

September Newsletter 2023

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Wu Tan Alaska

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Above: Sifu Jacob with student Nari Ando

This orchid has been in the school for decades! Thanks to Royal Kiehl for donating it and Nick Lynch for keeping it alive!



Upcoming Events

Praying Mantis Softs

with Sifu Kevin

September 23rd and 24th

3-5pm Sat; 1-3pm Sun (zoom available)

Baji Internal

with Sifu Kevin

Wed. **September 13th, 20th, 27th**

10-11am

Meditation with Master Wong

3-4 Meditation **Sun Dec. 24th**

Wu Tan Halloween Potluck

October 29th (zoom available)

2-3pm Potluck

Lian Huan Quan [Linking Form]

Hsingyi seminar with Sifu Emily

October 21st and 28th [Saturdays]

8:45-10am (zoom available)

Q & A with Master Wong pg. 4

Continued interview with Master Wong discussing the concept of chi and its relevance to Chinese martial arts Part II.

Looking back: In August, we shared a yummy potluck including nachos, spicy potato curry, fresh veggies, angel food cake with strawberries and cream, and more including some sweetened green tea. Many students participated in the seminar about Tai Chi usage and applications with Sifu Kevin. It was a fun and productive month. Thank you all!!!



Pictured Left and above:

Sifus' Derek, Jacob, Kevin, Padrick and Spencer, Rae and Violet, at the August Potluck. 😊





Congratulations Brother Paolo on opening **Wu Tan Denmark**.

We wish you and your students many blessings and luck!



Q & A with Master Wong

Question: Will you share with us your knowledge about the concept of chi, what it is, and how it relates to Chinese martial arts?

Part II Continued from August Newsletter

Master Wong:

Okay, let's switch the topic to Grandmaster Liu's theory of nourishing Qi & restoration, as I mentioned earlier in August Newsletter. I only selected part of his essay on Qi restoration and returning its origin (養氣還元) philosophy as the example of addressing the importance of cultivating Qi in relation to Chinese Martial Art practice as Sifu Emily Walle inquired last month.

During Grandmaster Liu's Yun Chiao's older days around late 1980s, he wrote about 'Man with Heaven and Earth are listed as Three Talents (三才 - san tsai - refers as the Heaven, Earth, Man - 天, 地, 人) side by side', its root or origin (元 - yuan - the original spiritual essence) should be Oneness (人與天地並列三才, 其元本一). But because of people's burning desires nowadays, the spiritual 'Man' part of the Three Talents got closed, therefore it cannot live up to the heaven and earth, and as a result, it lost its vitality, therefore, it cannot connect to the heaven and earth.

When the root or origin (元 - yuan) is lost, it is like the grass and trees are perishing and decaying rapidly by losing their roots. If the root is lost, the people who are devoted to the wisdom will turn into chaos and destruction. Before the heaven and earth were formed, there was a 'Swirling Qi' (混沌一炁), it is known as the beginning formation of the Universe. The life existence or disappearance began from this Swirling Qi of existence. The Yuan (root) and Qi (energy) are actually the same but with the different names. The reason of cultivating or nourishing Qi through the heaven and earth is because they are always there in harmony for us. It is up to the 'Man' (人) to work with yin and yang, which could make up the deficiencies and help us returning to its origin (root).

As I understand from Grandmaster Liu's essay, there are two parts of human life, one is the form and the other one is formless, which can be referred as physical body and spiritual body (mind). But the spiritual body has its own connection line. So the question: Is it possible to follow the Dao (way or path) of yin and yang of the heaven and earth, stealing its essence, and make up for my shortcomings?

In his commentary, he stated: the scriptures say: "If man can always be Clear and Quiet, then all the heavens and the earth will return to its origin." That is knowing this is the only way to start practicing.

(人能常清靜, 天地悉皆歸, 是知清靜乃下手之不二法門也).

The method of martial arts cultivation is especially important to achieve, it is also especially necessary to immerse yourself in contemplating and meditating on these philosophy to reach its understanding and internal connection.

(武道修煉之法尤易臻此，以其重悟解尤須沉潛靜修也)

The body whether is sitting or standing, the Baihui (百會 - Crown Point – the top center point of the head) should be in alignment, no less than that, this is the meaning of Taiji's correct body. The sea is deep and still, exhales the turbid Qi slowly, removes the dregs of the viscera, and guides it with the mind to make it clear and empty. In this way, the five viscera are easy to fall into place, and the blood and qi are easy to be in harmony. When the body is safe, then slowly loosen it with the mind. Every time the skin and bones are passed, the thousands of holes and hundreds of orifices are opened one by one, and there is not a single bit of blockage.

I believe if the practitioners can focus on breathing with Dan-Tien at all times, or finding a way to quiet the mind, then the clarity will follow its own course. Another way is to focus on the movements of your form, slow down your practice by paying attention to each move through breathing. One should try to sense from the head, shoulder, hand, elbow, tail bone, thigh, knee and feet during practice. This is to allow time settling your movement by observing your body parts. As an example: finding the connection of your spring well point at the center your foot with the ground when you are doing Taiji Chuan. Feeding the Jing to the elbow when you are practicing Ding Xin Jo (elbow strike) in Baji Chuan, by focusing your striking elbow in line with your opposite elbow to counter the balance. There are many ways of meditating or observing your movements through practice. This method will enhance your mind and yi (intent) training as well as deepening your understanding of the art itself. You can even practice while you are sitting down by breathing in and out through your Dan-Tien, as a quiet mind practice in progress.

Remember, do not rush into the move, but instead slowing down your process, so that you can feel everything through your heart (mind), it is important that if you would like to reach the mindfulness of Clarity & Calmness! (清靜)

However, the mind (heart) is the KEY, movement and stillness depend on each other. Therefore, to nurture the Qi, it is necessary to nourish the mind first. The mind is calm and then the Qi is calm. The Qi is peaceful and settled, then the mind will be still and calm.

(然无以心為主，動靜相依，故養无須養心，心平而後无和，无安方且心定)

Grandmaster Liu said: Close the five thieves outside (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and mind), get rid of distracting thoughts, clear and calm the mind, return to the inner vision, adjust the breath, hold the essence and keep oneness, eliminate thoughts, distance from the desires, the inner breath from shallow to deep, gradually subdued and subtle, but always focus naturally. If your mind is not settled, you cannot force it to be settled. If your mind is not at peace, you cannot force it to be peaceful. It is like the turbidity of water. It is okay to wait for it to be calm and clear. If you control it with quiet thoughts, all predestined relationships will rest on their own. The harder it is, the harder it is to be unbearable.

(外閉五賊，去雜念，澄心靜意，返神內視，調息綿綿，抱元守一，去思慮，遠情慾，內息自淺而深，漸次低沉細微，然總以自然為要。意未定，不可強使之定，心未平，不可強使之平，譬如水之濁亂，靜以待之徐清可也，以靜之念鎮之，則萬緣自息，若橫霸硬挺，則愈致力愈不堪矣)

Further, one must be understood that the mind is also the shape and the shadow. If you follow it, like a dog barks at its shadow, the shape moves with the shadow. How can it be effective? Knowing that when the breath is in the shadows, the shadow will stop on its own. Therefore, the resting mind should know that it is still, and when it stops (the thoughts), it will be settled, and there will be peace and tranquility in it. (是知息於陰則影自止也，故息心當知止，止則定，而靜安在其中矣)。

Knowing to stop cannot exceed stopping at the Emptiness (nothingness), the scriptures say: "What is nothingness is where the Tao resides. 'In terms of my whole body, it is empty inside the Dan-Tien area, this is the non-being in my body, so I should dwell in my mind to return to its prenatal state. However, nothingness is not non-existence. In terms of the Qi, it is non-existence inside the real existence, a real original existence within the nothingness. There is a little bit of originality of Prenatal Qi when the parents were forming this pre-birth body. As one's true nature turns to be enlightened, it is happy and peaceful, unobstructed, not obsessed or empty, like a single light in the sky, and everything is at ease.

(止莫善於止乎太虛，經云：『虛無者，道之所居也。』，以吾一身言之，其中為空，丹田无穴也，此乃吾身有中之無也，故當棲心於此，以歸於無，所謂逆返先天，如復歸於胎元中情景也。然虛非無，以无言，有中之無，實立本無中之一點真有，父母未生此身時之一點元无也；以心性言，棲心既久，此生若遺，而本性獨轉覺明，湛湛然怡恬無礙，不執不空，若長空一燈獨明，無不自如也。)

When the mind reaches this state, then the Entrance has been knocked down, and one can enter the realm of the mysteries of heaven and earth. At this time, it is enough only keeping in the Center (focus on centering).

With the purpose of tranquility and nature, suddenly forgetting and helping, knowing its existence but not alarming its life, realizing its life. If you don't help it to grow, if the empty room is slightly fogging, and it is allowed to settle on its own and gradually diffuses, then the room will be completely covered with the floating clouds of Ying and Yang.

If you are good at disturbing it with all kinds of trouble wind and dust, this fog will suddenly dissipate and break off, and how will one be able to fully breathe the clarity of it. Therefore, once you enter the Entrance, you will be connected with the essence of heaven and earth, and the spiritual spring will fill itself up to make up for your deficiencies: your mind is quiet, your breath is slight, the post-natal Qi disappears, the innate reappears, the mind is clear, the sky is open, and you know the heaven and earth. We are all in one with Taiji (Harmony), keep its origin, the three talents are as one, and if the other is lost, it will disperse and harm each other.

So does the heaven and earth hurt me or support me? This is all up to the people to do it for themselves.

(心无臻此一境界，則玄關已叩，可登天地奧秘之域矣，此時守中即可，以恬淡自然之旨，忽忘忽助，知其存而不驚其生，覺其生而不助其長，若空室微煙，任其自定而漸瀰漫，則一室盡氤氳矣。若擅以諸凡雜風塵吹擾之，則此煙忽散忽斷，曷能全其氣哉。是以既入玄關，則與天地之元通，靈泉自注以補不足：其心寂寂其意

沉沉，其息微微，後天盡消，先天復現，心性澄澈，天宇開闊，是知天地與我，本渾然一太極也，守其元一則三才本一，失其一則散而互害矣。故天地害我者乎？資我者乎？亦在人之自為之而已矣

