

# Students have 'supreme ultimate' trip

Trip yields valuable life experience

**Isalah Creel**  
Editor-in-Chief

Clackamas' tai chi instructor and 14 of his students spent the weekend of May 13-15 in Grants Pass, training under internationally renowned tai chi masters George Xu and his guest Qian Zhao Hong (aka

"Chainsaw") ... and lived to tell the tale.

"When [Hong] hit you, it felt really natural. It felt like he went right through you," said Clackamas student Steven Worsley, "whereas when master Xu hit you, it would hit you and it would spread out, but when 'Chainsaw' hit you, it would feel as if he were hitting through you, as though you just weren't there."

"When Master Xu hit you it felt like a wave," Worsley continued. "From the point of contact [the pain] was spread out, and then eventually that area would knot-up."

Master George Xu is a world-renowned tai chi master who, since moving to America from his native China in the late 1980s to pursue higher education in mathematics, has furthered his martial interests by bringing the highest level internal martial artists to the United States.

With exercises like running laps and lifting weights losing popularity, new exercises that focus on the mind/body connection, like yoga and tai chi, have become more

prevalent in the United States. The benefits of such a switch mainly deal with the relative lack of stress on the joints and muscles and the improved longevity of the organs.

"Everybody feels internal. You have a digestion problem, you feel inside pain; but normally you never feel inside," said instructor Wayne Keller. "You feel this energy [chi] move at different times, but you cannot use this energy to affect somebody else or defend against an attack; that takes longer."

For many years, Master Xu has brought those masters to Grants Pass for a weekend-long tai chi-intensive event, open to tai chi enthusiasts and otherwise martially inclined folks.

"I knew that they were going to be good coming into it," said student Steven Worsley. "I don't completely understand everything they do, but looking and feeling the things that they did was extremely impressive."

George Xu's approach to the Tai Chi is more yang (a Chinese term meaning "aggressive" or "hard") while Hong's approach is more yin ("yielding" or "soft").

Qian Zhao Hong is a member of the Shanghai Wu Shu Association, vice chairman of the Institute of Shanghai Pa-Kua, vice chairman of the Institute of Shanghai Wu Dong Qigong, and Highest level-Ninth Generation of Xin Yi Liu He Quan (10 Animal Hsing Yi). He has defeated more than 50 masters, earning his nickname "Chainsaw." While the majority of students at Clackamas take tai chi for a PE credit, a few continue their study beyond the normal one or two terms.

"Their levels are so much higher than mine that a lot of the things they do or explain or talk about I still don't fully understand yet," said Worsley. "There were some concepts that my eyes were opened up to. It's going to be a steady growth; one weekend is not going to make the difference."

One student's account of the enlightening weekend

**Joe Piazzisi**  
The Clackamas Print

Learning tai chi secrets from the masters at the tai chi seminar this last weekend was very eye-opening. There is everything you hold in your mind to be real, and then there are the things that you see on television or in movies; after all that comes these guys. Not to say that they are supernatural or anything, but they are just that. They are very natural, while we are all very unnatural and set within our movements.

In general, we are all very rigid and mechanical in the way we move, while the masters were very fluid and open, flowing with their moves and allowing them to open themselves to immense amounts of power in rather interesting ways.

Wayne Keller, the tai chi teacher here at Clackamas invited all of his students to join him at this seminar, where "Chain

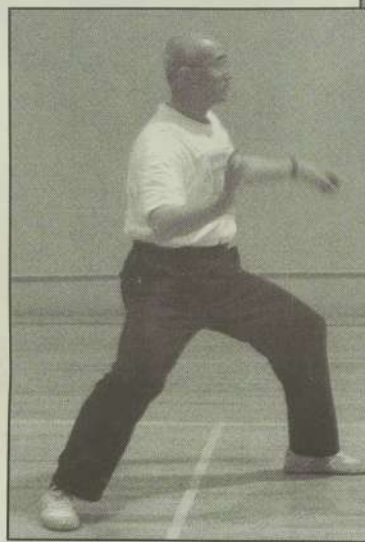
Saw" and "George" were showing some of their techniques, fundamentals and for lack of better words—power source.

"Chain Saw" loved to demonstrate some of what he knows on people. Throughout the weekend I had been the receiving end of a lot of his demonstrations, feeling everything from the kicks, blocks and ear pulls to bear attacks, all on a level I have never experienced before. If I had to describe it felt like to get hit by "Chainsaw" would have to say it feels like a feather pillow hitting you with the pressure of power of a bag of bricks. You only feel the softness. The pressure and power just there; very soft to the touch and the same time very painful. "George" more like a lead pipe coming down on you; an overwhelming power.

Both were very different and effective. Seeing their quality and comparing it to what I thought I knew shown me I have a long way to go, but now know what is obtainable.



Master Qian Zhao Hong (aka "Chainsaw") (ABOVE and RIGHT) goes through a Hsing Yi form, while Master George Xu (FAR RIGHT) goes through his Chen style tai chi form. The difference in approaches to their respective internal arts was evident in their interpretations.



All photos contributed by Wayne Keller

## DUMB: Instructor prepares by taking break

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For the collaboration, Andersen will present a slide show and lecture, and students from Estacada will create drawings to formulate ideas for the mural. From those ideas, a small group of painting and drawing students, with guidance from Andersen and some Clackamas Phi Theta Kappa students, will create the mural.

"It's great, because in the end the entire student body will be involved," Andersen said.

Andersen has been working with Phi Theta Kappa students at Clackamas four years, and is currently the co-advisor with Dave Arter. Even on sabbatical he is still coordinating some of the events, because he "couldn't give that up."

He has also found time in his sabbatical to travel to California for the opening of his exhibit and to lectured at Cal Arts and San Diego State University, Mia Costa and San Elijo campuses.

"It was one of the most productive weeks I've spent," he said. "I met

with hundreds of faculty and talked about assignments and student work."

"[The sabbatical is] an opportunity for me as a professional artist to go out and learn more about the professional art world," said Andersen. "But I also get to reinvent my curriculum."

"I love to teach," he said. "It's a constant challenge to find new ways for students to experience things."

Andersen first began teaching in 1985, as a teaching assistant in charge of drawing and painting classes at BYU. He joined the faculty at Clackamas in 1997.

"We don't have a large [art] department here, but we have an extremely potent department," said Andersen. "I love the new building we are in. I think it really benefits the students."

Taking a sabbatical this term is allowing Andersen to do a lot of work that he feels will be valuable for Clackamas students and faculty.

"I have so much new material to deliver to my students," he said. "When I come back in the fall, their heads are going to spin."

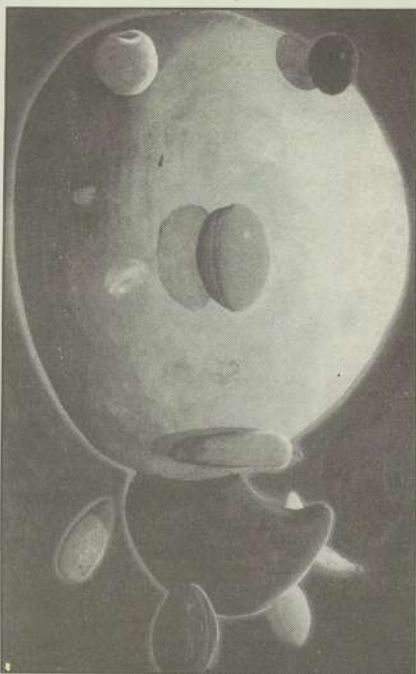


Photo contributed by David Andersen

