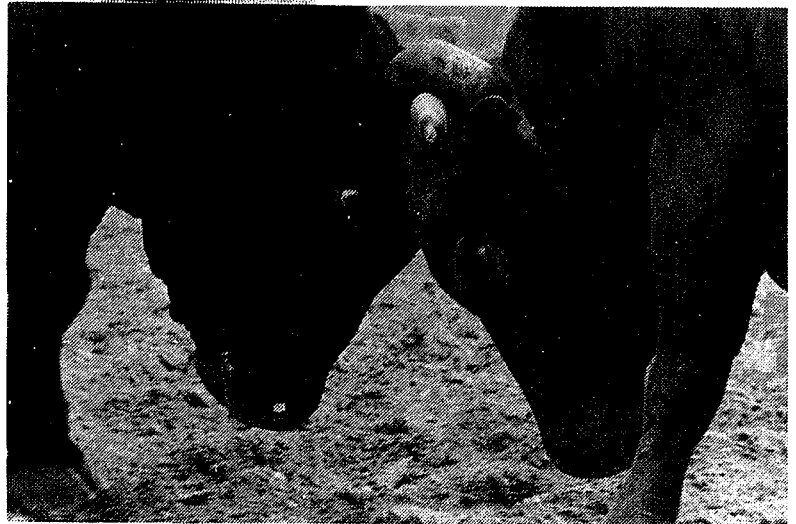


COMBAT & HEALING

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WORLD TAIJI BOXING ASSOC.



JUNE 1993 NUMBER 13

COMBAT & HEALING

EDITOR

Erle Montague

ART DIRECTOR

Ben Gabriel

U.S Correspondent, Rolly Brown:

SUB EDITORS:

Sandra Press and Eli Dana

TECHNICAL ADVISORS

Master Wang Xin-Wu China (Taiji, H'sin-I)

Master Chong Kwok China (Healing)

Master Mak Po-Sun Australia (Taiji)

Master Shao Shan-Karn China (H'sin-I)

Michael Babin Sifu Canada (Taiji)

Edward H Star Sifu USA (Kung-Fu)

Master Fu Sheng-yuan Australia (Taiji)

Mike Sigman U.S.A. (Chen Taiji)

Graham Noble Sensei England (Karate)

Uri Slomonski Poland (Pa-Kua Chang)

Master Dan Inosanto USA (Geet Kune do)

Jim Uglow, England (Hung-Gar & Taiji)

T'ai Chi, Combat & Healing is independently owned and published for the International Martial Arts Community, distributed worldwide. Opinions and viewpoints expressed in this magazine do not necessarily represent those of the editor, staff or publishers. Many will disagree, many will agree with articles and views published in the magazine. In the interest of fairplay and harmony among martial arts schools, all responsible instructors, individuals or organisations with something valid to say will be given a go.

POSTAL ADDRESS:

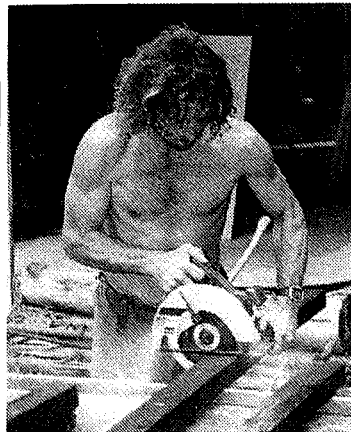
Taiji Publications, P/O Box 792 Murwillumbah NSW
2484 Australia (066)797145.

Published quarterly by Taiji Publications. Reproduction of any material without permission is strictly prohibited. All material remains under copyright to the publisher.

The acceptance of advertising does not necessarily imply endorsement of services or products. All articles, photographs and other material submitted for publication must be accompanied by return postage unless specifically solicited. Contributions are encouraged with each article being accepted or not upon its own merit.

Our eternal thanks to Kevin Brennan, Editor supreme of Australasian Fighting Arts Magazine for his valuable help and ideas.

printed by 'THE PRINT SPOT' Murwillumbah NSW Australia



ABOUT THE COVER

Stuart Le Marseny, chief instructor for the W.T.B.A. Australia, and main student of Erle Montague doing what he loves second best, building. Well, actually, third best!

The other photo comes from the all American Push Hands Tournament 1992! well, this is how they do it isn't it?

CONTENTS

- 1 Investing In Loss: Michael Babin Ottawa Canada
Michael Babin continues his enlightening articles based mainly upon his own experiences in learning and teaching.
- 3 Fa-jing: Erle Montague Australia
What is this mystical internal energy? This explosion of power.
- 5 Bagwa And The Spanish Sword: by Miles Henderson Australia
Miles has been threatening to send me this article for years now. Here it is.
- 6 Sticking Hands: Also by Miles Henderson.
This time Miles enlikenes sticking hands not to Spanish Sword, but to the honey gatherers of Guatemala.
- 8 The Gang Attack: By Ed Star, New Mexico U.S.A.
Some interesting information from ed who has been there and done it all.
- 11 Chang Yiu-chun: Bits & Pieces About Self Defence, By Erle Montague
- 14 Kadaitja, The W.T.B.A. Finds A Permanent Home.
- 15 Kadaitja Days By Chris Scott:
Chris shares his experience living and learning at Kadaitja.
- 17 Folk Bagwazhang: By Li Yiu-wen, China
Master Li gives we in the west some good advice on perofrming bagwazhang correctly.

GOLDEN LIGHT HEALING:

Advanced Specialized Kinesiology; absent Healing Possible.

Eva Niemegeers and Jurgen Christmann

Phone Australia: (066) 840216

INVESTING IN LOSS

by Michael Babin

Any serious student of T'ai Chi Ch'uan who has bothered to take workshops with different instructors and/or view the videos now available should be aware that the Yang style has changed a great deal since the days of Yang Ch'eng-fu and even more so when compared to the forms created by his grandfather, Yang Lu-ch'an.

Sadly, in most cases, the changes have not been for the better. Since the death of Ch'eng-fu in 1936, the majority of subsequent interpretations of the Yang slow and fast forms have lost much, if not all, of their health-giving and combat benefits.

the majority of subsequent interpretations of the Yang slow and fast forms have lost much, if not all, of their health-giving and combat benefits.

While "older is not necessarily better"; it remains true that many of the variations developed in the last forty years are lesser versions of their Yang Family ancestors. While many of the newer forms/styles are suitable for beginners or those with a minimal interest in T'ai Chi; they don't have enough depth to sustain those whose interest and effort goes beyond a superficial understanding of the art.

When you compare the forms taught by instructors like Erle Montague, Liang Shouyu, Fu Zhongwen and Yang Zhen duo to the majority of Yang styles being practised around the world; it should be obvious to the experienced that something has gone wrong in the process of transmission.

Sometimes this is deliberate as when an expert changes the form to

conceal its essence from the unworthy; however, more often the problem lies in the number and quality of the intermediaries between the student and whoever created the form/style being learning.

In general, the fewer people involved the less chance there is of serious errors being introduced. Think of it like this — would you rather own the master recording of a symphony done with professional equipment or the copy you made from the bootleg copy somebody else made with amateur recording equipment!

Even with the highest skill and best intentions, some changes occur every time a form is learned by a teacher and subsequently passed on to his or her disciples for further transmission.

For example, I am learning the Yang Lu-ch'an Form which Erle Montague learned from Chang Yiu-chun who learned it from Yang Shao-hou who learned it from Yang Chien-hou who learned it from his father Yang Lu-ch'an.

On a subconscious level, each has no-doubt modified it in subtle ways to suit their individual variations of physique and temperament.

That's four interpretations between myself and the originator and all those instructors were/are committed, ON A CONSCIOUS LEVEL, to preserving the form as each learned it. On a subconscious level, each has no-doubt modified it in subtle ways to suit their individual variations of physique and temperament. That is to be expected and

when I teach it someday I can't avoid doing the same.

Consequently, despite all this effort and commitment, it is quite probable that Yang Lu-ch'an would see a lot of differences if he were alive today to watch this form being done. However, he would probably at least recognize the attempt!

What would he think if he could see any of the North American New Age interpretations of the Yang style or many of the forms being taught in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan? Would he even recognize that they were doing an internal martial art much less a derivative of what he taught?

Yang Lu-ch'an would see a lot of differences if he were alive today to watch this form being done.

To make it worse, Yang T'ai chi is burdened with endless bad copies of bad copies. A student learns from a reputable instructor for a few months/years and then, without his/her blessing, goes off to teach students who do the same after an inadequate apprenticeship. The original form becomes riddled with errors or changes are made for all the wrong reasons.

Moving On

So what do you do if you discover that the form(s) you have loved and sweated over is not what you had hoped for? Accepting the necessity for change is not that easy even for students of an art that talks freely of embracing the necessity of change.

Look at it this way, I recently held a garage sale and one of the items I sold was a tricycle that my four-year-old had outgrown. He seemed to understand when a woman bought it for her grandson. However, after she left with it he broke into tears over his loss and wanted me to get it back, even though he had been happily sitting on the newer, bigger bicycle which had replaced it.

Forms and tactics that were suitable for your development when you were "young" have less relevance as you mature

It seems to me that his experience is one that many internal martial artists can empathize with if they stick with their training for any length of time.

Forms and tactics that were suitable for your development when you were "young" have less relevance as you mature as a practitioner; but can be hard to give up.

As I am in the process of switching to the forms taught by Erle Montague, I would like to share my experience in "investing in loss" in terms of giving up old forms in case it can assist those of you who find themselves at a similar cross-roads in their training.

I had been doing the same Yang-style long form (from the Chen Weiming line) for ten years. However, when I started learning Erle Montague's Original Yang Ch'eng-fu Form, I could immediately appreciate how different and superior it was to the form I was used to.

Unfortunately, it soon became almost impossible to practice the old form because, in comparison, it felt empty and flawed. Despite this realization, deciding to "give-it-up" was a difficult one that I struggled with for almost a year.

More recently, I have started learning the Yang Lu-ch'an Form as taught by Erle. I find myself faced with much the same emotions except that the comparison is less severe as they are obviously the same form —

the Ch'eng-fu variation being a good condensed version of the original.

Factors to Consider

Changing over will involve several areas of decision-making:

- If, as I am, you are trying to learn from videos with only occasional personal correction; do you have the determination to constantly review the tapes to ensure that you are really doing something different/better as opposed to just laying a new veneer over your old forms.

More recently, I have started learning the Yang Lu-ch'an Form as taught by Erle. I find myself faced with much the same emotions except that the comparison is less severe as they are obviously the same form

Learning from videos is far from easy, especially if you don't already have considerable experience in T'ai Chi, but it is certainly better than NO instruction.

- Can I handle the new material on a physical level? The older forms tend to be more athletic/martial and can be difficult for the older practitioner, especially those who suffer from "T'ai Chi knee" or are unused to fast forms or those which emphasize faching.

- If I decide to switch will my old instructor end our relationship on a personal or professional level? I was lucky, my former main instructor, Allan Weiss, is quite opened-minded and respects what Erle teaches so we are still on good terms.

I suspect that the majority of instructors would not be so forgiving. In fact, I don't know how forgiving I would be if one of my senior students was to say to me "Well, Mike, it's been five years; but ..."

- If I continue to teach the old style, how will my switching styles affect my students? It is possible to practice two completely different long forms and to teach that way and some students will have little problem keeping the two distinct. However; the majority will just end up being confused.

- If I continue to teach the old style, how will my switching styles affect my students?

- Will I cease teaching the old form(s) and force or encourage them to start over or will I make the new forms/methods the next step in their progress when they complete the old?

Conclusion

I guess what it comes down to for the serious practitioner of Yang T'ai Chi is you should be prepared for that point in your development when they outgrow the forms/methods that have served them well to that point.

A good form/style should provide the material for a lifetime of research and practice. A mediocre/beginner's form should be discarded when the time is right to do so!

It is in your best interest to make a serious effort to search for an original T'ai Chi "document" that suits your physique and temperament. Leave the badly-abridged or mutilated texts where they belong — on the shelf.

Michael asked me when I last visited Ottawa to give workshops, who I thought to be "good" at Yang Style Taiji in the U.S.A. apart from my obvious students. I thought for a while and could only come up with one name and he lives in Canada, Allan Weiss, he sure can punch, I told him.... Erle.

Michael babin can be contacted in Ottawa on (613)739 7805

Fa-jing: The Power

By Erle Montaigue

Fads come and go. But fa-jing has been out there for a long time and utilized by many famous martial artists. The old one inch punch was the flavour of the day back in the 70's and was glorified and mystified. People would study photos of Bruce Lee using mathematical equations and geometrical calculations to try and gain his secrets, especially that of the one inch punch. All they needed to do was to have someone tell them about fa-jing which is what all of these people were using to gain such immense power over such short distances. Most people would study the hands of the exponents, claiming that it was this angle or this direction that caused this supernatural power. Others would call it qi, others would just give up trying.

The old one inch punch was the flavour of the day back in the 70's and was glorified and mystified.

They all missed the boat though as it is the body that one must watch in order to find out how one gains fa-jing. The attacking peripheral is only secondary to what the body is doing. There is an old saying, one that not many people use nowadays as it is not in vogue. It is not in vogue because people simply got the real meaning wrong. The whole body is a weapon. Everyone who has been around a bit has heard of that saying. Now we all understand this to mean that the elbow is a weapon, the knee is a weapon, the fists, head, back, shoulders etc. No, this is wrong, what this saying means is literally, the whole body is the weapon while the parts are only secondary and happen as an adjunct to what the body is doing, this is real fa-jing. The fist does not punch, the whole body

punches, the elbow does not strike, the whole body strikes etc.

The technique of fa-jing lies in what the body does to cause the peripheral to be thrust out at great speed and power. It is not the strength of the triceps, or the laterals that cause the power, but rather the whole body. So it stands to reason, that a smaller person is able to generate much more power than a body builder who is only using his triceps to generate the power for the punch, by using his whole body. There is simply much more power in a whole body than in one triceps muscle.

If one could utilize the power generated from a sneeze, this would be perfect fa-jing. When we sneeze, the whole body reacts violently, not just one part, but the whole. We are unable even to keep our eyes open upon the act of sneezing. It is the same with fa-jing. Upon impact, the eyes are closed for that split second and the body shakes violently at high frequency, throwing out a very deadly fist, or palm or elbow.

If one could utilize the power generated from a sneeze, this would be perfect fa-jing.

But not only is the whole body used as an initiator of such power for the peripherals, the whole body can be used, physically as a weapon. For instance, when someone grabs you, or is trying to take you down, grapple you etc. The whole body will perform a fa-jing movement, anywhere. This immense power is enough to cause even the strongest grapple to loosen his grip. The beauty of fa-jing is however, that in order for even the smallest part of the body to do fa-jing,

every other portion must also be doing fa-jing, otherwise it is not fa-jing and only a muscular strike. And so, the grappler would not only find himself being shaken violently, some other peripheral would also be striking to points on his body.

Using fa-jing and dim-mak in this way, we are able to systematically cause the opponent's body to react in a known way. We are able to drain energy from the spleen to cause him to simply fall down,

Fa-jing and dim-mak are inseparable. There is dim-mak at a base level where someone is able to strike for instance to a point called 'stomach 9' just over the carotid sinus to cause a knock out. This by the way is the classic KO point used by an increasing number of karateka to show how good they are. Or one uses "Liver 13" to cause KO and great internal damage using finger strikes. These points can be used by anyone at a base level using pure physical force and not fa-jing. But if one wishes to rise to the highest level of dim-mak, then one must understand real fa-jing. This is where we use four different body shakes in order to 'put in the adverse qi' and not just strike at physical dim-mak points.

Using fa-jing and dim-mak in this way, we are able to systematically cause the opponent's body to react in a known way. We are able to drain energy from the spleen to cause him to simply fall down, still conscious but not able to do anything about it. We are able to add qi to certain points to cause an organ to explode from within. We are even able to cause

certain disease states to happen instantaneously by striking certain points. For instance, most will know that sunstroke is not nice. It makes us feel really crook and totally unable to do anything but sit down, let alone fight. Using dim-mak and fa-jing we are able to cause someone to have a bad case of sunstroke. We also know how to cure this sunstroke using the dim-mak antidote points. In this way, dim-mak and fa-jing are also used for healing. So we have a death art used to heal people. These points can actually be used to cure a real case of sunstroke.

We are able to cause someone's right or left leg to shake so violently that he falls down, for this we use certain spleen points on the upper arm and shoulder. But striking at these points without fa-jing will only cause the physical damage caused by the physical power of the strike. This is not fa-jing.

So we learn a few body shakes and think that we know all about fa-jing. No, then we have to learn all about the 'C' back and the rising qi. Look at Bruce Lee when he is fighting, what do you see. Most people look at the physical movements and try to emulate what he was doing. Not many look at what was in his eyes or what the whole of his body was doing. In his own way, Bruce Lee was making use of a primordial posture called 'C' back. Or changing his human brain for the reptilian brain. We all of us still have bits in our brains that go back to prehistory and this part of the brain can be utilized by using certain body postures to bring out this fighting energy.

'C' back? Look at the great silver back (Gorilla to those who are not animal inclined), see what his back is doing naturally. It is not an 'S' shape like ours, but rather makes a 'C' shape. The Gorilla, although a placid calm animal, is also one of the greatest fighters of the animal world when protection of his family is concerned. He is a constant state of readiness, due to his 'C' back. The qi is constantly ready to defend and attack. The eyes tell the story. When we cause our body to be in this state, the eyes change and we are ready to defend. It was the same way with

Bruce Lee, he would go into that little stance of his alone and so bring up the fighting qi. This is the difference between a martial artist and one who knows how to fight.

Bruce Lee was making use of a primordial posture called 'C' back. Or changing his human brain for the reptilian brain.

The 'C' back and the reptilian brain etc. are all scientific, based upon Western science. So where does all of this fit in with the ancient Chinese martial artists? All one has to do to find out that our current scientific knowledge about the human body is all there in the Chinese classics written hundreds of years ago. It states in the Taiji classics that we must round the shoulders and hollow the chest. 'C' back! It also states that we must see with the eye of the eagle, using the middle peripheral vision or 'Eagle Vision'. When we go into the 'C' back posture, the whole attitude changes and we are ready to fight. The arms, legs, back, chest, feet head, are all energized ready for action and release of energy. Couple this with the fa-jing and we have the classic animal way of self defence. Simply put, hit him with as much power and speed before he has even attacked. This is stated in the Chinese classic of; 'if he attacks you, attack him first'.

The Types Of Fa-jing:

There are four kinds of fa-jing, all generated from the whole body but having different ways to generate the power. The most common of the fa-jings is the 'closed shaking fa-jing'. This is where we are using the natural stance and punch using the same fist as the foot that is forward. The body shakes violently from left (if using a right fist) to right and then snaps back to the right to 'close' the movement. This final closing happens just upon impact and causes a wave of energy to be thrust into the target. The voice also plays an important

part in all fa-jing. The voice is an intermediary between the physical movement and the internal action. Once again it gets back to the classics which say that the breath must be natural. Now most people interpret this as being that the breath must be slow and constant, but this is wrong. Only if you are performing a slow and constant movement must the breath be that. However, if we are performing a sudden fa-jing movement then the breath must also act accordingly with an explosive sound emanating from the voice box. This is what is meant by natural breathing, when the breath is in harmony with the movement. So with a fa-jing movement, we cannot use a slow haaa sound for instance, we must use an explosive sound which can be anything as long as it is explosive, like 'ba' or 'pa'.

The next fa-jing is the 'open' fa-jing shake. This is where in Taiji we use the posture known as single whip to strike to no less than four dim-mak points on the neck. This time, the body is (assuming that the right palm is doing the work with the right foot forward) shook firstly to the left, then to the right and finally with this final attack upon St.9 & SI16, back to the left, leaving an 'open' posture. This type of fa-jing move is said to suck energy away from the opponent.

The third fa-jing action is called 'closed up shaking fa-jing' and is used to put qi into the points to cause sunstroke or to cause the associated organ to explode. This time the body shakes in the closed way, but also there is a spiralling of the body upwards upon impact.

The fourth way of fa-jing is the 'open down fa-jing shake' and is used to drain energy from the lower heating space, thus draining energy from the body. It is the same as the open fa-jing but with a downward spiralling shake.

Many martial artists have the fa-jing naturally and would never have to learn it, but for the most of us it's a matter of hard slog to gain this great power.

BaGua Zhang and Spanish Sword Fighting.

by Miles Henderson

BaGua Zhang (eight trigrams boxing) is a Chinese martial art that is growing in popularity. As a boxing style it is markedly different from other Chinese martial arts because of its peculiar solo and partner training methods based on "walking the circle". In fact, the original name of BaGuaZhang was ZhuanZhang (circling boxing).

Most readers will be unaware that in Renaissance Europe there existed a school of fighting that used the principle of "walking the circle" to teach footwork and the methods of defence and attack. This was the school of sword fighting as practiced in sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain. The remarkable similarities between this western martial art and BaGuaZhang are the focus of this article.

Most readers will be unaware that in Renaissance Europe there existed a school of fighting that used the principle of "walking the circle" to teach footwork and the methods of defence and attack.

Sword fighting of the renaissance era bore little relation to modern sport fencing. Schools of defence taught a curriculum that started with the single sword, and included double swords, polearms and empty hands fighting. Mastery of these weapons was considered a matter of life and death as the skills taught were used in duels, for self defence and in warfare.

The most popular sword at this time was the rapier which was a long heavy

weapon designed primarily for thrusting but also for cutting. The parry and riposte of modern fencing were unknown then because the swords were too heavy for the subtle wrist work required for these manoeuvres. The primary method for defence was called "passing", a cross step designed to remove the body from the line of an incoming attack and put the defender into a position that allowed for instantaneous counter attack. A dagger in the left hand was often used to assist in warding off an attack in conjunction with a "pass". The spirit of this method is captured in Romeo and Juliet "... with one hand beats cold death aside, and with the other sends it back."

When "walking the circle" students would assume the Spanish guard and would walk opposite each other on an imagined circle on the ground. The stance and guard of the Spanish school was to stand with the body erect, with the heart not directly opposite the opponent's sword;

To use a "pass" effectively necessitated an understanding of footwork combined with an innate grasp of distance and timing (or measure and time as these terms were then known). The method used by the Spanish school of sword fighting to develop its exponents' "passing" skills was "walking the circle". This was in contrast to the emphasis on linear movement in the Italian schools, in which the "passes" were

often more like dodges than side-steps.

Just like BaGuaZhang, footwork was regarded as the most important skill. A student was taught how to step different lengths combined with different timings, and to keep the "feet moving continuously as if in a dance".

When "walking the circle" students would assume the Spanish guard and would walk opposite each other on an imagined circle on the ground. The stance and guard of the Spanish school was to stand with the body erect, with the heart not directly opposite the opponent's sword; with the feet a short distance apart; with the sword arm straightened and the point of the weapon menacing the opponent. This guard is very similar to the extended arm posture of BaGuaZhang and served the same purpose of keeping the opponent at bay, and as a "feeler" to monitor any incoming attacks.

Just like BaGuaZhang, footwork was regarded as the most important skill. A student was taught how to step different lengths combined with different timings, and to keep the "feet moving continuously as if in a dance". By doing this he learnt how to "gain advantage by taking successive steps around the adversary". A very good understanding of the subtleties of distance and timing was gained because the method taught that as long as the combatants stayed on opposite sides of the circle they could not hit each other, but as soon as any one of them crossed the space in between he could be attacked.

In regards to actual technique only five basic thrusts and cuts were taught but a student had to learn how to apply them in conjunction with different "passes" and how to take into account an opponent's physical stature and emotional state. As in BaGuaZhang, a student was taught to never over commit the body when striking, and never to use excessive, violent or tense movements. The thrust for example, used a type of power reminiscent of fajing. It was performed with a explosive, jerking motion of the arm so as not to compromise the "rapid performance of the complicated series of steps."

The Spanish School, like BaGuaZhang, also included sensitivity training. Students were taught how to exploit the different angles resulting from the engaging of blades, either in defence or when forcibly engaging an opponent's blade upon an attack. A student was also taught trips and disarms and how to use the guard and pommel as weapons in close range. However, the preferred tactic of the school was to dispose of an adversary without engaging his sword.

The Spanish School, like BaGuaZhang, also included sensitivity training. Students were taught how to exploit the different angles resulting from the engaging of blades, either in defence or when forcibly engaging an opponent's blade upon an attack

Swordsmen of all European schools realised that training in martial arts also served the purpose of improving and maintaining good health. The benefits attributed to the exercising of weapons are remarkably similar to the claims of internal styles, like BaGuaZhang, although without the mention of qi. The exercising of weapons was said to put away "aches, griefs and diseases, to increase strength and to sharpen the wits, to give perfect judgement, to

compel melancholy, choleric and evil conceits, and to keep a man in breath, perfect health and long life."

The Spanish School suffered the same fate of mystification. It was said of Spanish fencing that it "required for its practice a knowledge of geometry and natural philosophy", and that its "principles were only explicable on metaphysical grounds.

In addition to these physical similarities another aspect of Spanish fencing is similar to that of BaGuaZhang. This is the obsession some practitioners have with the philosophy that is supposedly an integral part of the art.

BaGuaZhang is a highly effective system of self defence but at some stage in its history it got mixed up with the Book of Changes (YIJING). In addition to being boxers it seems that BaGuaZhang exponents had to be masters of esoteric philosophy as well. Most books on the subject try to relate not only the basic eight palms to the eight trigrams but each movement to one of the sixty four hexagrams as well. Adam Hsu, a BaGuaZhang master, sums up the artificial nonsense this is: "Having eight palm changes merely fits the components of the style into a super imposed structure that is not directly related to martial arts."

The Spanish School suffered the same fate of mystification. It was said of Spanish fencing that it "required for its practice a knowledge of geometry and natural philosophy", and that its "principles were only explicable on metaphysical grounds." Masters devoted chapters of their books to the explanation of their art in terms of principles based on the "mathematical relation of angles to their subtending arcs, of tangents and chords to their circle", and threw in as many references to Euclid and Aristotle as possible. All of this in order to "demonstrate that a perfect theoretical knowledge must infallibly lead to victory."

By the seventeenth century, the philosophy and theory side of their art became more important than the actual application. The Spanish school, once so feared and respected, became obsolete and a bit of a laughing stock. Other schools in Europe, by keeping their emphasis on application and survival, maintained the vitality and flexibility necessary to evolve and adapt to new ideas and weapons technology. Hopefully practitioners of BaGuaZhang will keep this in mind and not allow their style to become irrelevant as a science of self defence as its western counterpart did.

Some notes on Sticking Hands.

Translated and adapted by Miles Henderson

Sticking Hands (nianshou) is an integral part of Taijiquan. This article outlines some of the important points from a chapter on sticking hands in a book called "Questions and Answers on Pushhands". The name sticking hands is derived from the fact that in this exercise the wrists of the practitioners must "stick to and not let go". Sticking hands is also called "chaotic bracelets" (luan-huan) because of way the wrists circle around each other continuously in no set pattern.

Sticking hands is more akin to sparring than normal push hands, being the final step in one's training before sparring without first making contact.

Sticking hands is more akin to sparring than normal push hands, being the final step in one's training before sparring without first making contact. However, without a solid background in the formalised exercises of push hands, sticking hands cannot be practiced in the correct spirit.