, John Camp, Arnold Porter, and Rex Eastman.

Kootenay Tai Chi Center

Box 566, Nelson B.C.

Canada V1L 5R3

(250)352-3714 phone/fax

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TREE CHI KUNG: *Go study with a tree!* by AT Dale

Let's start from the basics: everything is energy at various levels of vibration; solid matter to light, body-thoughts-spirit. One way to think about energy is as if it's water in its many forms: an ice cube, a flowing stream, or humidity. Chi, like water, has various intensities and rhythms, sometimes slow, gentle, standing still, other times quick, violent, dispersed.

The basic principle of tree chi kung is that trees are the natural filters of the earth (loggers are disbeliever's). Trees and plants take what are toxins and waste from other life forms, feed on it, transforming it into useful products for the planet.

Every form of life, or matter (energy) also has a type of energy field around it to some extent. Just as a sound doesn't really go to a certain distance and stop, energy and fields of energy are much the same way. Energy radiates out in all directions from each being, just getting fainter as it gets further away from its central source. This means that beyond our perception these energy fields interact and blend to a certain extent influencing each other. As we practice the zhan zhuang and chi kung over a period of time we can begin to feel this field energy emanating from us. This feeling of chi is first between our hands, as we practice chi kung we increase our own chi flow and awareness of it, our vitality increases and our chi shines brighter - healthier. Daily practice is required for noticeable progress. Now this is a very slow and individual process. Training with a chi kung master can accelerate this process.

If we have an internal weakness or sickness, instead of building up a reservoir of chi as we practice the chi is directed to heal the illness or our weakness. If our minds are busy and can't calm down, much of the chi is used up by the thoughts and nervous energy expenditure (Stress depletes much chi). Practicing too much fa-jin movements also depletes our chi reservoir. The mind uses up much energy in its functioning which is why basic meditation, learning to calm and focus the mind are very important. As our health improves and our mind learns to center we begin to build up our chi reservoir.

Once our chi begins to build, we not only become aware of our own chi but also that around us. A good example of this is being in a room when a depressed or angry person enters; the vibes change. Keep in mind that all energy isn't all the same so some types of energy may: flow, mix, merge, change, irritate or bump into each other. We're talking about a limitless levels of vibrations here.

The basic assumption of tree chi kung is that trees also feed on and filter pure energy - all vibrations. Through our practice we can open up and permit a greater exchange of chi with plants for healing, insight or knowledge. Even without specific tree chi kung, anytime we're around a forest, or wooded area we are benefiting from a boost of our own energy by being exposed to the trees. Try doing tai chi or basic meditation in an old growth forest, the energy is so thick you can almost see it (some people can see it). As with all chi kung, tension - muscular or mental inhibit the flow or exchange of chi. If we walk relaxed through a wooded area we are basically doing a minor type of tree chi kung. Anytime we practice around a tree or healthy plants we have an exchange of chi with the surroundings and we benefit on very subtle levels.

The most basic tree chi kung is practicing our zhan zhuang with a tree. Begin zhan zhuang until you can feel the chi flow between your palms, then use your palms and try to feel the chi flow, aura, of the tree. When you feel the current of the tree, this is the place to stop and use 'listening' energy. *This is your practice.* When you can feel the tree's chi flow, this creates a strong circuit, your energy gets hooked into the flow

of the tree's chi stream. If you can't feel the energy between your palms just practice your zhan zhuang keeping your palms about 6" away from the tree. Another method is sitting in a meditation posture with your back to the trunk.

Though there are specific visualizations and certain exercises to do with some styles, this basic method of focusing on feeling the energy connection I believe is the best. We permit the energy to flow as it should, and the changes and cleansing happens naturally, without forcing or interfering in any way. Just open up to what you feel or completely empty your mind.

Don't stand by a tree you feel a negative response from, on the other hand a gentle tree can keep you standing there all day so you may want to keep track of time if necessary. This energy-link is a healing-link, a purification of our system. The calmer and emptier our minds are the greater the exchange, there is less resistance to the exchange of chi flow.

Is there a certain spot in a park where you like to sit, read a book or just rest? In your yard? Check out the plants around you.

One theory of tree chi kung is that there is a subtle exchange, cellular, of information whenever the energy-link is great. So... on some level we are learning or absorbing information when we practice. I had one member unhappy with a class because I said to ground all our negative feelings and energy. Their was a comment that we were dumping enough garbage into mother earth. If we look at how beneficial animal waste and compost is to feed the earth and plants I feel it must be the same with energy, it's fuel for the fire. The problem with much farmland is the overused of synthetic fertilizers.

The size of the tree makes a difference, the location of the tree will make a difference. If you don't feel comfortable practicing your tree chi kung in public you may just sit by a tree with a book, pretend to be reading the book.

To Compete or Not to Compete

PART TWO
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SPORTSMANSHIP

Poor sportsmanship and what is appropriate conduct is often debated. What is appropriate behavior for tournaments? One student told me that he should be allowed to release tension by yelling, swearing, etc, as typically seen in some Western sports events. I feel this is just a symptom of degeneration of our society. Western sports have sold out to have more of a spectacle to attract viewers who are more interested in violence than the sport. Playing a sport seems to give one approval to let off steam. I don't think that is such a great thing, it is not noble and I don't want any part of it. The exercise should let off steam, not acting like a two year old.

BAN BAD VIBES

I have witnessed, at some karate tournaments, competitors who yelled at and threatened judges and referees when they disagreed with their rulings. These were not kids, but were adult black belts who, according to the lore, are supposed to have discipline and self control. At least when I see ads for martial art schools, self control and discipline seems to be one of the claimed benefits. Well if they (blackbelts) don't have self control in a public event, I wonder how much control they have in private. If they don't have self control at a tournament, how do they teach self control to ten year olds? Maybe this benefit is just a myth. Those out of control black belts are bad role models at the least. I heard that at one tournament a riot broke out, happily I wasn't there. Talk about bad vibes. What kind of self control is that? Well, I think it is time to say that is totally undesirable behavior and will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of tournament promoters to stop thinking about how much money they will make, i.e. greed, and think about the impact on society they are having. Any violence that would be considered illegal outside the tournament should be illegal inside as well. Black belts who assault or batter referees should be arrested. Period! Promoters should toss them out and have them arrested. But is that done? If it were, the behaviors of athletes would soon change. They need to set a better example.

REAL TOUGH GUYS

If these tough (bad attitude) guys want to prove themselves, instead of bullying some older, 50 year old, out of shape, black belts, (who are donating their free time to be a referee so that others can play) they should fight in the Ultimate Fighting Championship or similar tournaments. I would guess most wouldn't, as it is one thing to abuse an old man or lower rank student and another to have an honest anything goes fight against a real athlete. Most of the real professional fighters who I know and have worked with, are gentleman as well as being skilled. They are tough & elite athletes. I have the greatest respect for them, for their skill and good attitude. Maybe it is because they don't have to prove themselves that they don't have that jerk attitude. They know where they stand. But I am wary of the acting tough guy who seems to pick the targets of his rage carefully, so that he thinks before he starts that he will

win. They are just bullies or criminals. Maybe they need counseling, more meditation or medication. They need to meditate more, pray, and get in touch with spirit. Maybe they just had a bad childhood. Maybe they are just evil. Either way it is dysfunctional, antisocial behavior that promoters should not encourage. That goes for any sport.

THE MYTH OF SELF DISCIPLINE

I think self discipline is just a myth anyway. As the reason people stick to martial art training is because they like to do it. It has its own intrinsic reward for them. If they don't like to do it they will give it up, in most cases. That is why most people do not stick to exercise programs.

There is always some excuse, too hot, too cold, too late, too early, too hard, too easy, don't like the outfits, don't like the teacher, have to work, have to watch a special TV show, etc.. But what it comes down to is: they don't get any intrinsic reward for doing it. They just are not motivated. And the only one who can motivate you to do something is you. So developing self discipline by doing martial arts may be a myth, because the ones who stick to it are those who are self motivated because they like it. It meets their needs OR someone forces them to go to class, like a parent. Then it becomes an extrinsic reward. Still, no self discipline.

YANG STYLE T'AI-CHI CH'UAN STUDENTS ARE MORE MELLOW

I find that the majority of Yang style t'ai-chi ch'uan students and competitors are mature and act responsibly. It may be a more mature personality who takes up Yang t'ai-chi ch'uan to begin with. It takes a more intellectual person to appreciate its subtleties. The art itself is more mellowing, students more serene. The energy at our t'ai-chi event is more relaxed and mellow than other types of martial art events I have observed. I noticed several years ago that I did not like the vibrational energy of most karate tournaments I went to. After doing t'ai-chi and ch'i kung for such a long time, I guess I am sensitive to the negative "Hyper" energy of those events and I would actually vibrate (the atmosphere felt like a bomb ready to explode). It is stressful to just be around all that negative energy. Some people are invigorated by it though. And that is fine for them. We all have different needs and energies; What is good for one person is not necessarily good for another. So I feel one needs to find the one that fits them and be happy with it. If you enjoy the activity, you will stick with it, if not, find an exercise you like to do. Exercise should be done regularly for all of your life, so do one you enjoy and you will appear to have self-discipline. HK reader may reply with e-mail to NWTCCA secretary: rvtaichi@pe.net web site: <http://www.pe.net/~rvtaichi/>

Harvey Kurland received his Masters Degree from the University of Washington and has dedicated himself to public health issues for the last 30 years. He has degrees in public health education and exercise physiology. He is a certified chief instructor of t'ai-chi ch'uan by Grandmaster Tchoung Ta-tchen and teaches at the University of California at Riverside and Loma Linda University. He also holds certification from the American College of Sports Medicine and International Sports Sciences Association.

A Visit With Sifu

"The mark of a good teacher is that his students exceed his own skills. Each student will adapt the art and change it to fit their own personality."

These were important points sifu wanted to emphasize to us.

On May 4th a few of us went up for instructions and a visit with sifu. A couple of months ago sifu (now 84 years old) had a quadruple bypass and is essentially retired from 'official' teaching. It was a pleasure seeing in up and he's doing great. Crisp, clear, alert he just needs to be careful not to overexert during this healing process. The only effect he has now from the operation is that two of his fingers are slightly numb on his right hand. He said that by our next visit he'll be 100%.

We were fortunate to coordinate our visit with Rex Eastman (visiting from Nelson BC) and John Camp. I'm very grateful to Laurens Lee and Simu for taking care of sifu and to Laurens acting as translator for sifu and us to permit a greater exchange of information.

CHANGE

If things don't change there is no progress, no advancements and things die. This is true of tai chi and as well as in life. The students, after learning from the teacher must explore and nurture the art within themselves. However, the changes must not just be incidental, they must be in accord with the underlying principles of tai chi and build upon solid foundation. It's a natural progression.

He pointed out that if you look at Grandmaster Cheng Man Ch'ing and his descendants they are all unique, and highly skilled at tai chi, yet still have evolved into their own systems: each valid. He cited William Chen, T.T. Liang and a few others as good examples.

ON TUI-SHOU (push hands)

We were very luck to have John Camp there while we were visiting. As sifu remarked, John's tui-shou is of the best quality because he's so water-like. His movements are soft, light and fluid yet powerful. His entire body is in unison and responds like a wave, absorbing a partner's push then responding wave-like (good tai chi) with the ripple and smooth flow of his entire body. It was a pleasure being able to watch tui-shou at such a refined level. After watching and correcting several members pushing hands we moved onto section 7&8.

TAI CHI SANSHOU(7&8)

Each movements must be correct! Each position and grab is important and has many uses if the positions are correct. Sifu took us step-by-step through sections 7&8 demonstrating the nerve grabs (ouch!), arm twists and cavity presses. If the movements are practiced correctly there are many opportunities and possibilities. If practiced poorly there is only the form and limited applications that you learn. It's important to know the 'where' and 'why' of each movement.

SWORD ENERGIES

I asked sifu about the 13 energies of the sword that are referred to in some books. Sifu explained that it's a mistake to try to isolate the individual energies since this segments the one energy, the entire flow the unity which is important. If your practice is correct the energy flows like the waves in the sea, isolating the what, where and which energy interrupts the flow. Can you isolate each energy in a wave? To do this it's not a wave or an ocean. All the energies are happening harmoniously and some simultaneously. He stated that the postures may be called 'this' posture or energy or 'that' energy but by posing in a posture the energy stops and dies so there's no real energy to it. Simu elaborated on the fact that before there were forms to practice the military was trained in specific techniques of using the sword; this is to split, to slick, to stab . . . In the forms these movements are woven into a flow into a symphony and if you isolate each instrument you don't have a symphony you don't have the tai chi quality of it. Regardless of style if you practice each form correctly the energies have to be there, focus on the flow.

Our next visit will be early July.

(Continued from page 1)

PUSH FOR PEACE

Sat. - June 21, 7am til ?

Golden Gardens Park

Caylan Storm is organizing a mass Tai Chi practice at Golden Gardens Park in Ballard. Various local instructors may be leading some of the practice. For more information call Caylan: 448-1512

ALL SEATTLE TAI CHI PICNIC

July 13, 1997, noon till?

at: Meridian Park (Good Shepard Center) Picnic Shelter
information Chris: 789-9223

PRACTICE + PRACTICE

During the winter months we're restricted to the small club space so there's only room for those enrolled in the specific class. Now that summer is here and we're outside it's a good time to come an extra night and just practice as the regular class is in session. Or . . . better yet get one of your class mates to meet you and practice partner work.

SIFU'S CLUB DEMONSTRATION

June 21

If you'd like to help out I have Laurens' number for you to contact.

QUESTION

When practicing tui-shou or any partner work are you concentrating, commenting and asking questions on the techniques or socializing? Are you practicing or visiting? Remember we're trying to develop listening energy not 'hearing' and 'talking' energies (we have those energies to some extent already).

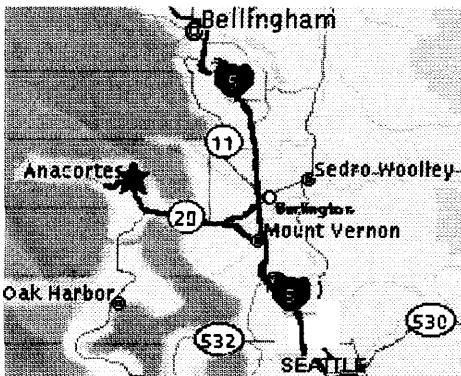


Internal Arts Festival

Summer 1997 Anacortes

Sessions offered by several Tai Chi, Pa Kua and Chi Kung instructors throughout the day. Visit with instructors and students from other clubs and arts. and enjoy the beauty of the park.

July						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



INSTRUCTORS: John Camp, Michael Gilman, Bob Iden, Harold Naka, Andy Dale

POSSIBLE GUESTS: Master Yueng, Dave Harris, Master (Gao fu?)

BEGINNING: Friday 12:00 meet at Washington Park picnic area

FEE: \$5.00 per session to the instructor (special guests \$10.00)
(the instructors may have books, t-shirts, videos or other items available to purchase.)

LODGING & FOOD: Participants are responsible for their own lodging and meals.

Directions:

- ⇒ Take I-5 to Highway 20
- ⇒ Follow 20 to Anacortes / San Juan Ferries
- ⇒ Follow signs to the San Juan ferries (through Anacortes).
- ⇒ As road heads to the ferries get in the left lane Sunset Avenue(it looks residential) and follow this road. It ends at Washington Park.
- ⇒ Friday we will meet at park picnic area.

	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
9:00		Dancing Dragon Harold	Fu style push hands John	T'ien shan Chi Kung Andy
10:00		Silk Reeling exercises Michael	Helping partner open for chi Michael	Opening for Chi Michael
11:00		Body Mechanics of Tai Chi Bob	Body Mechanics of Tai Chi Bob	
NOON	Meet at picnic area			
2:00	Dancing Dragon Harold	Free hands Andy	Pa Kua 8 elbows Andy	
3:00	partner cane Andy	Opening for Chi Michael		
4:00	Ssu Hsiang Pa Kua John	Ssu Hsiang Pa Kua John	Ssu Hsiang Pa Kua John	
5:00	Body Mechanics of Tai Chi Bob	partner cane - Andy		
6:00				

schedule subject to change