

Lectori Salutem,

The Chinese Internal Martial arts has a long history and it is practiced widely around the world. Unfortunately, it lacks a systematic approach that allows its practitioners to be assessed in a reasonable manner. As of the summer of 2012, the Nederlandse Federatie voor Krijgskunsten (NFK) has a style group representing the Chinese Internal Martial Arts (CIMA) of Taijiquan, Baguazhang, Xingyiquan, and Yiquan. The mission of the CIMA Department is to promote the Chinese Internal Martial Arts' cultural heritage, its uniquely Chinese approach health maintenance and self-defense, both of which involves the development of physiological and psychological aspects, the treatment and prevention of ailments and the professional and moral development of the practitioner.

Within the NFK, Taijiquan, Baguazhang, Xingyiquan, and Yiquan are grouped into a single 'domain', known as the CIMA. The motivation behind the CIMA Domain is to assist the practitioner in discovering the martial vocabulary found at the core of the Chinese Internal Martial Arts. These days, the major focus of Taijiquan is on health maintenance and well-being, with less attention being paid to the martial aspects of the style. Traditionally, the CIMA were trained to provide an effective answer to self-defense and other martial situations. One major goal of the CIMA is to reiterate proper emphasis on the martial aspects of the styles, while retaining the focus of the health maintenance aspects. Proper attention to the correct interpretation and execution of the forms and postures will lead to better health and well-being and realistic knowledge that can be used in self-defense situations.

One of the first efforts of the NFK was to create a 'Duan' (Dan) grading system that makes the practitioner's progression in each of the styles measurable. This is one of the first efforts outside of China to help the Chinese Internal Martial Artist in mastering the styles. The CIMA Duan system has aligned its examination criteria with that of the other major martial arts styles represented by the NFK. This has professionalized the system, providing the practitioner with a clear path of progression and to ensures that these four martial arts are properly promoted to a broader group. The NFK provides the framework for National and International accreditation and acceptance.

Another problem that the duan grade system has addressed is how to become a 'Master' in Taijiquan, Baguazhang, Xingyiquan, or Yiquan. Traditionally, a student had to find a Master and became his or her student. The student was under the tutelage of the Master. After years of training, the Master would promote the student to 'Master' status and the propagator of the lineage. This is why lineage has been so important in the past. Unfortunately, this system does not function well in this day and age. It lacks a systematic and scientific method of training and examination, next to the time it takes to attain the grace of the Master. The NFK Duan system allows each practitioner to prove his or her ability and understanding in the art against a standardized scale, which will assist them in their pursuit of mastery.

The first three Duan focuses on the practitioner's martial knowledge, tactical insight and the ability to properly perform the techniques of the respective styles. From the fourth Duan and up, progression is all about being able to build up the 'internal power' (the 'jin') and being able to use it in further exercises such as in 'fa jin' and in pushing hands applications.

The NFK also offers Instructor Certification. This certification is not related to the individual's knowledge of the martial arts, but on how he or she performs as an Instructor. The NFK looks at how the individual designs the lesson plans, how the classes are conducted and how the instructor interacts with the students. The Instructors are also required have basic First Aid training and knowledge in how to treat sport related injuries.

Would you like more information on the CIMA, the NFK Duan system, CIMA Instructor Certification or more information concerning the NFK? You can visit the NFK website at www.federatiekrijgskunsten.nl or www.neigong.nl for more information. For further questions about CIMA you can sent an e-mail to: underheavenmartialarts@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Shi Dan-Qiu
Head Technical Coordinator CIMA
Nederlandse Federatie voor Krijgskunsten