



ADVANCED METHODS OF TAIJQUAN & BAGUAZHANG

This book was written back in **1982** and published in 1984. At that time in my teaching I had only taught two others about dim-mak and did not even tell people about it. However, I do make reference to it even in this early work. Some of the training methods given in this book, I no longer teach, however, it is a good work for historic purposes. **Erle Montaigue February 1998**

Introduction

This book has been born out of the many workshops that Erle Montaigue has given over the many years that he has been teaching the arts of T'ai Chi Ch'uan and Pa-Kua Chang. Although people from many areas have attended these workshops, it is the martial artist in particular to whom this book is directed.

With the increasing interest, in T'ai Chi and Pa-Kua as Martial arts, brought about by the many articles by Erle Montaigue, it became apparent that many martial artists would benefit from certain

techniques taken from T'ai Chi and Pa-Kua. It doesn't matter what martial one is studying, whether it is Karate, Tae Kwon Do, Kung Fu or Chinese wrestling pigeons, etc. The techniques that are given in this book will greatly help in your training. The areas greatly assisted are, perfect balance, centeredness and most of all awareness and sensitivity.

If a more comprehensive book on T'ai Chi is needed, then we suggest that you obtain the series by Erle Montaigue called "POWER T'AI CHI CH'UAN BOOKS 1, 2 & 3. However, this book will suffice for the learning for certain techniques that we have found to be helpful to any martial artist.

Most of the techniques given in this book require another person. This person in most cases doesn't have to be a martial artist; a wife or husband will do or even a son or daughter, as long as they are able to throw a few punches (most wives can do that!). There are however a few techniques that train both partners in which case another martial artist is essential. Solo exercises are also given and these of course can be practiced alone.

There are three areas of training in T'ai Chi and Pa Kua, the first of which is the gathering of the Chi. ---The next area are the awareness and sensitivity exercises whereby the student learns to listen with the skin and eventually knows when an attack will take place before it has even started.

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The third area of training covers the techniques of the martial art whereby the student learns the technical abilities. It is this area that I will deal mostly with in this book. Although the others will also be covered in brief.

There are of course certain techniques that will only work if the student is studying the actual arts so I will not deal with these. My Power T'ai Chi Ch'uan Book 3 deals with all of the advanced techniques.

A NOTE ON T'AI CHI BOXING

The boxing style of T'ai Chi is a most unique one and contrary to popular thought, has little or nothing to do with the slow moving form or Kata of T'ai Chi.

It is almost impossible to take each posture of the slow moving form and say that this posture is representative of such and such a defence an attack etc and then expect that to be the martial art of T'ai Chi. Although the slow moving form is based upon certain martial techniques, the form is there to allow us to have a fairly easy way to build up and then have the Ch'i flowing. The movements of the slow form are for the most part large and open and even if these movements were performed quite fast, they would be still too slow in actual combat. However, along with Ch'i Kung and the form we build up a very potent energy that can be used in the martial art. The T'ai Chi boxer gains much power and it is very difficult for anyone to block the attacks. The power just seems to keep on coming.

Without the base of the ' Ch'i Kung and the form, Tai Chi boxing is just another martial art, with it, it becomes a great martial art. It becomes truly INTERNAL:

CHAPTER ONE:

T'AI CHI BOXING TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Unlike the open movements of the T'ai Chi form, the boxing techniques employ very tight circles which can be used at great speed. The palms never move away from the centre, always guarding. The half side on stance is used with one palm up and one slightly down. The large low stances of the T'ai Chi form are never used in combat, we always use an upright stance with the knees bent not unlike the western boxer.

The power for the most part comes from the waist and hips; this makes for great power and speed. Usually, the techniques are performed on the front leg with the rear heel slightly off the ground; this enables us to find more power in a totally centrifugal punch. In T'ai Chi we never only use muscular strength, this limits the technique. We use centrifugal force with the muscles only there to hold up and direct the attacking portion. One must also learn to use exactly the right muscle for this job, otherwise our muscles work against us. The fist or foot must be used like a whip. This is the true meaning of, " the power comes from the legs, is passed along the legs, is directed by the waist and is expresses in the fingers.'"

THE MEANING OF YIN AND YANG IN T'AI CHI BOXING

In T'ai Chi we only really have to know two techniques, yin and yang. When someone attacks us, we must look at that person as simply being a sphere. The sphere is divided up into two halves, one yin and one yang. We don't have to know how bock all of the different types of attack, we only have to know how to deal with either yin or yang.

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Within these two states we do of course have to know other technical abilities but these must become totally sub-conscious and should just happen depending upon the situation.

The main physical aspect of the use of yin and yang is that if we attack with a yang movement, we must immediately change back to a yin movement and if we defend using a yin movement, we must immediately change back to a yang one etc. This ensures that we can not be re-attacked by giving the opponent something to attack. For instance, if I wish to pull down a large tree by grabbing one of its branches; it would be an easy job if that branch and the tree were dead and rigid. If that tree was alive and the branch was yielding then it would be a much more difficult job because there would not

be a rigid connection back to the tree. It's the same with us, if I attack with a yang punch and the attackee is quick enough to grab my wrist, then I should immediately go yin or relax the wrist. This places a great amount of energy on the end of something that is loose and so is not so easy to pull over. If the opponent tries to hurt the arm because it is relaxed then I immediately change back to yang and attack with elbow or shoulder.

FOLDING PRINCIPLE

If I am attacked on the wrist, I fold it up or relax it and turn it under and attack with elbow. If my elbow is attacked, I fold it up and attack with shoulder; if my shoulder is attacked I should fold it up and attack with my head. By the same method, if we are attacked on our right side, that side is empty while the left side attacks and if the left side is attacked then we make it empty and attack with the right side.

ON PUNCHING

The fist is always relaxed and never completely tenses even upon impact. It does close up but remains relaxed. This principle is the hardest of all for other martial artists to understand because we are all taught that we must protect the wrist by clenching the wrist. Not so in T'ai Chi. Only after many years of Ch'i development are we then able to use the relaxed fist. There is no easy way around this, because even if we use the hard fist in order to practice sparring, the Ch'i will never develop to any great degree because of the tension. This is why we tend not to practice any heavy sparring too early.

The wrist flicks up on impact, not using the muscles as in wing chung but with a whipping action. When we perform the Pauchui or fast forms, the fist can be heard as it snaps up at the end of each punch. The whip action will only ever work if the arm and wrist are totally loose and relaxed. The total body energy is concentrated into one small point and is most powerful.

In T'ai Chi we never stand still, there is always a changing motion from leg to leg. This motion is never constant and doesn't allow the opponent to know when the weight is on each leg. This kind of movement gives us greater mobility so we are able to attack from the side after blocking. For the most part the low kicks are blocked with the legs while the high kicks are blocked with the arms or palms.

Although there aren't many high kicks in T'ai Chi, we still train in all of the usual kicks just so that we are able to practice blocking these attacks. Also, if we are able to use high kicks then we are able to use low kicks to greater advantage. The block is never taken static. As the attack is coming in, we immediately start to move in. This tends to put the attacker's timing out and give us great advantage. However, these techniques will only work if we are only thinking of defence and not attack. If we are thinking all the time when to attack next then there is a big part of our awareness gone. So in T'ai Chi we only think of defence and the attack is made to be a part of the defence in our training.

The kicks are aimed mainly at the lower leg, the kneecap, side of the knee and the shin area. The premise being that the leg is able to reach the opponent before his attack has reached you. The

specific training system will be covered later in this book.

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BLOCK AND ATTACK ARE SIMULTANEOUS

Firstly we learn how to block and then we learn how to attack. Then we learn to block and attack at the same time. Then we learn that block and attack are the same. The specific training methods for gaining concomitant blocks and attacks will be dealt with later.

The block and attack can either happen with the same part of the body or block with one part or attack with another.

A NOTE ON PA KUA CHANG BOXING

Even more so than T'ai Chi, pa-kua is a specialized martial art and so only a few of the pa-kua techniques lend themselves to all martial arts. I will be covering these techniques in this book.

Only the palm is used in defence and attack. Eight different palm manoeuvres are used to cover almost any defence situation. The main difference to the fighting art of T'ai Chi is that pa-kua uses quite unorthodox movements using spirals. We try to completely encircle the attacker and confuse. The centre is the main area of defence the palms are held in such a way as to always protect the centre. The legs protect the lower centre while the two palms protect the upper centre. An experienced pa-kua person should be able to protect against all attacks using only one palm. There are specific training methods to achieve this and I will also be covering these in this book.

The fighting stance for pa-kua is also not so low as in the form. The lower stances are only to gain strength and leave us open if used in a fighting situation. Pa-Kua is truly one of the great martial arts but it takes a lifetime of dedication to learn properly.

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CH'I GATHERING EXERCISE FROM T'AI CHI CH'UAN

QUI GONG:

Qigong is probably the most integral part of T'ai chi. This exercise can be used by anyone to enhance his or her martial art. This is where we literally clean out the acupuncture meridians so that the Ch'i is able to flow to all parts of the body healing every organ in it's path. Once the channels have been opened, then the Qigong starts to build upon our given Ch'i or energy. This Ch'i can then be used in either healing or the martial art. There is no difference between the healing and the martial art; we use exactly the same energy.

In order for Qigong to work, certain criteria must be met. Firstly and most importantly the whole body must learn to totally relax. The word relax in Chinese doesn't mean that we fall on the floor, it means that we are soft externally but strong internally so that we only use the exact amount of muscle for the job. The upper body in particular must be totally relaxed and although it's quite impossible to block all thoughts from the mind, you must just let the thoughts come and go not concentrating on any one thought. The thought just comes in one side and out the other. Try to concentrate on the breath in the beginning, sink each breath deeply but not forced.

HOW IT WORKS

In order for anything to work, there must be energy to start with, a catalyst. In qui gong we have the knees bent which creates heat in the tan-tien or psychic centre, an electrical point about 3" below the navel. This heat then causes chemical changes to happen in the body which also causes energy changes to take place. It's like lighting a fire under a caldron of water, so that we cause the steam to rise. In the same way we cause the Ch'i to move which in turn makes the shen or spirit rise to the top of the head.

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In Chi kung we fool the mind into believing that we are doing certain things when we are not and so the sub conscious mind sends the Chi into the appropriate area. Because there is no tension in the area, the Chi is able to flow freely to it. Eventually the mind will be able to send the Chi to all areas without any special games, even if we have to perform great tasks. For instance, if we imagine that there are heavy weights hanging on the arms, the mind will try to send more energy to the arm. If there are weights on the arms then we become tense and the Ch'i is immediately blocked. Because we do not really have weights, the Ch'i is free to flow into the area because there is no tension.

After much practice of qui gong we learn to do work but still remain relaxed so that the Chi will flow freely to help with the task. In the martial arts this work would be punching, kicking, taking down etc.

This concept of Chi is very difficult to understand but if you ever come in contact with a real master of the martial arts then you will understand. My main teacher, master Chu King-Hung could hurl me some four meters away with not so much as a shrug and I am physically much larger than him. This is all done while drinking a cup of tea and standing on one leg. My book No 1 contains some photos of master Chu performing some of the Chi feats that have made him quite well known. Whenever master Chu gives demonstrations, he always asks people from the audience to come out and test him out and every time even if the person has quite obviously done some other martial art and their stance is very strong, they still are sent flying even more so because they are able to give more energy so that Chu can send it right back. In the martial arts this power shows itself in the punch and kick which have the same devastating power.

It is this same power that is used in the healing area of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, energy can be either put in or taken out of certain areas for healing.

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THE STANCE:

FOR QUI GONG

Stand with feet parallel and shoulder width apart. The toes are slightly turned under; this enables the point, K1 to be slightly lifted off the ground. The feet are concave. The reason for this is that in this position the outsides of the feet are caused to be yang while "kidney 1" is made to be yin. As in the laws of electricity, unlike poles attract while like poles repulse, the yin energy at the base of the foot causes yang energy to be attracted downward to the K1 or bubbling well point. The energy comes from the tan-tien or psychic centre, an electrical point 3" below the navel.

The knees are slightly bent until the patella comes in a vertical line with the toes. Any lower and damage could occur. The buttocks must be tucked under so that there is no sway in the lower back area. It's advisable to have a mirror at the side so that you are able to check to see if your back is straight at all times. Make sure that the back is not leaning backwards. Totally relax the shoulders, neck and chest and even the skin around your forehead, the whole face is relaxed. Relax the stomach. Raise your arms up to in front of your chest as in Photo No 1. It's as if you're holding a large ball. The intensity of qui gong is increased by holding the arms further away from the body and decreased by holding them closer. Much later it is possible to place small weights on the arms but this should not be tried until at least four years.

There must be a straight line of skin between the thumb and forefinger this ensures that the palm is concave and tends to bring the Ch'i into this area.

Qui gong is sometimes called 3 circle standing Zen, because of the circle of the feet, the circle of the arms and the circle of the palms.

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The hands are held at about upper chest height, see Photo No 1A. And the elbows hang down slightly, this ensures that the shoulders will be relaxed. The chin in the centre and pulled inward to straighten the backbone. Don't pull the chin in too far as to pull the head downward. The tongue is resting on the hard palate just as if you are saying the letter 'L', this joins the yin meridian running down the front of the body to the yang meridian up the backbone.

Breathe in and out of the nose using a full breath but not forced. Only in the fa-jing movements of the fast forms should you breathe out of the mouth. Breathe slowly without causing distress. Imagine that you are being held from above by a piece of string. Perhaps play some nice music and just stand there for about 15 to 20 minutes. Do this every morning half an hour after you rise and try again for an evening session.

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Qui gong isn't a pleasant exercise in the beginning. You will experience pain in the shoulders and the legs will tremble which will cause your whole body to vibrate. There will also be other spontaneous manifestations of qui gong but rather than tell people what to expect, I prefer everyone to experience their own feeling. If I tell people what to expect then they tell themselves that they are feeling something when they may not be.

After about only 6 weeks the shakes should stop and then qui gong becomes quite pleasant with one literally feeling the Ch'i flowing around the body.

VISUALISATION:

In order to have the Ch'i travel to the right parts we must firstly visualize and use the imagination so that the mind thinks that we are doing some work. On each in breath, imagine that the palms are trying to push inward i.e. the fingers try to move together. The palms only move minutely so that someone watching is unable to detect the movement. Remember to keep the arms and palms totally relaxed. Imagine that there are springs holding your palms out so that there is a force between the two palms. Remember! Only in the mind! On each out breath, try to pull the palms apart and imagine that they are being held together by rubber bands. Persevere with the exercise until you actually feel the force between the palms.

The mind is now fooled into believing that there is a strong force between the palms and will direct the Ch'i to move into the hands and circulate around the arms.

Eventually the Ch'i will just flow into the right areas without the mind games. You must also reverse the visualization, i.e. try to pull the palms apart on the in and push them together on the out.

After standing in the posture for at least 15 minutes and you have had a good shake, lower the palms to a low position and hold them there for a while. Then, on an in breath, lift both palms out to either side and across in-front of the chest then push downward as you breathe out and slowly straighten the legs. Just walk around for about 5 minutes slowly and in particular don't have anything cold to drink.

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If when practicing qui gong the vibrations do not start then have a look at your stance, you have probably slowly crept up and haven't noticed it. If pain is felt, have a look at the posture, if everything is right then it's a good pain but if something is wrong then rectify it immediately. There is a tendency to sway, just let this happen naturally, it usually happens with the breath.

THE BREATH

Although after some time we use different breathing techniques, I will only cover the natural breath in this book. All of the breathing techniques and other qui gong practices are covered in my first book, "POWER T'AI CHI CH'UAN BOOK 1."

As you breathe in through your nose, the lower abdomen must expand; this is the same natural way that a child breathes. As you breathe out, the lower abdomen must contract. This is called natural breath. There must be no shoulder or chest movement when breathing. If you have access to a child, place your palm over the lower abdomen and learn how to breathe.

CH'I GATHERING EXERCISE FROM PA-KUA CHANG:

In the same way that T'ai Chi has it's Ch'i gaining exercises, so too does pa-kua chang. Although Pa-Kua also has a static type of qui gong I will only cover the moving type as I have covered the T'ai Chi qui gong in detail already.

This is a walking exercise with the feet performing the same movements for each step. Hold your palms above your head with the palms relaxed and the fingers are pointing forward. Bend the knees to as low as you are able to go but still keeping the back straight. Now with parallel feet and shoulder width apart, brush the left ankle against the right ankle and step out in an arc as shown in Photo No 2. The breath must be deep and slow but not forced. The anus sphincter must be lightly closed internally and the toes must be curled under in the same way as for T'ai chi. When stepping forward, the whole foot must touch the ground, whereas when stepping backward, the toe must touch first.

You must walk so slowly that someone watching is unable to detect the movement. It should take around 15 minutes to walk up and back along a 6-metre length. Do not pick up the rear heel before the weight is fully placed on to the front foot. Make sure that the arms do not slowly drop down and keep them relaxed.

MOVING THE ARMS:

The arms must move totally independently to the feet. Don't get into a habit of pushing forward as the feet move forward each time, vary the arms by slowing down and speeding up the movement of the arms.

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ROLLING THE BARREL

This is the first of the arm moving walks and simply involves holding the palms as shown in Photo No 3. And making like you are rolling a large barrel in front of you as you perform the same walking pattern. The arms just push out in a downward arc and then pull back toward you also in a downward arc as the arrow shows in the photo. Once again, don't get into the habit of pushing always on the same movement, vary the speed of the arms but keep the feet going at the same speed.

OPPOSING CIRCLE BLOCK

This is another of the arm moving walks and involves taking both palms out to the sides in large arcs from down near the hips out and over in front of the body. Both palms come down in front of the body as shown in Photo No 4. Both palms are facing downward. Keep the walking slow and easy without changing pace. Notice that in photo No 4, the right palm is on top, on the next circle; the left palm should be on top. This technique can be used to block front kicks or straight punches. The palms trap the attack moving it downward as you re attack.

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OPPOSING CIRCLE BLOCK

FIRST VARIATION:

This is another of the moving palm walk and is exactly the same as the one in photo No 4 only this time the upper palm is turned up. Photo No 5. This is used in much the same way except that it's a more straight out block rather than a trapping technique.

FREE CIRCLE BLOCK:

This moving palm walk makes use of a free-swinging circle in front of the body. The palms swing in either a clockwise or a Counter C.W. circle blocking anything that comes across the path. The wrists must be relaxed and the walking must be the same. Photo No 6.

GRASP BIRD'S TAIL BLOCK:

This is probably the most difficult to understand. The left palm comes up from the right hip and the right fingers join it as it journeys in an arc out to the left shoulder to block. Photo No 7. To perform the other side, the both palms come back down to the right hip and circle across to the left hip then out to the right shoulder as before.

CHAPTER TWO

AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY

EXERCISES FROM T'AI CHI:

These exercises I have taken from the workshop material and start with the less complicated exercises and go on to the more advanced ones. So it's important to follow the book from the beginning and not attempt the more advanced exercises first.

BLOCKING WITH THE VOICE:

Two people stand opposite each other, one being the attacker and one being the attackee. You must stand at arm's length so that the attacker is able to attack and touch the attackee. The attacker must not focus on any part of the attacker's body. I prefer to look over the right shoulder but this is a personal preference and each person should find his or her own area. You must take into account the attacker's whole body with the peripheral vision and in particular the triangle formed when a line is drawn from the top of the head down to both shoulders and across the chest. See Photo No 8.

In taking in this triangle, the attackee is able to know whenever the attacker is going to attack. So, if the attacker attacks with the Rt. palm, there will be a movement of his right shoulder or if he attacks with the left palm, the same thing will apply. If the attacker is going to kick, there'll be a slight movement of his head. In taking in the whole body, we will know which foot is going to kick.

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HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

You must make some sort of noise with your voice. You do this when the attacker attacks. The idea is that we are trying to get our mind and our movement working as one unit, rather than the mind

recognizing the attack and then a split second later the movement happening. In order to do this we must have something in the middle to join the mind and body, this is the voice.

The voice acts in complete co-ordination with the mind and our movement also works with the voice. So if we are able to have our movement working in total harmony with the voice while the voice works in total harmony with the mind, eventually we will have the movement and the mind working in complete co-ordination.

The attacker should move as quickly as possible to try and touch the attackee on the side of the face. The attackee should make a noise and as soon as the attacker hears it, he/she should stop the attack. So depending upon how aware the attackee is, he will either be touched or not touched. You are able to use the left or the right palms and also use low attacks to the lower abdomen. Later on, you may start to use the feet as well. This involves kicking to the knee or shin but be careful and make sure that you are able to pull the kick.

(Remember! At no time should you focus on the attacking portion of the attacker. Keep it all in the peripheral vision and most importantly, remain totally relaxed.)

When you become a little more at ease with this exercise, you may then start to point to whichever portion is going to attack but still make the noise. If the attacker attacks your face with the right palm, you will point to it either with your right or left finger as you make the noise. In this way we are starting to have the body moving with the voice. Take in the peripheral vision and even with the kicks point to whichever leg is going to kick. Eventually this exercise goes on and you start to touch the attacking part before it has struck. At a more advanced stage you should be able to leave out the voice and have the body moving in perfect harmony with the mind.

The last stage of this exercise is the most advanced stage and shouldn't be practiced too soon. This involves simultaneous block and attack. As the attacker tries to touch you, make your sound and point to the attacking portion and at exactly the same time re-attack, touching him somewhere with the other palm. It's then up to the attacker to make a noise and point to your palm as it attacks.

This exercise can become very complicated. The most important thing to remember is not to allow it to become a competition. Remember that you are only trying to help each other and not trying to find out who is the better. Don't allow it to become a brawl.

PUSHING HANDS, DA-LU, SAN-SAU AND CHEE SAU:

Pushing hands is one of the most beneficial exercises that any martial artist can learn. However it is quite indigenous to T'ai Chi and to really understand it one must have studied T'ai Chi. For those who are interested in push hands I refer you to my second book, " POWER T'AI CHI CH'UAN BOOK 2 ". This book contains all there is to know about the physical side of push-hands. The same applies to Da-Lu, a sort of advanced double push hands with movement. San-Sau or 'free hands' is even more so connected with T'ai Chi but is available in my third book, " POWER T'AI CHI CH'UAN BOOK 3 ". Any martial artist can practice Chee Sau or sticking hands so I will cover it in this book.

Sticking hands means that you simply stick to the opponent at all times, you never allow your palms to break touch. If you do, as you will see later, you leave yourself open to attack. Unlike other martial arts the T'ai Chi sticking hands is done with a very light touch, this enables very quick reactions to take place with fast blocks and attacks. It also allows each player to be totally relaxed during the exercise.

Two people stand opposite each other in a right bow stance as shown in Photo No 9. Once again the gaze should be just past your opponent's shoulder and seeing with the peripheral vision. The two players, as a unit now start to rock backwards then forward changing the weight from leg to leg. One person goes forwards while the other goes backwards. The palms should rotate as if using a butter churn. The arms must not rotate by themselves; the waist must also turn. Be especially aware of the knees, they must not rotate with the body, your legs are only doing their correct job in holding you up and providing the power. The palms are held exactly the same way as for Qui-Gong covered earlier. One person places his palms on top of the other's near the wrist with a light touch. The first and most basic attack is for the person who's palms are underneath to come forward and try to push into the other person's abdomen. The person who is being attacked should open his palms downwards and out to neutralize the on-coming force. The circling then continues. The person who's palms are on the top has to attack the face and upper chest area. The attackee should open both palms just past his ears to neutralize the on-coming force. At no time must the palms separate. The low attack is seen in Photo No 10. And the upper attack is seen in Photo No 11.

Once this basic exercise has been accomplished, you may then go on to a more advanced one. If the other person attacks upper and you have neutralized the oncoming force, you can immediately re-attack to the low area of the other player. This means that the other player has to be very fast to get back quick enough to block your attack. The mind must change very quickly from Yin to Yang and from Yang to Yin, which is exactly what we're trying to achieve. Another way to neutralize the force if a low attack is being felt is to turn the whole body either to the right or left depending upon which direction the circling is going to push away the attack to one side rather than opening the palms downwards.

ATTACKING WITH ONE PALM

Instead of attacking with both palms the person who has palms on top could attack with one palm to the side of the head meaning that the other person must block using one palm. This attack can either happen when you are moving forwards or retreating. The same applies to the person who's palms are under, he can attack to the rib area either when coming forward or when retreating. The low attack is done with spear fingers.

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Continue practicing in this way until both players become aware and sensitive of each other and know exactly what you're doing. At no time must any tension be felt in the arms or any part of the body.

SIMULTANEOUS BLOCK AND ATTACK

This part of the exercise is excellent for developing simultaneous block and attack techniques. As your partner comes in for an attack, you now not only block the attack, but simultaneously re-attack with the other hand. If you have both palms on the top and your partner attacks low, with one palm, then you would block low with your one palm and attack high with the other palm at the same time. This will take many hours of practice and awareness to have the hands and the mind working together. This exercise above all will increase your martial ability. No longer will there be a waiting time after an attack because block and attack will be the same. By the same token, if the other person attacks and you simultaneously re-attack, then it's up to him to also block your attack. This is all happening while you have either both palms on top or underneath.

CHANGING HANDS:

As the circling continues and you have your palms on the top, you are now able to take one palm, the Rt. one and shift it to the underneath side. Now you have your right palm under and the left one on the top. It's most important that you don't lose contact when you change.

So far the palms have only turned in one direction. I.e. both palms turning together either clockwise or counter C.W. You can now move each set of palms in independent circles. As your right palm moves away from your body, the left could be moving in etc. Keep the changing from leg to leg happening so that the legs are constant while the palms move freely to attack and block. This now becomes quite complicated with each person either attacking high or low at any time. Keep it light and don't compete, just help each other.

USING THE FEET:

Using the feet to kick and trap should only come at a very advanced stage. While still performing the palm manoeuvres, you are now able to throw in the kicks to the lower leg area in which case the attackee would have to pull that leg back very quickly.

There are countless possibilities in this exercise so I will not cover them all in this book. I will however show just a few possibilities so that you are then able to build on them and find your own.

HAND TRAPPING TECHNIQUES

Still keeping in contact, one palm can come across to the other side and underneath the other person's hand so that now you have both of your palms touching his one arm. From this position you are able to lock the arm and use throwing techniques. See photo No 12.

USING THE ELBOWS:

The elbows may also be used to either attack or defend as shown in Photo No 13. By lifting the elbows up or down, you are able to block high or low. Once again attack and defence should be simultaneous. The elbow could block as in photo No 13. And at the same time it could attack the face. The elbow could also be used to attack the lower rib area after a block to a face attack. See Photo No 14.

The obvious progression of the above exercise is to start moving. This may sound impossible due to the amount of techniques that you are trying to perform but stick with it and eventually it will all become subconscious and you will not even have to think about it. Just remember to always follow and you can't go wrong.

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SQUARE BLOCKING FROM PA-KUA CHANG

Although Pa-Kua is a very specialized martial art, where most of the techniques cannot be used by other styles, there are just a few techniques that I have found to be quite helpful to all martial artists.

The first of these techniques is a very simple exercise called square blocking. Two people stand facing each other with the feet a little more than shoulder width apart and knees slightly bent. One person, who is the attackee, holds one palm out in front holding what is known as a dragon palm or No 3 palm representing fire. The palm is lightly tensed and concave like a dragon's palm. The arm is slightly bent. The attacker throws four punches in a set manner, which later on will become free but still to the same four points. The punches are aimed firstly at the right side of the head, then to the left side, then to the right lower rib area, and then to the left lower rib area.

The attackee must only use the " hammer palm " i.e.; the position of the palm never changes to block. The palm is used like a hammer and any part of the palm is used to block. The right face punch is blocked as shown in Photo No 15. The left fist lower rib punch is blocked as shown in Photo No 16.

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USING THE PA—KUA POLE

This exercise involves using a long pole as used in the Pa-Kua stick form and simply poking it towards the attackee's head. Both players stand opposite each other one holding the pole. Be sure to stand close enough to be able to touch with the stick and make sure that the end is padded. The attacker pokes the pole at the other's head to the same area each time. You must not try to trick each other by changing the direction.

The attackee either moves his head to the left or to the right, or bobs down to avoid the stick. Start very slowly at first and only when each person is very proficient should the speed increase. You are also able to attack to left and right rib area where-by the attacker should shift the waist to the left or right.

The advancement of this exercise is that one player now attacks anywhere to the attackee's body

who now must block the stick with his palms and try to re-attack. The idea is that if you are able to block and attack with the stick, then it should be easy when only the body is used.

WAVE HANDS LIKE CLOUDS FROM T'AI CHI CH'UAN:

This technique not only develops the use of the particular posture, it also causes reaction time to be greatly reduced using any technique.

Once again one person is the attacker and one the attackee. Hold the palms and body as shown in Photo No 17. As the attacker throws a chest punch, you bring the upper palm down on the outside and block downward while the other palm comes up the inside to attack to the face with back-fist. This also applies to a lower attack. See Photo No. 18. If a face punch is used, bring the lower palm up on the inside to block and attack the groin area with the other palm, which has simultaneously moved downward. This is the action of wave hands like clouds. The attacker can use either punch at any time.

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CHAPTER THREE

FIGHTING TECHNIQUES FOR ALL MARTIAL ARTISTS:

This chapter deals with the practical usage of some of the techniques from T'ai Chi and Pa-Kua which will be of interest to all martial artists. I'll cover ways to gain more power in your punching through total relaxation and not through using more muscular strength. I'll also cover how to gain more power in kicking along with more speed through total relaxation. Certain techniques from T'ai Chi and Pa-Kua will be covered which will not only be of use to the style's practitioners but to everyone.

You will find that the word relaxation is used a lot in this book, this is because it is the most important factor in these arts. Through total relaxation the internal Ch'i is able to flow freely to all parts of the body and great power is generated in a very concentrated form when we kick or punch. Because we are relaxed the arms and legs are not restricted through too much muscular tension and so we are able to become much faster in defence and attack.

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When one first tries this idea of relaxation it will be quite difficult hut only with many hours of practice will your technique rise to a very high level and not only stay within the limitations of your own muscular ability. All the muscles have to do is to direct the action, for instance when throwing a

punch, the arm is totally relaxed and the muscles aim the fist. The body does the rest. If your arm is at all tense then you are limited by the strength of your muscles. If you use centrifugal force, or Ch'i power then the sky is the limit.

The waist is the commander of the power. It is used in a whip like action, which literally sends out the fist, or the foot like a cannon shot. My teacher, Master Chu King-Hung could kick and pull it just before your stomach but the absolute force would be felt through the whole body. The power is generated from the rear or the front foot, depending upon which technique you are using. When the power arrives at the waist it is hurled out at great speed and power because the waist is like a turbo jet. The foot could be likened to an electric guitar out of which not much voltage is generated, but when it is put through an amplifier, that power is increased many times. The waist is the amplifier.

THE FIGHTING STANCE

The fighting stance in T'ai Chi is not unlike that of the Western boxer. We do not use long low stances; these are only used in the form to make the body very strong. The arms are held very relaxed with one being up in line with the face, the other at a slightly lower angle. One palm is a little more forward than the other is. The weight is on the rear foot in the receiving position but moves to the front foot for the attack with the heel of the rear foot off the ground to allow the waist to do it's job. The shoulders hang very loosely the waist is loose and the whole body is calm. Photo No 19.

From this position we are able to block and re-attack from any kind of attack. I will deal firstly with palm or fist attacks.

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Many people have heard the expression, " don't use force on force ". This means that if an attack is being felt from a right fist to our face, never block with a slap at a 90-degree, force angle to the arm to move it away to the side. What you must do is, just before the attack is being felt, one of your palms comes up in a very relaxed natural manner and simply brushes the on-coming forearm toward you and to the side. The angle that the palm is striking the on-coming fist is quite an acute angle towards you and out to either side of your head. This makes for a very short reaction time and doesn't allow the opponent enough time to counter your re-attack. In other words, we don't play it safe; we allow the attack to come in close to our body and in this case about an inch away from the face. Photo No 20.

Both palms are able to work across the body or on the same side. For instance if a right punch was being felt, you could either block with the left palm or the right palm. Sometimes the same hand that performs the block also re-attacks. If a right punch is coming, you could block with the left palm and once the punch has been blocked to the left side of your head and because you have turned the body to the left. The left palm is then able to use the centrifugal force from the waist, which now turns to the right and sends the left palm out. Or, as you turn to the left to block the punch, the right palm is free to use that same force as used in the block to simultaneously attack. Both palms are always held in the centre.

OPEN AND CLOSED SIDES

You are able to block a punch on either of two sides, i.e. the 'closed' or the 'open' side. The open side is when someone throws a right-handed punch at your face and you block the punch on the inside of the forearm. You are now standing square on to the attacker. This means that the other hand of the attacker is free to block or attack. This is what is known as the open side. This side is more dangerous than the closed side. If you both are standing in front of each other then you are facing each other's open side.

If you block an attack and you find that you are on the open side of the attacker, we must always keep in mind the OTHER HAND! Before or as you re-attack, you must block that other hand regardless of whether it is attacking or not. For instance, if you block a right fist to your face with your left palm and take it past the left side of your head, you would then use your right palm to touch the attacker's left fist and then re-attack with your left fist. In this way you are stopping the attacker's left fist from re-attacking. If you block that right fist with your right palm out to your left side, then the left hand would still have to come down and block the other hand as your right hand then comes through to attack. See Photo No 21.

BLOCKING ON THE OPEN SIDE

So far I have only dealt with high attacks but what if you are attacked to the abdomen? T'ai Chi has an excellent block that can be used by any martial artist to great advantage and is not unlike the 'bong-sau' block from Wing-Chung. If someone attacks low on your right side, bring the right forearm down in an arc across your body to block with the back of your forearm. The left arm is placed across your right forearm so that the fist is unable to slide up and re-attack. You are then able to attack the face with back-fist. See Photos 22 & 23.

This block is also strong enough to be used against medium height kicks and with a twist of the waist, the attacker is sent flying. You make use of you great leverage using his knee as the fulcrum. Some people say that T'ai Chi has no blocks and that we must just bob and weave out of the way. These people obviously haven't heard of martial artists like Benny The Jet. Such statements come from people who have not had ring or street experience.

BLOCKING ON THE CLOSED SIDE:

If it's possible to block and get onto the closed side of the opponent, then this is always the best way because it means that you are coming in to attack from the closed side of the attacker. This doesn't leave much room for the opponent to re-attack. If a right fist is being felt we block with the left palm pulling the fist across to our left side. Immediately we also step around to the right hand side of the attacker and then re-attack with the Rt fist over the top to his face. See Photo No.24. This time you do not have to block the other hand because it is unable to re-attack and you are well out of the way of it.

If you are fighting with a very tall person it is unwise to attack to the face unless very sure because

this would pull you in closer and you have a reach disadvantage. In these cases you must strike at the vital points along the centre of the body or armpit area etc.

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LOW BLOCKING ON CLOSED SIDE:

Exactly the same low block is used on the closed side that you used on the open side, only this time it's a little safer. The left forearm comes across from the left to your right to block the low right handed attack over to your right while the right palm is on top to prevent the arm sliding upward. As before, you could re-attack with a left back-fist to the face.

HANDS CHANGING BLOCKS:

These techniques are most effective and can become very fast because you are using circular movements. If the right handed fist is attacking, you would block it with your left palm and literally pat the arm in towards you i.e.; you slide your palm down the attacking arm moving it to your right hand side. Almost simultaneously the right palm comes over the top in a circle and does exactly the same thing, it slides down the arm, and it takes over the block. The left hand is then free to attack to the face from the side. Photo No 25.

It is also a good idea to kick to the attacker's knee as you block and re-attack. For instance, if the right handed attack is being felt, you might block in to your right hand side with your left hand which takes the fist just past the right of your head. The other palm could come up underneath to further block the attack and the, right heel could attack the kneecap as the right palm attacks the face or heart. This posture is known as " Lift hands ". Seen in Photo No 26.

The kick and punch must be almost simultaneous. It's a good idea for the attackee to wear protective shin and knee guards.

The actions of the palms must not be forced muscular movements, they must be as if you are standing with your palms by your sides and you swing your palms upward with a natural swinging movement as if brushing flies away.

THE FIGHTING STANCE FOR PA- KUA CHANG:

The fighting stance for pa-kua is once again a side on one with one palm held further away from the body than the other one which is held a bit below your other elbow. The knees are slightly bent and the stance is not so wide. See Photo No 27. See page 33.

The peripheral vision is towards the outer index finger. The palms held in this way are able to block any attack. The inner palm (the left one as in the photo) is ready to attack while the outer palm is used as antennae. As soon as an attack is coming in, i.e., a right face punch, and the right palm will block from left to right and the left palm will attack to the face simultaneously. The body turns from left to right on the heel i.e., the toes swing 90 degrees from left to right and the weight changes from right leg to left leg. This gives the left attacking palm great power. See Photo No 28. The techniques of Pa-kua are quite unorthodox and so I will not include too many in this book.

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ON BLOCKING KICKS:

To be able to block kicks I believe that it is important to firstly be able to use them. Therefore it is a regular part of my class to practice all of the usual kicking techniques using the heavy bag. High crescent, low crescent, roundhouse, back spinning heel, back hook, front heel, side, back, reverse crescent, double and triple flick and leaping kicks.

To practice the blocking of kicks you simply need some one to kick you. Slowly at first and then quite fast.

As with the punch I like to use the immediate re-attack method. Never just block the kick and move out of the way ready. Block on the move and re-attack in towards the opponent. To practice this we have a most unusual training method. Two people are set in a fighting position, one is the kicker and the other is the one being attacked.

The very instant that the attacker attacks and is seen in the attackee's peripheral vision, he does not move away but instead moves straight in. We use the 'barging' technique. The idea being that in order for someone to kick you they must have their timing right for the power to be delivered at exactly the right moment. If you move in, you might very well collect a foot in the stomach or elsewhere. But, the force of the kick has been greatly softened because you have upset the distance and timing of the attack. In the beginning you will receive a few bumps and grinds but with a little tenacity of purpose this exercise will change your whole outlook on the blocking of kicks.

As soon as the kick is being felt, you barge in at a slight angle to the attacker and throw your arms any way you like. They might go down or up or both, depending on the attack. As soon as the kick is blocked, both palms pound down onto the attacker. Remember in the beginning of this book when we covered the walking Ch'i gatherers? Well it's now that you are able to use these techniques.

You can either use the circling palm technique, opposing circle technique to pull the kick down and then re-attack, in fact any technique will do as long as you move at the very instant that the attacker moves. See Photo 29 on page 34.

Another training method for defence against low kicks and sweeps is to have your partner perform low sweeps to your legs. At that very instant leap into the air over the top of the sweep and at the same time strike to the head with you fist. Remember that you must remain totally relaxed even when leaping. This technique is called 'hopping like a sparrow' in T'ai Chi

There are of course particular style blocks against the kicks but are a direct homology to the styles. All of the T'ai Chi postures are covered in great detail in my book, "Power T'ai Chi Ch'uan Book 3."

One of the main things to remember in all forms of martial art is not to retreat. Retreating only gives the attacker a great advantage because he/she is already moving forwards and in a state of Yang so that he is able to keep stepping in on you. If however you move in on the attacker and slightly to the side, you put the timing of the attack right off. But at the same time you make for a very short distance between you and your attacker only now you have the advantage physically and mentally. You are just beginning to attack whereas the attacker has just finished.

ALWAYS STEP IN AND MOVE TO THE SIDE FOR YOUR RE ATTACK:

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A NOTE ON PUNCHING

As Pa-kua doesn't use the fist, I will only discuss the T'ai Chi method of the fist.

There are two methods of punching in T'ai Chi and they are dependent upon which parts of the body that we are striking. If you punch against the boned parts of your opponent's body, i.e. the face, the centre of the chest etc. you would use the whipping fist. I.e. on impact you should lightly close the fist and at the same time the wrist flicks upward in a whip like action. This has the effect of sending a shock wave up into the area being attacked. The only way that this action will work is to have the arm totally relaxed as with all of the T'ai Chi techniques. In this way the energy or Ch'i can flow from tan-tien out along the arm and penetrate. There are also three ways of punching the hard areas. The first way is to hold your palm in front of you with the palm facing downward. As you twist your body to the left, allow your right palm to thrust out and at the precise moment of impact the fist closes very lightly and twists to a vertical position. With the wrist slightly turning upward at the end. The second method is the reverse of that method, you start out with the palm held in a vertical position with the thumb upward and upon impact, the fist closes and you turn your fist downward. This time the wrist still flicks up but laterally. The third method is simply the whipping action of the back-fist. I.e. with a totally relaxed arm and just before impact you whip your forearm back towards you, which causes the wrist to flick out and strike. To practice these methods we use a punching mitt. As these methods are for the honey areas of the body we use the harder type of mitt usually made of leather. Photo No 30.

Imagine that on the end of your arm is a lump of lead and as you twist your waist to the left as you push with the rear foot, the weight is thrown out. Upon impact the fist closes lightly, In T'ai Chi we strike mainly with the last two knuckles, i.e. the weakest ones.

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Many people are sometimes amazed or sceptical that anyone uses these knuckles. Most other martial arts use the stronger knuckles so that they will not be damaged. We use the last two knuckles so that

we are able to use this whipping action which allows us to remain totally relaxed so that the Ch'i will flow. If the Ch'i is able to flow to the fist then the bones will be protected. Under no circumstances should you try to use these knuckles if you haven't been practicing for many years. After many years of training it is possible to strike hard objects using a relaxed fist.

If the arm is totally relaxed there will be a certain kind of sound made when the fist strikes the mitt. You will get to know this sound. Never draw the fist right back to the hip to punch, only attack from the fighting stance from no more than 18". Always keep the fist in line with your centre; this will increase your power.

The second kind of punching involves attacking to the softer areas of the body. This punch is a more conventional punch in that the power comes from the rear leg and thrusts forward rather than a quick jab. The punch does not flick up at the end but is still held in a loose manner. This sort of attack can be practiced on the heavier softer type of bag.

USING THE MAKIWARA:

Most harder martial arts use the makiwara to develop hard knuckles with calluses protecting the bones. I use the makiwara in a totally different way. We use it to train relaxation and the sending of Ch'i to certain areas for protection.

If you strike a hard makiwara with the back of your palm, it will usually hurt. This is because there is tension in your arm and hand so the Ch'i cannot flow to this area. Even when you think that your arm is relaxed your sub-conscious mind will cause it to tense up on impact. When you are able to strike the makiwara with the back of your palm and remain totally relaxed, only then will the Ch'i flow to the striking area and protect it. The same applies for the soft punch.

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ON THROWS

AND LOCKS:

If you are able to grab the opponent's wrist, leg or arm, then locks and takedowns are very effective. But the only way that these techniques work is depend-ant upon the other person trying to pull away. If someone applies a lock to your wrist, try to go with the force, this will neutralize the lock. In other words you use the folding technique. If someone is twisting your right wrist, to your left side, relax the wrist, move in and attack with the elbow. This will neutralize the lock. If a person is going to throw you, they firstly have to grab you and as soon as someone grabs you use the T'ai Chi technique of sticking to and not letting go. For instance if someone is pulling your right arm, you simply go with the force, step in to the attack as close as you are able, then with your free leg you redirect the energy right back into their centre and knock him down. This principle is a very simple one but it is quite difficult to master. Because we all have the sub-conscious thought of always trying to pull away using force against force. It is in the techniques of push-hands that we teach our sub-conscious mind to go with the force rather than against it. Never forget to have the use of your other

hand. As someone is applying a lock to your right wrist, don't forget you can strike with the left hand or if you are being pulled down, as you step in, your left hand is then free to strike the face or other parts. You also have feet and legs, which can also strike, as you're being taken down. I remember once pushing hands with my teacher, Master Chu King-hung and at one time I thought that I had finally beaten him by pulling him forwards but as he came past me, his head somehow was under my arm and I was thrown several feet away. Any part of your body can be used only if you apply the principle of sticking to and not letting go.

USING PRESS AND SQUEEZE

These two techniques are two of the most important ones in T'ai Chi but are somewhat neglected in other martial arts. But when applied correctly, they are quite effective. The technique of press (some people call this push), is simply pressing someone with both palms. This may sound simple but it's a very difficult technique to learn properly. Firstly you must have the whole body in complete co-ordination i.e.; the power from the rear leg must be totally co-ordinated and joined with the palms. To do this your body must be totally relaxed. The arms do not push; the body does the work with the arms directing the power.

Keeping in mind that the main principle of T'ai Chi is to re-direct energy rather than forcing against it. If for instance someone attacks with a right fist, you would block the punch, step to their right hand side coming in and as the attacker goes by, all you have to do is to add just a few ounces of force in the right direction and send them flying. If you choose to add much force, you can send him through the wall! My teacher could knock anyone out just using press. The technique of squeeze (Chee, some people call this press), is an extremely powerful form of pushing. One hand, the left one is placed on the inside of the right wrist and once again you have complete co-ordination from your rear foot through to your right wrist. Only this time, in a relaxed manner you start with your elbows slightly out as you attack, you straighten your rear leg and literally squeeze your elbows in towards you, which sends your wrist out something like a concertina. There is a great concentration of energy in the wrist area, which usually leaves no room for escape. In using Chee you are able to lift the attacker off the ground and send him backwards. Photo No 31.

THE USE OF ELBOW AND SHOULDER:

Never forget that you have a shoulder and two elbows, we always hear about elbow techniques but not many people know how to use it correctly. This comes from the fact that not many people use the stepping in technique to bring them close enough to use shoulder or elbow. If the timing is right and the distance is right then elbow stroke works a little like a grenade whereas shoulder stroke works like a cannon. Elbow can be used in many different ways. As an uppercut or as a roundhouse attack or as a straight jab in fact most of the ways that a punch can be used, so too can the elbow. With elbow the power source is the waist.

Shoulder stroke has only one main use and that is to barge in towards the chest. When used correctly, the shoulder is most devastating. The timing and distance is crucial and will not work over about 6". Whereas with elbow stroke the power comes from the waist, in shoulder stroke, the power comes from the rear leg.

The technique of slant flying works very well with shoulder stroke. After you have struck the opponent with shoulder, you then step in behind with one leg and using the power from the waist, open both arms throwing the attacker over your leg. This technique only works in close but then it's difficult to strike someone from ten feet away.

ON SINGLE WHIP:

Most T'ai Chi practitioners know of the use of the final posture of single whip, i.e., the left palm is used to attack to the soft parts of the upper body. I do not believe that this technique is very effective so I will not cover it, however, the secondary use of single whip can be of great use. The hooked palm or horse foot palm can be used to attack the soft underneath parts of the body which have a boned structure, i.e. under the arm or just below the pectoral area. There are many important acupuncture points around these areas which when struck are quite painful. If you were to strike with the knuckles of this palm straight out, you would surely hurt your wrist, so we attack in a downward glancing blow so that the force is evenly distributed over the wrist. The other palm is used as a defensive measure to stop a re-attack. See Photo No 32.

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ON STRIKING THE VITAL POINTS

It's all very well for someone to tell you that all you have to do to render an attacker immobile is to strike the vital points. However, being realistic, one would have to take about 3 lifetimes to learn point striking, or dim-mak. Any acupuncturist knows that it is very difficult to even find the points by careful measurement, let alone striking at them with great speed and power. I tend to teach that if you are able to strike within the general area of some points then it will still have a great affect. In acupuncture there are certain points that are labelled dangerous to needle. These points are only given after many years of study and only when the instructor is sure of the student. I will give a few general points that are quite good for self-defence.

Firstly the face area. To strike the forehead can be effective but it takes much power to be really effective. Any other hard boned area will usually work and most people take potluck in striking to the face. Although the temple is very effective, it takes a good deal of technique to use it properly. The throat is usually an easy and dangerous target but only use it if you really mean it.

Remember, the whole idea of T'ai Chi and Pa-Kua is one of defence and not attack, so only use the right amount of power for the job at hand. We don't want to go to jail for hurting someone whom is a bit under the influence and decides that he is going to bop you one.

The chest area near the hard honey parts are effective, as are the armpits. The old breadbasket is of course an excellent striking place and either side of it will make living very difficult so be careful when attacking these points. It requires a great deal of accuracy to strike the groin with the greatest affect. The knee is one of the main striking areas either downward onto the kneecap or to either side. So too is the shin OK

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ON TOURNAMENT FIGHTING:

Once upon a time tournaments were won by the person who had the best technique. Nowadays it is the fittest person who usually wins. This is because there are so many rules placed upon the fighters that much of their technique has to be forgotten; otherwise they would be disqualified. And rightly so too. Nowadays people are able to at least try some of their art in an almost real situation without risking life and limb.

I don't really agree with tournaments but then that is just my opinion and other people think differently. For this reason I have had some success with full contact tournaments. Some of my students have won quite a few bouts using what little of the T'ai Chi techniques that we could.

I will include some of the more unorthodox techniques that I have found to be useful in full contact tournaments.

I have already mentioned two techniques that work very well with or without gloves and that is press and squeeze. In kickboxing, people just don't expect one to use these techniques. Most fighters are put off by someone who comes in rather than moving away from an attack. We have found that the spinning back-fist is quite effective. It has also been my experience to find that most fighters only ever use the same leg each time, so learn to use both sides and you will have a much better chance.

The whole T'ai Chi idea of remaining calm and aware of what the opponent is doing puts you miles ahead.

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IN CLOSING:

In this book I have covered only a small spectrum of T'ai Chi and Pa-Kua techniques that could be useful to all martial artists. If you wish to take up these arts either as whole martial arts or as an addition to your own martial art, you must make sure that you find a teacher who still teaches the arts as they were first intended, AS MARTIAL ARTS and not some sort of jazzercise for weight reduction etc.

There are many excellent teachers in the U.S, Australia and Europe. But unfortunately we all have our share of charlatans. SO be warned and try and find someone who knows the scene in your area.

It doesn't matter what style you learn or teach, we are all martial artists and should therefore have some affinity with each other. Any martial art can be great if you have the right mind attitude. If the mind is right then the martial art is right.

Erle Montaigne, 20th of August 1982