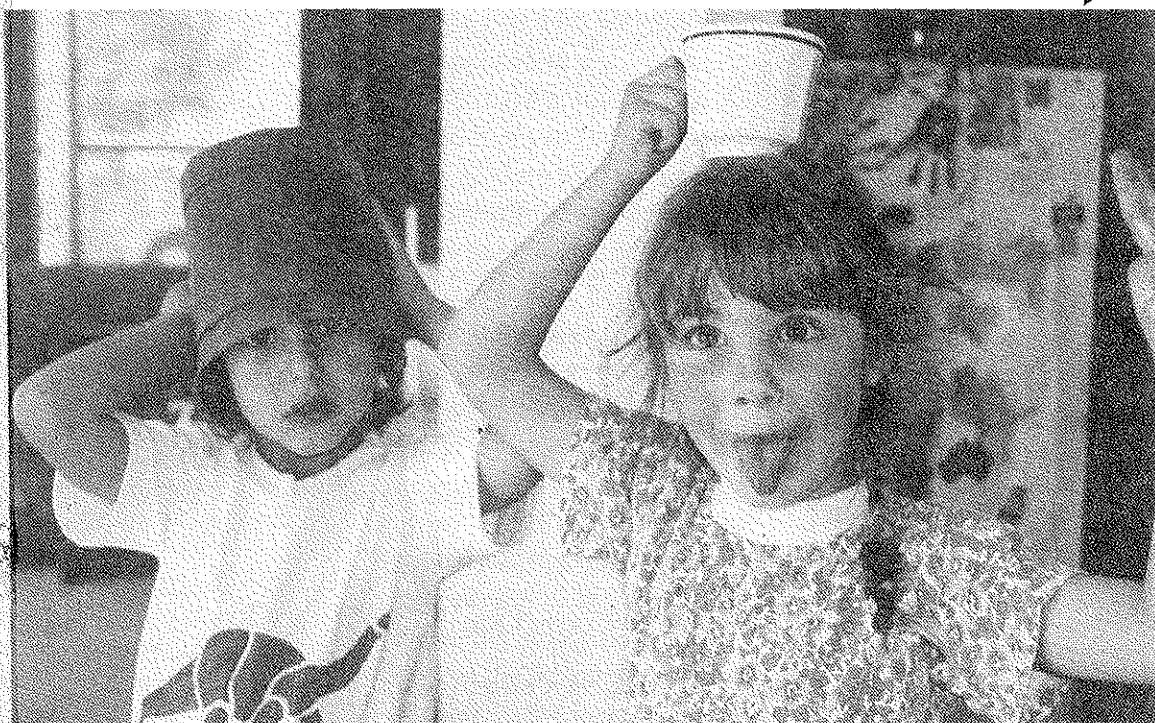


# ***COMBAT AND HEALING***



***March 1997 No. 28***

# Combat & Healing

December 1996

## EDITOR

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Al Krych

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POSTAL ADDRESS:  
POB 792  
Murwillumbah NSW 2484  
Australia  
(61-66) 797145  
Fax: 61-66-797028  
Email: Taiji@MSN.COM

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# The Erle Montaigne Research Papers

Volumes Four & Five

## Research Paper No. Four:

Balance:

**B**alance is the singularly most important aspect of your taijiquan training. Once you have established 'balance' and more importantly, understood it, your training will do for you what it is supposed to do.

It's difficult getting out of the habit of thinking of each posture as a set of movements, where we have a place and a time to put our hands, a place and time to put our feet, legs waist, head and so on. We tend to think of each posture in the way that we learnt it, even though we may have been practicing for 30 years or more. Herein lies the danger in teaching taijiquan the way that we do, in bits. But nowadays, we who have not the time to be full time training, following the master each day, learning the form as a whole identity, just doing it rather than learning postures, have no other way. We must learn taijiquan in bits. So it is important that we have some way of getting to they way that we *would* have learnt taijiquan internally, had we learnt it in the classical way. Well, there isn't, hence this paper.

Taijiquan is balance itself. Think of the whole form as **balance**. Imagine that your tantien point, (about 3 inches below the navel near CV 4), as being a pivotal point around

which everything else is pivoting. Each portion of your body is equally weighted (qi wise), and when a yang part moves one way, a yin part moves in the reciprocal. No longer think of the movements as separate movements, think of each posture as a whole where the whole body moves as a unit, the feet moving in perfect harmony with the hands, while the knees move in perfect harmony with the elbows, the hips are in harmony with the shoulders and the top of the head moves in perfect harmony with tantien and the movement originates with the waist.

No longer think of the movements as separate movements, think of each posture as a whole where the whole body moves as a unit,

It has always been said (in the classics) that the waist is the ruler. All movement comes from the waist, whether that be a hand movement or a step. You must get into the good habit of causing each movement to come from the waist, **make** the waist cause each movement. This will seem awkward at first, and you will only be able to manage large movements. But as you progress in this way of training, you will notice the movements becoming smaller

and smaller and smaller until there is no movement at all. The waist will cause the movement from within.

The first area to look at is that of the feet and hands. These two are those that we have to get into complete balance before the rest of the body's *pairs*, will fall into balance.

Firstly, make sure that when you are changing weight (moving from the rear foot to the front and visa-versa), that there is **always** a corresponding hand movement. This rule can **never** be broken. Needless to say that this corresponding hand movement must be a *changing qi* movement. I.e., it must be either changing from yang to yin for the whole stroke of the weight change or it must be changing from yin to yang for the whole stroke of the weight change. I have seen, even masters who have been practicing for 40 years make the big mistake of doing *dead* movements where the palm is made to be a yang hand before the movement even begins! For instance, should you be performing the posture of *brush knee twist step* and you have your right palm ready to do the strike forward, it should be a yin shape (limp) not a yang shape (flexed). If it is a yang shape, then you have already done the movement (qi wise) and have no reason to do this movement because you have already used the yang qi that is held in the yin shaped palm. The same applies for the reciprocal.

So, your palms and your feet must move in balance, in fact, take a look at your form and if there is ever a time when you are moving your feet and your palm(s) are not moving, and more importantly, moving from yin to yang or visa versa, then you should adjust this so that they are. The same applies to when you are lifting your foot, as in the posture of *lift hands*, or *play the guitar*. At the very instant your foot leaves the ground, there should be an *empty* feeling in your palm which should then emulate the exact movement that your foot is doing.

**There is a beginning, a middle and an ending bit to all of the postures. This is very important to know when one is just beginning to understand movement and energy.**

There is a beginning, a middle and an ending bit to all of the postures. This is very important to know when one is just beginning to understand *movement and energy*. Once we have learnt the taiji form at its basic level, we progress to other levels until eventually, we arrive at an internal movement that is in complete harmony with the external movement. This is impossible when we are first learning the

form. This will cause your external movements to become very small. (like the internal movement of qi). We learn the *yin/yang* or *opening and closing* way of performing the form where we close down on a final yang (or attacking) movement and open up on a yin (or receiving) movement. This will be evident in the form of a large (in the beginning only) and then a small shake of the waist and shoulders. Many people ask me why they do not see these movements when I perform the form any more. I teach them the *open/closed* form and then do not do it myself! The fact is, that I am doing the open closed movements, only now they have become internal and no longer actually show externally, only a very well trained eye will see these internal movements that only slightly show externally. This is because the points of change between yin and yang and yang and yin (the shakes) have become *empty*. This is the beginning or end of each movement. You should actually feel this emptiness at the end of each move and just before you begin the next move. So that the empty movements are both yin and yang and change into each other depending upon what part of the movement you are doing. So for instance, if you are doing the posture of *slant flying* where there is normally a yin/yang shake (opening and closing) movement at the end and just before you go into the next posture, this shake

will become an *empty* movement and will not show hardly at all physically. It's like as if your whole body is a sine wave, and when it changes from the upper part to the lower part (under the centre line), there is an empty movement that is not expressed physically. And this will also happen when the sine wave moves from both of its peaks either yin or yang. Now here's the rub, this will only ever manifest if you are doing the form correctly by making all movements come from the backbone (waist). So we have a beginning (empty), a middle (working), and an end (empty). It's really difficult to try and express this phenomenon in writing so I will also put out a video tape on this subject as it's much easier to express physically.

### **Balancing the feet and hands.**

The balancing begins at the very first movement. Eventually, everything you do will be in a state of balance both externally and internally. This will in turn lead to an increase of your total power, also both internally and externally. You will have more physical power as well as a more subtle and greater power that comes from within. You can then use this power to change your circumstances for instance.

## **Research Paper 5**

### **The Energy Flows Of The Body**

I learnt long ago to write everything down after practice. I would experience certain things that I would wish to teach to others so that they too would gain what I have experienced. But I soon found that if I waited too long, it would be lost into my internal network. It has been my experience that we only need experience things physically and consciously once, then it is gone, and the feelings that you have directly after practice, will never return physically again as you only need experience them once. They happen of course, but you do not actually recognise it physically. So much of what follows and in all of my research papers has come from these experiences of form practice at a high level, and from my writing them down immediately after practice.

We all know that we

**So much of what follows and in all of my research papers has come from these experiences of form practice at a high level**

have meridians or channels through the body through which flows qi or energy

keeping the body alive and strong. Until I knew about the **other** flows of qi throughout the body, I always wondered what happens to the rest of the body where there **are** no channels?

There are **eight major areas of qi flow** in the body. And we must address all of these flows in order to maintain a balanced healthy body and mind. There are other flows of qi of course, but it is these eight main flows that we are concerned with when practicing taijiquan.

When we are first born, all qi flows are healthy and strong but as we grow, human tension and especially twentieth century living tends to cause these flows to be impeded causing physical disease, mental disease and diseases that are caused by not having a strong enough connection with the spirit.

Although all of the different streams of qi throughout the body are connected and all together will help to maintain 'health', each individual flow of qi has a specific job to do.

### **The Twelve Main Meridian Flow:**

Most of us know about the qi that flows through the 12 main meridians. This is the qi that will maintain a healthy body by keeping the internal organs healthy. The flow through these meridians is activated each two hours in a different part of the meridian. Depending up which



organ that part of the flow represents, it is given the name of that organ, so we have the 'heart' meridian or the 'liver' meridian etc. But it is all one flow of qi, at certain times of the day, the qi is simply 'activated' at the correct area of flow, so the qi is 'activated' in the heart meridian between the hours of 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., and so on throughout the whole of this meridian system.

### **The Eight Extra Meridian Flow:**

The eight extra meridians, the qi flow of which (notice that I have not said qi flows, as there is only one flow of qi throughout the different channel systems, it's just that at different times the qi is 'activated' at different parts of that flow at different times of the day. The flow in the 8 extra meridians is active at all times. This is why these meridians are so important for good health. Many people dismiss these channels, concentrating only upon the main 12 channels. Balance is the singularly most important aspect of a healthy body mind and spirit and it is the job of these 8 extra meridians to keep all three areas in a state of balance. These meridians bind the other 12 meridians, keeping them taught or relaxed as the situation arises. I like to liken these meridians to the carotid sinus which keeps the blood pressure at a constant level, so too do the 8 extra meridians keep the other meridians at a constant

'level'.

### **The Body/Spirit Flow:**

The 'Body/Spirit' flow is one of the most important flows of qi in that this is where we keep the 'spirit' of each organ healthy.

**Balance is the singularly most important aspect of a healthy body mind and spirit and it is the job of these 8 extra meridians to keep all three areas in a state of balance.**

That esoteric part other than simply muscle and tissue etc., that keeps the organ alive, I guess you could call it the "God" aspect of the organs. This flow travels through the whole body from ground to fingertips. It flows in from K 1 (ground) and upwards through the thighs, the whole torso (there is no direct channel) and then joins the six main meridians of the hand (yin and yang) at either the upper chest or at the shoulders and flows directly out of the finger tips, and presumably joins with 'God'? Hence the tingling sensation I the finger tips when one practices taijiquan for instance. There is also a branch of this qi travel that goes from CV 1 straight up the backbone and out of the top of the head. This flow is continuous, but

can be impeded by tension in particular, not having enough sleep, over work etc.

You must not wear any electricity impeding shoes especially during this way of practice. Bare feet is best. You will also notice that they form itself will speed up during the middle bits and slow down beginning and end, this is the natural flow of yin and yang. I believe it is better that people find out where their particular parts of the form begin to speed up and slow down rather than my trying to tell you.

Your tongue will feel particularly strange like as if it is empty at point of contact with your upper palate. Your hands must not touch **any** part of your body even in the postures where you must place your 'fist' onto the side of your thigh.

This form is also particularly good for enhancing the flow of qi through the internal organs because of the extra flow out of the finger tips, which should feel damp at the finish of practice, even to the point of dripping.

It's very difficult to explain the feeling one gets from this way of practice, it is sort of like 'not being there', or as one of my teachers said "being awake but asleep".

### **The Practical Flow:**

Another flow is called 'the practical' or 'working' (doing work) flow of qi. This flow begins directly at the tantien and flows upwards and

joins the PC meridian to leave the body at PC 8 (Laogung). This flow of qi can be exhausted and must be continually replaced in the tantien. This flow is the qi that we use for 'work', like when we are healing someone and we wish to transfer qi into someone else to help their ailing qi supply, it comes from PC 8. Or when we wish to hurt someone, as in self defence using the martial arts, the 'adverse' qi comes from PC 8 into the attacker, thus damaging his internal qi flow. Things like qigong will help to replenish this store of qi. It is also replenished during sleep and only requires around two hours of 'good' sleep to do this, but sadly more and more westerners in particular are only receiving mediocre sleep. And when we only get mediocre (quality) sleep, we need more and more of it. A person who receives good quality regenerating sleep, only needs two hours of it each night, the rest is only there to rest the muscles and joints etc.

### **The Wei Qi Flow:**

The Wei qi, is a flow of qi that travels the surface of the body keeping it clear of external pathogens that will invade the body causing disease. This flow, like the 12 main meridian flow, can also be termed as a physical affecting flow. Many believe that this flow is there purely as a result of the magnetic fields set up by the 12 main

meridian flow which is the strongest flow of qi, hence its causing many magnetic fields from the flux it creates.

**This flow of qi can be exhausted and must be continually replaced in the tantien.**

### **The Fa-Jing Flow:**

The Fa-Jing flow of qi can also be regarded as a flow, although it only flows explosively when needed. I liken this flow to that of a steam iron where you have that little button that delivers a 'shot of steam'. The other flows of qi are happily flowing around through and from the tantien (the water container), then you press the button delivering an explosive shot of steam. This 'flow' comes directly from the tantien and is then drawn back into the body, provided that the correct method of fa-jing is used. One can deplete one's body of main qi if the fa-jing is not done correctly so that it not only goes out, but also comes back in. This has to do with 'full and empty' when one practices for instance one's 'Old Yang' taijiquan. When we use fa-jing qi in a self defence situation, in order not to become tired ourselves, we must also take back the qi that is sent out into the attacker's body, so that we are continually rejuvenated by not only our own qi but also that of the attacker. In other words,

we 'rob' the attacker of qi making use of it for ourselves. We use "one lot" of qi for many different types of attack, we do not stop the flow of qi after the first attack, then build up another lot of qi for the next attack etc., But rather we take one big lot of fa-jing qi and 'throw' it into the attacker, this qi does its work in adversely affecting the attacker's qi, then comes back to us bringing with it some of his yang qi, the qi that he has used to attack us, but now it is 'softened' by our own qi. So we can use this qi to build up our own reserves of fa-jing qi for further attack.

### **Awaking Qi:**

This flow of qi runs from the front of the head to the back on the centre line and is different to the GV meridian part of the flow. This flow of qi is responsible for either waking us up or putting us to sleep. In the martial arts we can use this flow, disrupting it by stroking it in the opposite direction when a person is awake, in order to upset their awaking qi, thus in effect putting them to sleep. Practicing your taijiquan forms does not affect this flow in any way no matter how you do the form.

### **Life Force Qi Flow**

This is a flow of sorts that never changes. It is situated in the tantien area and can be larger or smaller at given times. It's like a ball around which qi flows in all

different directions. From this, lines of qi are sent out automatically to all parts of the body especially when the body needs some extra help. As we grow older and we 'dip' into this pot of qi, it becomes depleted and we die. There are many practices that advocate the replenishing of this qi, but one would have to be a saint in order to do this. It is my belief that this is a natural occurrence and the cause of our dying of 'old age'. We can prolong life to a certain degree by practicing things like taijiquan, yoga, meditation etc., but to prolong life indefinitely I believe is impossible. But, .. I'm open to suggestion on this.

in enhancing certain flows of qi. So I will present those different ways of performing the taijiquan form that will greatly enhance certain flows.

**As we grow older and we 'dip' into this pot of qi, it becomes depleted and we die. There are many practices that advocate the replenishing of this qi, but one would have to be a saint in order to do this.**

## Enhancing The Different Flows Using Taijiquan:

**Please note:** All of the above qi flows can be enhanced or kept at their maximum by practicing the different ways that we practice either the New Yang Style Taijiquan (Yang Cheng-fu) or the Old Yang Style (Yang Lu-ch'an). However, it is only the Yang Lu-ch'an's form in which we are able to enhance the **fa-jing qi** flow.

All of the ways that we perform our taijiquan will enhance all of the eight flows of qi to a certain degree (other than the fa-jing flow), hence the fact that all taijiquan is good for your health. But certain ways of performing our taijiquan will work better than other ways

### To Enhance The Body/Spirit Flow:

This is one of the major flows of qi and can be enhanced by performing taijiquan in the "hands not moving" way. This involves never closing your palms (as in a fist), leaving your palms open at all times during practice. This must of course only be performed once one has become sufficiently advanced at taijiquan. In the beginning we must close the fist and bring the fingers together for instance in "single whip". This form is performed at the medium pace or even a little quicker, however, this is not important as it can also be done quite slowly. The hands **never** touch, even in postures such as "grasp swallow's tail" they just brush by each other not quite touching. A fist is

never made, nor are the fingers brought together for single whip. The palms hardly move at all, even in movements where there is presumably a palm strike, the wrist stays in line with the arm in the shape of "the beautiful hand", or "tile palm hand".

Practicing in this way you will feel the most that you will feel during practice. Your fingers will be tingling at the end and your whole body will feel enervated.

You can also bring in to this practice the "Backbone Shaking Method". I have experimented with this and although I was never taught to do it Yang Cheng-fu's form, it works quite well here. It is also important to hold the 'qua' open a little more than normal, so the arm pits are held open.

You must feel the 'full and empty' parts of each posture and be in a total state of balance with each part of each movement in its correct place and in harmony with the body parts balance. I.e., head and tantien, knees and elbows, hips and shoulders, hands and feet. These are the 'eight things' that must be in perfect balance in all taijiquan practice.

### Enhancing The Fa-Jing Flow:

To enable one to use fa-jing we simply perform the Yang Lu-ch'an's form at one of its more advanced levels. All levels will enhance fa-jing, however, the upper levels of this form do more in developing fa-jing than the



beginner's forms. You can also perform the Pauchui form at its normal or advanced levels provided that you do fa-jing movements during this practice.

### **Enhancing The 12 Main Meridian Flow:**

This flow is enhanced no matter what type of taijiquan you are doing provided that it is correct of course. This flow is basic to life and health of the main internal organs. You must be doing taijiquan with balanced movements and be sticking to the premise that all body parts must begin and end at the same time and where there is no weight change, there is no movement etc. No double weighted movements in hand or foot, no palms arriving at exactly the same time (at their point of attack).

**You must be doing taijiquan with balanced movements and be sticking to the premise that all body parts must begin and end at the same time and where there is no weight change, there is no movement etc.**

### **Enhancing the Eight Extra Flow:**

This flow is enhanced no matter what taijiquan way you are performing. However, this flow is enhanced by really concentrating upon sinking your qi into the ground. This will happen sub-consciously anyway, but make an even greater effort to do this and you will find something different happening.

You will, as I have done, learn more and more about your taijiquan and the different ways to perform it as you practice more. It will become so that you will have to rush back from practice and write it all down so that you do not forget what you have experienced each day. You will go through each different way of performing taijiquan naturally when you are ready, then as you progress you will find that all the different ways will melt into each other so that all of the different internal qi flows are enhanced simply by doing your taijiquan. It is my belief that you must however, experience and feel the different ways and their effects before this 'total' form is able to be practiced. You will even come to the point where you are able to also enhance the fa-jing flow by not doing **physical** fa-jing, but rather have it happen internally. This is the kind of qi transference that we look for when healing, it is fa-jing, but on a healing level and not fighting.

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# The Apprentice Instructor

*By Michaelabin*

**D**eciding that you are ready and want to start teaching taiji or bagwa is one thing; finding a place to do so and adjusting to being "the" role-model instead of a student is another.

## Where you teach

Traditionally, parks were used as training grounds; but the weather is often a factor that can severely limit training time in many regions/countries. In my experience, the worst places to teach tend to be fitness centres in government or big business complexes: no fresh air, loud music, other members talking and/or using noisy fitness machines; and the constant hum from the ventilation system.

Another option is to offer noon-hour classes where you work, although, if there's no fitness centre, it can be hard to schedule a suitable space. It can be very distracting to have to hold your classes in a hall or foyer of a large building (listening to vacuuming after-hours is no fun) or in a boardroom full of furniture that has to be moved out-of-the-way for each class (and replaced when it's over)!

## Who You'll Teach:

At evening classes, beginners are often there because they have the impression that tai chi must be easy because it's done slowly. For example, at the first such class

I ever taught, only two, of 13 beginners, were used to regular physical activity. Only three were left at the end of ten weeks, even though each class only lasted an hour.

**In some ways, teaching at noon-hour in a fitness centre is more likely to attract those used to regular exercise as well as those looking for stress-reduction.**

In some ways, teaching at noon-hour in a fitness centre is more likely to attract those used to regular exercise as well as those looking for stress-reduction. However, it is very difficult to teach form at noon-hour once you have more than one level of student in a particular class. It's also harder to sell the value of taiji to aerobics fanatics or weight lifters unless you can get them to give it a real try.

You have to be careful and considerate of people with special needs; but mustn't cater to them so much that it's unfair to the others. For example, I had a young adult with Downe's Syndrome in two consecutive courses I gave and he tended to be disruptive at times (whistling at women in the aerobics class!) as well as incapable of remembering details from one class to

another. He did it just enough to put his back and knees at risk.

I discussed my concerns with the Centre Director and with the student's mom. However, she seemed more concerned about the convenient closeness of the building to their home than with his safety or the needs of his classmates. Fortunately, he decided to take karate at the end of the second session!

### Observers

It's important to remember that most people who watch a class will know nothing about tai chi and are easily impressed. However, you will occasionally face "hostile" observers.

On several occasions over the years, students of other taiji styles or martial arts have come and watched critically, asked pointed questions or made snide comments about my form, etc. On a good day, you'll just laugh them off; on a bad day ... ?

Chinese observers can also be difficult to fathom. I remember one family group who came to observe the beginning of an advanced form class at Ottawa-South Community Centre. The grandfather had told the Centre Director that he had been doing tai chi for ten years. They watched in solemn silence for an hour and left without saying a

word.

A few of my experienced students had been rattled by their presence. I tried to remind them that someone isn't automatically a tai chi master just because they practice some variation of the art and are Chinese!

Some of the experienced practitioners that you meet or who observe your class will be coldly polite, some aloof, some friendly. You have to play it by ear in your dealings with them.

Let me add that one of my continuing disappointments with the experienced practitioners/teachers that I meet is how arrogant they all seem to be about their arts. Their comments really should be interpreted as "My teacher's/style's teachings are authentic, not yours!" Having pride in your style is one thing; but feeling that there is nothing of value elsewhere is another.

**Chinese observers can also be difficult to fathom. I remember one family group who came to observe the beginning of an advanced form class at Ottawa-South Community Centre.**

### Curriculum

It is essential to realise that less is more in terms of understanding the principles of taiji; the larger the curriculum (especially for beginners) — the less time there is for them to develop skills at any one thing in one or two hours a week — especially in terms of the martial side of the arts.

It is important to structure your classes as most beginners want to feel that they are being supervised and led, not left on their own to practice.

I once taught with another local instructor at a corporate fitness centre. I was invited back to teach a second course but she wasn't. The fitness co-ordinator told me that it was partly because she had had poor feedback from a number of the other instructor's students about that woman's teaching style (i.e., too unstructured, left the students on their own to practise or not as they liked).

### Frustrations & Rewards

The first one-day tai chi workshop I ever taught in another city ten years ago went reasonably well, even though I was nervous. At least, I didn't spill a full cup of coffee on my lap the way the host did just before he had to get up in front of group to introduce me!

Some classes it's very hard to be patient with the obvious lack of practice or having to correct the same mistakes (in the same person) for the hundredth time. There are some days where everything aches in my middle-aged, overweight carcass and I think to myself why am I doing this. Or I go to a class and only one or two students show up. It's so hard to practise properly, to teach properly. More-and-more, I understand why many of the old masters didn't teach or only taught a select few.

Teaching will help you to understand what Yang Cheng-fu went through in terms of deciding to simplify the long form three times over the 30 odd years that he taught and why there are so many modern simplified short forms!

It has been my experience that few of any group of beginners will bother to practice what little they learn — much less make the effort necessary to advance to the deeper aspects of the art.

I use a lot of humour while teaching and it is usually well-received, although I have been criticised for it on occasion. You can't

please every potential student and I no-longer try! However, you're not me, so develop your own style of teaching, many would-be students want and expect their instructor to be solemn and methodical.

It has been my experience that few of any group of beginners will bother to practice what little they learn — much less make the effort necessary to advance to the deeper aspects of the art.

Aside from earning a modest part-time income, the only reasons for teaching beginners is to refine your own understanding of the art; find potential training partners; and, provide the example of "real taiji" to those who might never otherwise get the chance to see what they have the potential to experience.

## Michael Babin

### Books

### Taijiquan, The Martial Side:

Published By Paladin Press:

### Power Taijiquan:

Published By Paladin Press, (Co-authored by Erle Montaigue)

## From Nuthouse to Schoolhouse

### Stu Lam:

Would you want a mad-man teaching your children? How about someone who had seen the face of God almighty and as a result had his mind shattered into a thousand tiny fragments, some young fool who had had a massive revelatory *flash* through a maniacal obsession with Erle Montaigue's Bagua.

It was a one way ticket to the nuthouse.

some young fool who had had a massive revelatory *flash* through a maniacal obsession with Erle Montaigue's Bagua.

Who could help a person like this, locked up in a psychiatric ward for five weeks? Who'd want to? When there seemed no hope for me, I still had a great friend named Erle.

I had trained briefly with Erle way back in 1990 when I was a twenty year old university student, after studying a bit of ju-jitsu, tong long, and wing chun through my formative years. I was always trying to channel immense anger into something destructive. Indeed I was a very angry young man of Chinese origin, who had grown up in Aus-

tralia and copped a whole lot of racist abuse; physical, verbal, emotional.

Then I met Erle and the scales momentarily fell from my eyes. I was amazed not only at this man's masterful power, but also at his great kindness and humility. He was perhaps the first white person, in fact the first human being, besides my family, that ever made me feel good about myself. I knew he was a very special healer, legend, guru, saint, prophet, master. Even though I trained with him only for a short time it was of such quality and depth that it ultimately saved me from the path of self-destruction. But I was still under the control of other forces, and I still had to work these out of my system. I lost touch with Erle for many years, or so I thought. Looking back now, I know he kept his *eagle eye* on me.

Drugs, alcohol, crime and violence consumed me, all this while I was still studying at Queensland University (this is supposed to be an institution for the leaders of the future mind you!). Even being placed on probation for two years and seeing a psychiatrist (who really didn't give a damn), who put me on tranquilizers and anti-depressants, didn't bring me to my senses.

I continued to do the wrong thing, and after several terrible incidents, it was fear of being imprisoned and having to deal with some *really* nasty people, that brought me back to Erle's

teachings. I looked at old issues of his magazines, at the notes I had kept and at his videos. I began training the Bagua alone and in the dead of night.

Motivated by fear, I fancied myself to be an assassin. I punished myself with chains wrapped around my forearms, doing the forms over and over and over again. Unfortunately evil spoke to me in many ways during that period. Then I had an incredible flash and realised I was in great spiritual pain. I had dragged myself and my family into hell, and having no one to turn to I made contact with Erle again. The great warrior that he is, he took all my pain, and hatred and anger upon himself without hesitation, and gave me only great love in return.

I didn't know who to blame so I wrongly blamed Erle. And he and his family and friends suffered greatly because of me. I even brought my sickness into big Al Williams class of fiersome warriors for a little while, they all tried to help me, the champions that they are, but I guess I was too far gone by then. I passed out one time in Allan's class, overwhelmed by his goodness, his great yang energy, and I left in shame. To cut a long story short, I ended up travelling to Erle's home one fine day, disrupting his private class, upsetting his family, sick as a dog, fully insane and in the grip of a schizophrenic-psychotic episode, demon-possessed if you like. Erle, Wally and Mause

came to the rescue; talk about modern day exorcists! They used only love, and a few well placed acupuncture needles (I was screaming in agony, loud enough to wake the dead I'm sure!) to free me, and to combat something quite evil, God bless them. I am so sorry Erle. What they did that day, set up a flow of healing that carried me through five weeks in the psychiatric ward (man there are some very interesting people in there), through over a year of recuperation, through a postgraduate diploma in education, and finally through to this day. I'm still riding this wave of healing, goodness and love. Now I'm a twenty-six year old, qualified high school English and Science teacher (who is still as crazy as a loon! No, I'm just kidding!), who has the great fortune of being friends with Erle and his world-wide clan of warriors and healers. I don't know if I want to be a high school teacher, the university degree doesn't mean much in light of Erle's *real* teaching.

I've travelled from the outhouse to the nuthouse and finally I've arrived at the schoolhouse again, not as a qualified highschool teacher (regardless what a little piece of paper says), but once again as a student. Thanks God and thank-you Erle!

Stu Lam is a nice young man and one of our WTBA members. We all help each other wherever and whenever we are able, with whatever we can use. (Erle)

# Questions And Answers

*Asked By Arthur Smith*

**T**hese questions come from an old friend of mine from Illinois USA, *Arthur (pit bull) Smith*.

**Arthur:**

Does raising the heel (cat stance) activate K 1 and cause an increase in qi flow (a pulse or continuous flow?) from the right hand? If so, is this the primary purpose of the cat stance? Or is there something even more hidden?

**Erle:**

The 'cat stance' (empty stance in taiji) DOES activate K 1, in fact it is used in a special 'walking' qigong in China by pressing K 1 into the ground. However, there is a danger in that it should never be held there for any length of time as it will have the reverse effect! In all of the internal arts, slapping the K 1 on the ground is used to activate K 1 and a rush of qi to the hands for the work being done, eg., a strike.

The 'cat stance' (empty stance in taiji) DOES activate K 1, in fact it is used in a special 'walking' qigong in China

But it MUST be slapped and not stomped! Like a horse doing that thing they do with the feet, the ankle must be totally loose so that when you slap it, the ankle actually slaps down rather than a whole foot

stomp. Yes, it is a pulse of qi that we make use of here.

In Bagwa for instance, the cat stance is only there for a split second as it is forced into the ground, then the movement with the hands of two spear finger attacks to LIV 13s has much more qi. Doesn't matter if it is left or right foot, the qi will go to BOTH hands.

To activate K 1 continuously as in any qigong stance, you must press only the heel in to the ground from middle of the foot back to the heel. This will actually activate K 1 continuously.

Many people make a mistake and press K1 into the ground thus causing a thing called "adverse cyclic qi" which causes the body to twitch violently and can cause brain damage and mental diseases etc. When K 1 is pressed continuously, it actually stops the flow of qi from the ground through tension. And all physical tension hinders qi flow. But we would die soon if the flow from 'ground' is blocked, so the qi builds up and up until it is strong enough to burst through the blockage, thus the violent twitching. Sometimes however, the flow is so strong that it explodes into the brain, thus problems. Some people advocate using this phenomenon to gain power! Sure, it will give you momentary power, but at what cost, your mental stability!

**Arthur:**

Rick Moneymaker (a teacher in Virginia from the Dillman stable, and a nice bloke ...



Erle), teaches that a tap of the ball of the foot (heel raised) will also augment qi flow. Dillman says that qi flow from the hands can be increased by pressing the toes downward without cat stance. In Shotokan they have some "foot stomps" that do not seem to be geared to stomping on an opponent's foot, so I wonder if this could be a method of increasing qi flow through the hands. I would appreciate your thoughts on this.

**Erle:**

The answer to this question is covered in the answer to Q 1. The only reason for a 'slap' (perhaps not a 'tap') of K 1 on the ground is to increase the flow of qi to the upper body. It is up to the practitioner to decide where this increase will go. And this is done not by conscious thought, but by the subconscious reaction of his body when attacked.

**Arthur:**

Related to #2 above, a friend of mine in this areas, Paul Hunter demonstrated that he could almost completely nullify Rick MoneyMaker's "centre wrist lock" even when Rick was using all of what he called "players" (coordinated breathing, raised heel, proper leverage, pressure point activation, fire burning metal etc.). Rick said it was the best nullification that he had ever seen. Hunter could do it more than one way. One, by stretching out the fingers of the opposite

hand, the other by raising his toes on one foot, a third way was to move his elbow out slightly on the arm that was having the wrist lock applied. Hunter said he didn't know exactly how or why these things worked, but he had a couple of possible explanations. One, a slight change in body alignment may be the answer. Another had to do with changing the qi flow. I suggested that when he extends his fingers on the opposite hand (as you (Erle Montague) demonstrated to produce yang qi in self defence for timid people), he maybe draining off the other person's qi.

**It also has to do with what I was talking about earlier, the internal qi tension as opposed to physical tension. This is what many call "mind intent"**

**Erle:**

Yes, all of those things will nullify dim-mak attacks. The fingers spread, I teach from bagwa, this tends to increase the qi flow to the whole body while the elbows outwards also does this, creating a 'kua' or bridge for the qi to flow. In spreading the fingers we are forcing PC 8 outwards, this combined with a reverse breath and a mind sucking in type action, will suck the attacker's qi in so that it can

then be reversed upon him. This is done all the time in taijiquan and bagwazhang, and has to do with 'continuous qi' attacks, rather than having to re-load all the time after an attack.

It also has to do with what I was talking about earlier, the internal qi tension as opposed to physical tension. This is what many call "mind intent" where we put the whole focus onto the part being attacked (as in iron shirt) and 'breathe' in to that portion, thus causing internal tension in that particular area causing it to become very strong.

**Arthur:**

On breathing, some say that an exhalation should be stopped just an instant before a strike hits its target – and the less the time between the two, the better. Some say to keep the exhalation flowing throughout the strike.

**Erle:**

You use BOTH methods of breathing depending upon what it is you are doing. If it is a fa-jing punch, you should stop the out breath with reverse breathing as close to the point of impact as possible, but if you are doing a sweeping type of movement, then the breath should follow through with the technique.

**Arthur:**

A recent article that dealt with the Sanchin kata stated that the tensing of the body was to make the person less susceptible to pressure point attacks. Hunter has mentioned that if

you are going to hit on a muscle, that it is best (for the striker) if the muscle is relaxed. For example, a hit on the biceps should be done as the arm is being extended (where the triceps is being tightened). Although this may seem reasonable, Dillman often pointed out that when a person resists and tightens up, that he ends up getting hurt more. Perhaps there is a pattern that I don't see. Your experience in this area would be helpful.

### Erle:

Tension should be in three groups. No tension at all, (no good for being struck), Internal tension (the best) and external tension (the worst). So in a way Dillman is correct in saying that a person who is really tense is easy to attack using dim-mak. The tense muscles set up a shock wave of qi which is like a rubber band amplifying the strike into the internal organs etc. If you have only internal tension and no external tension (cotton fist), then the attacker's dim-mak strikes will have little effect, provided that they are aimed at points that aren't purely physical shots like ST 9 etc. So in attack, you should aim for either very tense muscles or very loose muscles. In your own training you should always train to have only internal tension in all parts of your body with 'mind intent', thus limiting the effect of point strikes to yourself.

## Relaxation

by Mike Hart (Wales UK)

Many people find the concept of relaxing while doing the postures from the form or qigong a little difficult at first. Relaxing the upper body and letting everything sink into the legs and the ground is an important part of the taiji training because this is where the power in taiji comes from - the ground or earth.

As the classics say, the power is generated by the feet/legs, directed by the waist and emanates from the hands/fingers. If we have not drained everything into the lower body or 'sunk' our qi, we have no base to work from. This is achieved by relaxing not only the upper body but also the lower ie. the legs.

The legs should not be held with tension in them but should relax allowing the weight of the body to compress the legs. The best way of describing this I found, was by Ron Sieh in his book "T'ai Chi Ch'uan - The Internal Tradition", when he likened the legs to a partially inflated basketball which, when your weight was gradually applied to it would compress, but only until the air pressure inside had become so great that it would support all of your weight. So it's not the ball itself supporting your weight but the great pressure inside it - this air pressure can be likened to the qi compressing in the legs until the body weight is held.

Holding the body weight with tension in the legs makes for awkward movements in stance or agility - try it yourself, stand in a boxing stance with your left hand and leg forward, and feel the tension in your legs. You will probably find the tension also manifests in the upper body to a certain extent as tension seems to cause a chain reaction through the body. Now try and execute a fa-jing punch with the rear (right) hand, changing stances, bringing the right leg forward and the left leg back as you do so. You will find that you have to do a little 'shuffle' with your feet and also have to relax and sink before you can change stance and that the punch feels ineffectual. Try the same exercise again but before you do the change stance / punch feel as if everything in the upper half of your body drains into the legs

and feet, you should feel the feet compress into the floor and visualise the legs full of qi and ready to explode. Once you achieve this you can move explosively by pressing the feet into the ground to start your punch. The legs now whip through the changing of the stance and the power is passed through the body by the waist so the punch now has the whole body behind it and is explosive.

For my students in taiji, I try to get them to be aware of what's happening inside their own bodies, to feel any new or strange sensations taking place and to remember what these were like. I find that after a few weeks they become more aware of the mental aspect linked to taiji and don't look at it so much as a bunch of slow movements. They constantly make more of an effort in their form and everyday life to relax and sink both breath and posture (so they tell me), when they are in work, maybe at a keyboard or on a construction site.

Many people from different arts come to the classes convinced they know how to relax, when really they are very tense. My fellow instructor Tony Court has a nice way to show some people how tense they really are. Simply have the person (or persons, everybody in the class can do it in pairs) hold their arm out horizontally in front of them palm up and elbow pointing down, and support the arm with one hand under the elbow and one under the hand. Then tell the person to relax their arm completely. If they are really relaxed then you should feel a great weight being borne by your supporting hands as the human arm is quite heavy. When they say they are ready take the hand supporting the elbow away. The person's arm should drop immediately to the side totally loose. You may find in some cases that the person's arm stays there or sags slightly (and I know that Tony has actually walked away from someone completely and their arm is still held out horizontally, so relaxed were they!!). This usually makes people think a little more about relaxing in the class as it provides them with the knowledge that they don't really know or feel their body as well as they think.

One thing I try to get over to students is to learn to recognise tension in the body so that they can work on dispersing it and at the same time it begins to teach them about the way their body feels and senses, not just while training but in everyday life.

# In Harmony

Louis Levin

**A**mong the driving motives for studying Taijiquan, or any martial art, is to be competent to stand up for yourself, and be in a position to accept responsibility for your life.

With the passage of time and acquisition of experience and confidence, the true martial artist seeks peace and gains the innate understanding that the skills s/he has developed are not about fighting, but about peace. That the Way (the Dao or Do) are a striving to live in harmony with oneself and as a result, with nature and the universe.

the true martial artist seeks peace and gains the innate understanding that the skills s/he has developed are not about fighting, but about peace

- This entails a striving toward the enjoyment of an optimum of mental, spiritual and physical health.

Those three foundations, so essential to peak health, are compromised when one gnaws on the flesh of dead animals, or consumes animal by-products such as eggs and dairy.

Knowing that this article concerns compelling reasons to adopt a vegetarian diet, you have the option of allowing your mind to snap defiantly shut. Or, hopefully, you will

choose to at least consider what is presented here.

There are three distinct advantages to a vegetarian lifestyle:

- 1 - Humanitarian
- 2 - Health
- 3 - Environmental.

The Dao teaches that, "the Way of heaven benefits but does not harm." it is personally gratifying to know that I enjoy radiant health without a single living creature having to endure any manner of suffering or death. No one is harmed or slaughtered so that I may not only live, but live well.

The animal-for-food industry is one of despicable cruelty. An itemizing of that industry's barbarity lays beyond the scope of this article. For more on that aspect, read John Robbins, *Diet For A New America*.

When you lift your head from your dinner plate to learn what really goes on behind the scenes to put food on your plate, Robbins's book will prove itself an eye-opener.

Non-human animals are individuals. They love and nurture their young, have yearnings, and like us, seek peace and survival.

The fact that you can not only live well, but actually enhance your well-being via a 100% non-animal (vegan) diet enables you to Live and let live.

Prior to the ice age, the human species was vegetarian. Because we discovered

that we can eat animals without immediately keeling over does not mean it is good for you.

We are not carnivores. We do not have the tearing fangs of a carnivore, nor do we have the carnivore's enzyme urease which counteracts urea in meat. Urea is a component of urine.

**We are not carnivores. We do not have the tearing fangs of a carnivore, nor do we have the carnivore's enzyme urease which counteracts urea in meat.**

A carnivores' intestines, unlike ours, is short. Therefore, animal flesh resides for a much longer time in our intestines where it putrefies.

Studies, such as those reported by Time Magazine, note that in parts of the world where animal products are either non-existent or constitute a very small part of the diet, there is far less incidence of degenerative diseases, such as heart and circulatory problems, stroke and cancer.

In fact, the consumption of animals and animal by-products have been decisively linked to heart disease, many forms of cancer, diabetes, arthritis, stroke and numerous

other maladies indigenous to so-called "advanced" societies.

The animals-for-food industry propagates that you need lots and lots of protein. Protein is indeed a vital, essential ingredient to the body's structure and functioning.

The fact, however, is that we need only a fraction of the protein we ingest, or are told we require. As a matter of fact, the consumption of the flesh of a dead animal is not a viable source of protein.

You do not consume healthy chunks of protein when you devour cattle, fish, chickens or pigs. What you get is second-hand cows pigs, fish and chickens' protein. Compounding that, it has been denatured, meaning ruined, since it has been baked, boiled, broiled, fried or otherwise burned to oblivion.

So, where do we get the necessary protein all of us animals require? From the same source as non-human animals — amino acids.

And, where do you get the aminos? From eating balanced meals of fruits, vegetables and grains. The amino acids in those foods form chains to make proteins.

## Cholesterol:

Take a brief look at cholesterol. Essentially, there are two kinds. Our body manufactures the good, healthy form of cholesterol. Made by humans, for humans.

When you eat animals, you ingest a harmful dangerous form of cholesterol.

When you eat a pig, for example, you consume pig cholesterol, because that is what its body has manufactured for it. What pig or cattle or turkey cholesterol does for human beings is choke the circulatory system. One among a myriad of other problems.

**What pig or cattle or turkey cholesterol does for human beings is choke the circulatory system.**

If all that is not enough to turn you away from the consumption of dead animal flesh, consider this — that industry today feeds those animals large doses of growth hormones (GH), antibiotics and pesticides among numerous other drugs and chemicals. Guess whose system that garbage winds up in.

Sadly, the increase of young, pre-pubescent girls coming into menarche has been directly attributed to the GH in animals' systems.

"Okay, but what's wrong with milk and other dairy products?" the common question goes. The answer, in a word, everything!

Consider that we are the only species who not only continues to drink milk after weaning, but voluntarily consumes the milk of another species.

Nature provides milk solely for the growth and

maturation of its young. Each species' milk exists for its own kind. Consider then that you drink the milk meant for a calf.

Imagine a calf. Now picture what he will look like as a fully-grown adult. Does it make sense to consume what a cow intends for her 75 pound calf to enable it to reach a weight in the neighborhood of one ton.

Is such a food item fit for the consumption of a seven pound human infant who may one day weigh between 120 to 200 pounds?

This is why dairy products are the primary culprit in pulmonary problems and allergies, cause excess phlegm and contribute to the clogging of numerous organic systems.

Keep in mind that after weaning, nature, in her infinite wisdom, depletes the body's enzyme for digesting milk which leads to the lactose intolerance suffered by most people.

Remove dairy completely from your diet and note the positive changes. And, don't fall for the dairy industry's propaganda about the nutrients found in dairy.

Vitamin D is obtained from nothing more complex than sunlight. More than enough calcium is available from numerous vegetables. As with protein, there is the danger of a health backlash from too much calcium.

Among many other interesting, numerous studies is one that concerned Africa's Bantu tribe. Their elderly

woman were found to have the bone structure one would expect of young adults, and with nary a trace of osteoporosis. Their dairy consumption is zero!

The final important consideration for the adoption of a vegan diet is the effect the animals-for-human-consumption-industry has on our home — planet Earth.

This industry has the dubious distinction as this planet's number one polluters. Their runoff pollutes our water. In order for them to breed animals in unnatural numbers for human consumption, they destroy our rainforests, which not only mucks up the ecosystem, but the destructive deforestation has begun to have an adverse effect on our atmosphere.

**Does it make sense to consume what a cow intends for her 75 pound calf to enable it to reach a weight in the neighborhood of one ton.**

What was once fertile soil is becoming rapidly depleted by being forced to yield large outputs of crops which are intended for the animals bred by the food industry.

Consider this, when the animal for food industry eventually does become a relic of the past, all of that food and

land now used for the upkeep of animals intended for your dinner plate, can be used to feed all the world's hungry.

When you become a vegetarian, you are personally responsible for saving one acre of land per year. And, you are saving the lives of animals who do not have to suffer and die in order for you to live. It should be apparent by now that without an animal diet the quality of your health and life improves.

In fact, and if you prefer, become a vegan for no other reason than to increase the odds of your own life being longer, healthier, and therefore, happier. You will also be taking a major step toward mastering the art and science of disease prevention — a major tenet of Daoism.

You will definitely feel better, and you will greatly enhance your trust in and respect for the integrity and validity of your own body-mind-spirit.

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*Louis Levin is a WTBA certified instructor in Owings Mills, MD USA.*

For information on class times phone: **410-654 6793**

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*And that is why all of our WTBA camps are meat free! Apart from the occasional escapee to the local shop!*



# CAMP 1997

Arrival date for Camp 97 will be the 29th of August 1997, leaving date is the 12th September 1997.

The reason for arriving on a Friday is that there are few buses from Brisbane down to Murwillumbah at the weekends. People are free to arrive on the Saturday if they wish though.

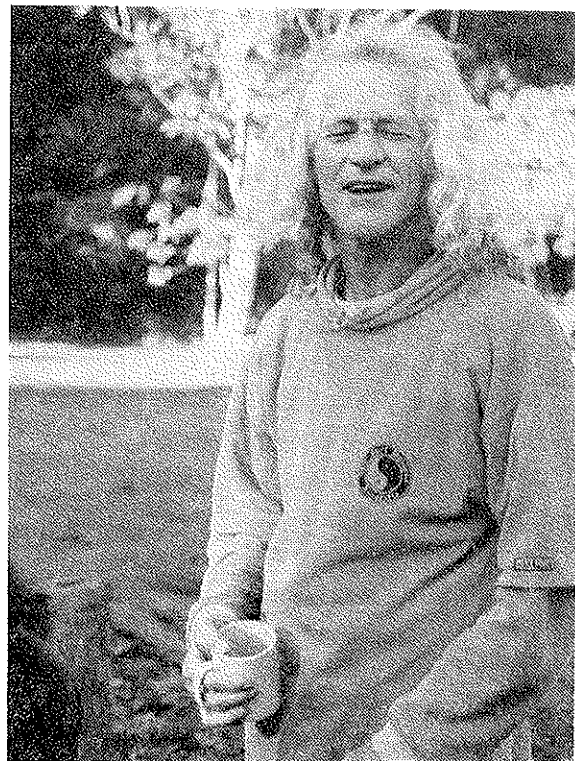
Please let us know early of your intention to attend the camp as we expect a large turnout for this one as people realise what good value it is. **You are able to lay-by your fees this year. And there will be no invitations sent out, so please contact us should you wish to attend. You can pay installments on your fees from now until July.**



Horatio Paz 'partying' at Camp 96



Back To His Wild Days .. Sitting!



Ah, That Feels Better