

COMBAT AND HEALING



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SUGGESTED READING

Australasian Fighting Arts Magazine

Erle Montaigue has his own column in A.F.A. It is one of the most well respected and longest running martial arts magazines in the world.

Write to:
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Manly NSW 2095
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D'AO Magazine

One of the better Magazines on Alternatives, including martial arts and healing arts: In German.

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Pat Conley is the head of Abraxis. He is a wizard in the computer programming area and is a member of the WTBA.

If you missed Camp 96, you missed something special.

This was by far, the best camp ever. From the very first day of arrival, we knew that this one would be good, first day of Spring, beautiful weather and smiling faces.

This year we held an opening ceremony where we all, in traditional style, tied a knot in a length of cotton rope, then at closing we untied the knot. Perhaps this had something to do with the success of Camp 96.

The Training.

I will include the hand outs that everyone received upon arrival. The theme of the camp was "moving from the centre" or performing taijiquan in the "backbone shaking way". See the next paragraphs for an explanation of this. We also got through the first four qi disruptive katas and had one day for corrections and questions etc. Everyone has seen the value of these ancient forms and the enhancement that they will give to their own katas or forms. I trained the group from 8 AM until around 12.30 PM each day and training continued into the evening with our other WTBA instructors.

THE WORLD TAIJI BOXING ASSOCIATION

THE SECRETS OF TAIJIGUAN: FROM THE ERLE MONTAIGUE RESEARCH CENTRE Vol 1.

MOVE THE CENTRE

Understanding comes from Experience. And experience comes from doing. One can only experience the different levels of taijiquan when one has practiced for long enough. I once had a student ask me how many times I practiced the taijiquan form each day. So I told him that I used to practice at least four times per day but now it is more like only once or twice. His next question was, would he get to my level in half the time if he practiced double the amount of times per day that I practiced. The answer is of course, no.

One can only experience the different levels of taijiquan when one has practiced for long enough.

One must practice of course and without doing the forms, you will get no where fast. But it is not so much the amount of times you do the form as this, in the beginning

WTBA NEWS

Camp 1996

From Erle Montaigue

is really to hone your physical skills, which is an important prerequisite for understanding the 'internal'. It is really the amount of years you have been practicing correctly that is the most important thing.

Once you have the correct physical skills, taijiquan will teach you no matter how many times you do the form each day. And it will only let out that amount of information to you when you need it and are able to understand it at that particular time. It's like a fail safe mechanism, all of the information is there right in front of your face, every bit of it, but you will not see it until you are ready to see it. And if you look for it, you will never see it. And if you do not practice the form at least once per day, you will also never see it as this is the only way that "God" has to teach us what is meant to be learnt through the form.

Sometimes there comes a time when the taiji form must be not done. This time period can be anything from three days up to months but not years. It's like a computer backing up information, you cannot do any more work until the previous information is backed up, and this is the waiting time. For some unknown reason, one morning there will be this urge to practice, and when you do, a new understanding will take place, the next chunk of information will go into your conscious brain and you will understand a little bit more

about life. Should you go against these urges, things will go wrong, you will feel out of sorts and you will become irritable etc., until you do the form again to go to the next level. Having done the form, again after this waiting period and having taken in the next level, you will again feel calm, relaxed and at ease with yourself, you can again 'smell the roses'.

Once you have the correct physical skills, taijiquan will teach you no matter how many times you do the form each day.

The 'secrets' are all there for all to discover, do not look for them as they will never manifest, just 'feel' what it is that you have to do. Look for meanings in everything you do an try to learn something from everything you do. In our everyday life, obstacles are placed before us to cause us to react and to learn. If we

complain and get angry, taking it out on our loved ones etc., we will never learn what it is that is trying to be given. All you have to do is to do your taijiquan form and you will learn. Everything that is told to us in the "classics" is a secret of taijiquan. But it means nothing if you just read it and think you understand it, it must be earned and learned. When a 'classic' is taken in at one of the times for learning, it will be like the heavens have opened up and spoken to you, like a light from above, and you will marvel at what you have just learnt. Simple things that you thought you knew, take on a totally different meaning and seem to expand into huge proportions of meaning.

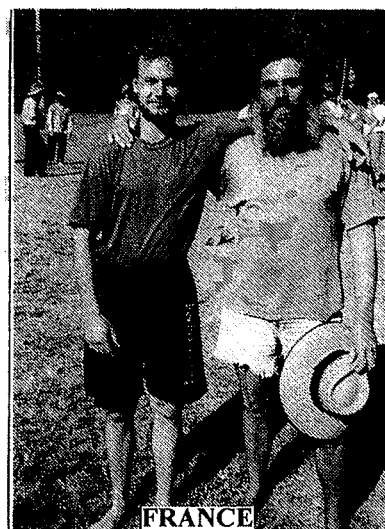
It is the job of the 'master instructor' to find ways of communicating these meanings to the student, so that they will become easier to understand once the learning begins. "MOVE THE CENTRE" is one classic saying that I now believe is the most important area of one's train-



How Are Your Nails Today

ing. Or "THE MOVEMENT COMES FROM THE CENTRE". Once you understand this, and have experienced it, you taijiquan will never be the same again. You will finally have found the way with everything you ever read about taijiquan finally coming to fruition. There is a catch though. To move the centre, correctly, you must firstly have mastered all of the other physical areas of movement as the centre moving is the highest level of

Only an eighth of an inch will cause your hands to move some inches, provided that your hands and arm, shoulders are all in 'sung'. (The closest one word translation of 'sung' is to relax, but this is not absolutely correct. More correctly, "we move without feeling the movement"). When we firstly learn taijiquan our brain puts each movement into either an upper body movement (hands, shoulders, elbows etc.) or a lower body movement, (feet,



FRANCE

cannot be done if you are controlling the movements so that they are all slow and constant as in the Yang Cheng-fu form for instance. So this form and others like it must be modified for quicker or slower movements throughout the form. But these quicker or slower movements must not be done just for the sake of doing faster movements, they must be done purely to cause the hands to move from the centre



Western Australia & Austria

movement.

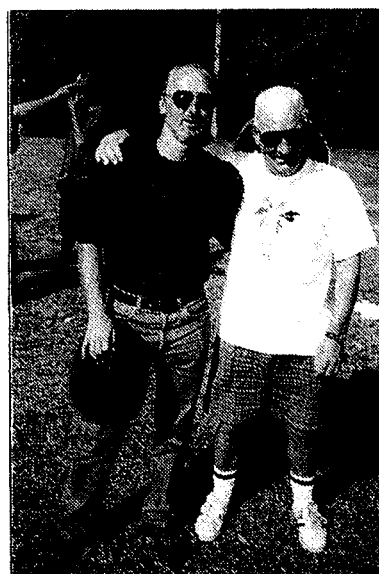
So I will try

and communicate to you my experience of this highest level of movement so that when it comes, it will really come.

Think of your centre as being your lower backbone in the beginning. As you progress, your centre will be the whole backbone. "The Movement Comes From The Centre". All of your movement must originate from the backbone! See how much your body moves when you simply turn your backbone.

legs hips etc.) We

are taught to put our hand somewhere, and that's how it stays in our mind until we learn about 'moving the centre'. In order to understand this concept we must get right away from individual body part movement. You must perform each posture from the taijiquan form (no matter what style you do, but the "Old Yang Style" of Yang Lu-ch'an lends itself to this area better than all others) looking at where the movement for the hands is coming from. This



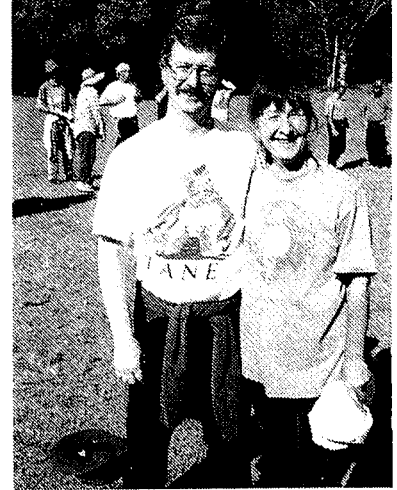
ENGLAND



“Bloody Huge They Are” The Welsh Lads



The Americans



New Zealand

and not from the shoulders or hands themselves. So if you are doing a movement like “Slant Flying”, loosen your arms (they should already be loosened) and make the arms move into the posture by moving your backbone only. You of course must hold the arms and hands in the posture for a brief time in order to get into the next movement, but the ‘getting into’ movements must only come from the centre. It’s as if you are throwing your arms and hands into the posture.

Only in this way will you ever understand fully, fa-jing, as this is where fa-jing comes from, from the centre. People often ask me how I am able to perform the Yang Lu-ch’an form with the ‘shakes’ as if they are coming automatically. It is because I am simply doing exactly what I have described above, moving the arms and hands from the centre. The movements do not have to be fa-jing to begin with, they can be done at a slower pace in order to experience moving

from the centre. The whole Yang Lu-ch’an form, when done at this pace, learning to move from the centre should only take around fifteen minutes to perform. But once done, your whole body will feel energised, the backbone will feel strong and your whole outlook will be brighter and more positive. In fact, this article has come as a direct consequence of practicing Yang Lu-ch’an’s form from the centre. I usually find some area of release for the tremendous amount of qi that is generated by this form, and today’s was to write this article. It’s like an explosion of positive qi energises your whole body into action when you do the form in this way. So you have to look at every tiny movement and make it come from the centre only, this will give your hands a rubber doll type of action that will not look like ‘traditional’ taijiquan at all, it will not look ‘pretty’. When I first saw Chang Yiu-chun performing taijiquan, I thought that it looked quite sloppy, as if he

were a rag doll. My own taijiquan at that time was controlled, beautiful, low, but was not taijiquan. I have since seen only a handful of other Masters performing taijiquan in this way and because it does not look pretty, they do not have many students. One master I saw in a park in Beijing had no students at all, but his taijiquan was just superb, he called his style “waving boxing”, which can be translated as “Loose Boxing” or “Hao Ch’uan”. Upon every movement from the centre which will end in a small shake, you must also ‘sink’ the qi to the ground. Keep the backbone vertical at all times, and allow the qi to sink straight down the backbone, through the legs and into the ground exhaling as you do this. Even if it’s only a finger movement, try to get it to happen by what the centre is doing and not just because you have caused the correct muscles to contract to cause the movement. Allow you fingers and palms to be so