

The Alternative Natural Philosopher Award Ceremony at ANPA West V

by

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Review of “Orienting and Entangling Oneself,” Presented by E. Oshins, L. Kauffman, and K. Chung.

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The Alternative Natural Philosopher Award ceremony was followed by an evening presentation “Orienting and Entangling Oneself” by Eddie Oshins, Lou Kauffman ¹, and Ken Chung, a noted wing chun kung-fu teacher. Oshins led the group through a series of body awareness exercises which focused on changing relations and boundaries between self and partner and discussed how they relate to symbols from Taoism. Chung and Oshins demonstrated how some of these principles apply in the wing chun system.

Oshins and Kauffman presented formal descriptions of these motions and related them back to their earlier presentations on quantum psychology and on spin networks and knot theory. Oshins explained that if one picks up an object, such as an alarm clock, and rotates it 360° with respect to some reference frame, such as oneself; it winds up where it started. In contrast, if one holds ones hand with the palm up, as if holding a cup of tea on the palm, and rotates it, while keeping the palm up so as not to spill the tea, one finds it necessary to turn the palm around the rest of oneself twice (i.e. 720° , once below the elbow and once above it, before one winds up where one is/was! Oshins described this property of “self-referential motion” in terms of the mathematics of spinors, and told how he has used such spinors to generalize Stanford Professor Roger Shepard’s work on mental rotations and internal imagery. Kauffman showed the group a device which he made called a “quaternion demonstrator.” He used this to explain the relationship between quaternions and spinors as found in the hand movements demonstrated by Chung and Oshins.

¹Lou Kauffman of the mathematics department at University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, currently visiting at Institut Des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques, Paris, and MSRI, Berkeley.