This newsletter is intended for students of the Internal Wushu Arts and interested parties. The intent is to give greater depth to some subjects, share my studies and current learning from various teachers. To keep members informed about events and changes in schedules. My hope is the newsletter will motivate and encourage students in their own research.

ATD

CHI KUNG CLASS
The purpose of this class is to understand the purpose, function and method of various chi kung we are taught in addition to our practicing. I am not teaching any 'one' system but as time goes on I will introduce many methods, movements and exercises. The new exercises introduced actually depends upon the energy of the group and the questions asked. The other purpose of this session is to create a strong foundation, a strong center so we can get the most out of any advanced level chi kung we will learn in the future. Since the movements may change week to week or month to month I can’t put together a class handout. To help memorization I will list the previous months chi kung movements in the newsletter.

MAKE MY DAY SMILE

SUMMER RETREAT
No summer weekend retreat this year, instead I will conduct intensive Saturday sessions once a month. The schedule will be in the next issue.

ADDITIONS
A friend brought me the enclosed article on addictions from an aerobics class. I had the assumption that people only did things that were addictive, and that there were good addictions and bad one. Well, this article says different.

TAOIST CREATION MYTH
At the Tai Chi summer camp last year (sign up ASAP enrollment is limited), Rex gave a series of lectures on Tai Chi Chuan, Taoism and related topics. I can’t even describe how wonderful these stories and insights were. Unfortunately they weren’t taped, and like special moments they seem to go quick, yet linger and have a positive effect. One evening Rex took the Taoist creation symbols and wove them into a wonderful myth. And like all myths and stories in many cultures he created a wonderful yet simple instruction on the creation of the Pa Kua trigrams. His story gave me an insight that I had missed and been looking for. His story was powerful in its simplicity. The story wasn't recorded but Rex has kindly recreated the following version.

PA KUA VIDEO
A new video is out on our lineage Pa Kua and it's very good. Solo drills, basics, and applications are covered. It's THE PRINCIPLES OF BA GUA ZHANG FIGHTING by Luo De Xiu & Tim Cartmell. Luo studied with one of my grand teachers. The tape is available through High View Publications Pa Kua Journal.

TEACHINGS AS WE PRACTICE
As we practice our various arts there is a constant learning that reaches every layer of our being. Whether we realize it or not, as we begin to relax we begin to learn more about ourselves. Harrison Moretz has a nice saying: "Relaxation is who you are, tension is who you think you are." Simplistically we learn the whys, how's and where tensions creep in and relaxation slips out. In the tuishou and sanshou we learn the whys, how's and where tensions creep in and relaxation slips out. In the tuishou and sanshou we learn.

FRIDAY CHI KUNG
Releasing breath - sinking
Body circle
Wuji posture
Tan Tien Breathing - YANG TAN
Waist Rub
Arm Swings
Shoulder circle
Ming Men tap
Shoulder tap
Open & sink -
  a. inhale through palms
  b. inhale and reach upward
  c. twisting
Pushing the circle - Tui Moh
Rowing exercise - Funekogi undo
Zhan Zhuang
  a. wuji posture
  b. monkey holds cauldron
Misogi Body drop
To sleep
One point meditation

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Students often ask, "Is it OK if I take more than one martial art at the same time?" Usually they mean karate or Tae Kwon Do. My answer is, if they are just starting both, it is not a good idea. Unless of course, they don't plan to do t'ai-chi for very long and are just using it as an exercise class. Why is this? Sifu, Tchoung Ta-Tchen, told us of the difficulty of mastering more than one art. He said you rarely find a top level master that specializes in more than one contradictory art. It is like having a University professor that teaches Math and English. While he may be good at both usually he will be best at only one. If you look around at masters of more than one style, you will usually find they have a "Favorite". The one that they do best. Mixing internal arts is not as difficult as to mix hard styles, e.g. karate, with t'ai-chi. It is difficult for many hard stylists to retrain themselves to practice the subtle t'ai-chi principles, though some have.

If you are attempting to learn karate and t'ai-chi at the same time, good luck. By the nature of both having similar motions but different concepts there is a conflict in learning, one interferes with the other. This is the NEGATIVE LEARNING effect. In learning similar activities one impairs the learning of the other. For example this can be observed in someone trying to learn tennis and racquetball at the same time. Similar idea, hit the ball, but very different ways of using the body, e.g. wrist straight versus wrist snap. This results in confused responses, slowed learning and contradictory reflexes. The closer two body arts are, the greater the conflict.

"There is no logical reason for learning a hard style before learning t'ai-chi, in fact there are some very good reasons not to."
Kurland

The same concept holds for learning hard style kung-fu such as preying mantis or tiger crane styles which emphasize arm motion but no waist turning or yielding at the same time as learning t'ai-chi ch'uan. These are very effective martial arts but the body is used differently than in our t'ai-chi, so there is negative learning. Contradictory learning confuses the body. It is better to first learn one art, then after mastering it, then learn another. Otherwise you end up with what can be called "chop suey", not one, not the other. In some cases these modified and mixes of different arts are extremely effective and evolve into styles in their own right. For example what some people call Water Boxing looks suspiciously like a combination of Yang style, pa-kua and hsing-i even though stylists say it predates those arts, based upon a scroll found in a cave. Master Dave Harris has put together a very high level martial art based on many different arts. But for the beginner wanting to learn a particular system it is prudent to stick to one version until the basics are mastered. Another strategy is if you want to work on more than one art at a time, learn two completely different arts that complement each other but do not have much conflict in concepts.

There is also the factor of diluting training time, the more time you train the better you will learn, up to a point. An hour of this style and an hour of that style is not the same thing as 6 hours a week on one art.

**BIZARRE CURRICULUM?**

Unfortunately in many schools which focus on hard style, the t'ai-chi student has to learn the hard style before learning t'ai-chi. There is no logical reason for learning the hard style first, in fact there are some very good reasons not to. Usually the real basis for this odd curriculum is that the teacher's interest is in hard style, so he or she emphasizes that style. Everything else is supplementary. But once one learns to tense up and not use the waist, it is hard to unlearn that concept. It might take years to learn to relax and move, nonever do. It is hard to relax, especially if you practice being tense.

It is easy to be seduced by the false feeling of power that tension based styles produce. Though many very high level hard stylists can relax, and are relaxed when they move, but for beginners that is difficult. Learn to relax first. Then later you might not even want to do hard style.

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**VIDEO REVIEW**

On viewing Carradines’ T’ai-chi tape. In my opinion it had some good exercises and drills, but could be made better with modifications. The structure of basic exercises was good but unfortunately exercises were done in a "Hard style" way, very different from what we are trying to do. There was no evidence that I could see on waist turning and body movement. In my view there was too much emphasis on moving the hands and arms around. The novice might be impressed. It’s OK, but otherwise not recommended for our students. If you use it, modify the drills using the waist and weight shifting as we do in class.

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Chapter 1

WU CHI

Before creation everything was the same, all was one . . . the chaos of the void. It is represented like this:

⊙

Chapter 2

DOT

Somehow there came to be a dot:

⊙

don’t ask me how.

Chapter 3

LINE

That dot grew into a line. That line became know as the great ridge pole that holds up the universe. The line has two sides, thus creating the concept of duality.

Chapter 4

YIN/YANG

Duality creates polar opposites, both sides necessary for creation, each side continually creating it’s opposite.

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Chapter 5

THE TRIGRAMS

The two create one . . . 2+1=3. Each one can be either yin or yang, thus there are eight possible combinations of three.