

T'ai Chi

COMBAT & HEALING



Taiji, Qigong, Pa-Kua, H'sin-I, Aikido

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T'AI CHI

COMBAT & HEALING

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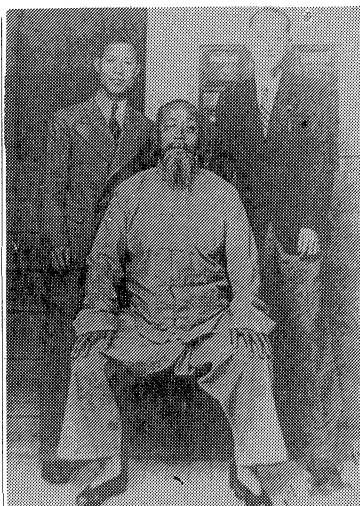
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ABOUT THE COVER

Grandmaster Wu Chien Chuan the founder of the Wu style of Taijiquan flanked by two of his senior students in China. Wu Chien Chuan learnt the Yang style that his father Wu Quan-yu learnt from Yang Lu-ch'an and then changed it to what we know as the Wu style today.

Wu however was not the family name as Wu Quan-yu was a manchurian and not Chinese. He added the Chinese surname, it is said so that the Yangs would teach him their precious Yang style.

There are other stories about how Wu Quan-yu got a hold of the Yang style but that's all history now and the Wu style remains one of the great styles.

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CHANG YIU-CHUN

An Interview by Mr Hu (China)

Edited By Erle Montague (Australia)

The Chang Yiu-chun interviews continued:

Originally taken by Mr Hu from China but edited here by Erle Montague (one of the rare students of Chang)

Editors Note: I have included here some of the hundreds of notes that I have taken during my brief training period with Chang Yiu-chun as back up to the original article which sometimes loses in the translation from the Chinese.

The parts that you are about to read come from hand written notes by Mr Hu. Much of this has not been published because at times Master Chang becomes very confusing, or rather I believe that he is trying to confuse! When I knew him, his sense of humor was greatly advanced but he was not trying to be funny and some of this comes out in this part.

H: I am interested in the fighting part of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, are you able to elaborate on your previous statements.

C: I have already stated that there is only one part of T'ai Chi Ch'uan as far as I am concerned and that the other part, the health comes by itself. One does not begin T'ai Chi Ch'uan initially for good health. To do so, one is missing out on one very important aspect of one's training and that is that the mind must be strong. One of the ways that we maintain a strong mind is that we learn the wushu (fighting arts). In this way we are no longer afraid and our mind becomes more yang (positive). Only then are we able to heal ourselves using T'ai Chi Ch'uan. What was it you asked?

H: About the fighting.

C: Yes, T'ai Chi Ch'uan is a fighting art but if we attempt to learn it in the same way that many of the other wushu styles are learnt then we fail.

H: Is this because T'ai Chi Ch'uan is a soft style?

C: There are no soft fighting styles! How can there be. If you must fight someone, then you must in some way hurt them in order to defend yourself. T'ai Chi Ch'uan is not a soft style of fighting and I have permanent injuries to prove this. No, the difference is that we must not be encumbered by set patterns of movement so that our mind must move in an unnatural way.

H: But surely all of the movements that we learn in T'ai Chi Ch'uan are not so natural.

C: No, any movement that has to be taught is not a natural movement. However, there are certain movements that when they are learnt are able to teach the body about spontaneous movement and to replace our natural movement with more useful movement. The movements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan are like this. It takes some people ten or twelve years before the unnatural movements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan began to teach them about their own body movement so that they are able to react with great speed and power to any attack from outside. Until that time, T'ai Chi Ch'uan is used in much the same way that other wushu is used.

H: So after some time, something happens to change the T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

C: Yes, exactly. Our mind becomes like certain animals and we begin to regain certain animal instincts, those which we have lost over many centuries. Because our mind is now reunited with our bodies because of our T'ai Chi Ch'uan training, so too

our body becomes more with animal instinct.

H: Is this why we read and are taught so often to 'have the eye of the eagle' or the 'body of the monkey'?

C: I should not take this aspect too far as some of the wushu has done.

H: What do you mean?

C: Some people have learnt that we must act like animals but this is incorrect. Physically, we cannot be like an animal, this is obvious, although I have seen some people who could be mistaken for some animals. What the classics say is that we must adopt the ways of thinking of the animals. This is very difficult for me to explain. Animals for the most part do not think, they just react using reactions that are like breathing is to us, it is automatic and sometimes the animals are able to react even before the event has happened. This is because of the greater awareness in built into all animals. When the human beings were tried out, we began to use our physical capabilities for thinking and that is where we lost much of our earlier instincts.

H: Could I please interrupt here master Chang and ask you what you meant by humans were tried out!

C: That is another complete story that would take up many pages and wear out many of your pencils. There are some areas of Taoist philosophy that cannot be written down in any book and this is the part that has been lost. We are able to regain this part through the practice of T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

H: You were talking about the animals.

C: Yes. Once we have done all of the training and we already know how to fight using the movements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, then the Ch'i (internal) part of T'ai Chi Ch'uan teaches us about the unknown.

H: *What is this unknown.*

C: I am sorry, I do not know it!

H: *But what you did to me earlier, was that the unknown?*

C: I do not know what I did to you earlier.

H: *You helped me up and put a wad onto my face did you not?*

C: Yes, I remember helping you but I do not remember doing it to you, did you do something stupid?

H: *Yes, I ran at you, remember.*

C: You should not run.

H: *I am a little confused now, please continue about the animals.*

C: I once had some animals.

H: *Yes?*

C: They started out as friends but after some years they became my teachers.

H: *What do you mean.*

C: I began to notice that the birds in particular were looking at me wherever I was located but they never seemed to look in the same way that we look. The birds were me and every time I moved, they would move accordingly even if I moved behind them. This is when I discovered about the way of the internal mind and the parts of our inheritance that we have lost. I discovered that the animals are able to look not at our physical body but at the space surrounding that body and in doing this, they are able to know exactly when we will move and when to move themselves without thinking about it.

H: *I am beginning to think that there is no real reason to actually learn the T'ai Chi Ch'uan forms as fighting applications.*

C: Yes there is a reason and that is that we must be able to protect ourselves using our physical capabilities and it is not many who will ever be able to rise to the highest levels. We do learn about the applications but only to help us in our training. As I think I said before, if you learn each of the movements and try to use them in fighting then you will be defeated. We must react as the animals to what ever is happening to us.

H: *Does the pushing hands help in this aspect.*

C: The pushing hands is a new invention but it does help. It must be practised for years and years against many different people in order that we learn about no mind movement (rough translation). I have seen some people practicing pushing hands and they like to pretend that they are fighting each other and trying to see who is better at it. This is like trying to see who is the better artist by trying to have some competition to see who is better at holding the brush! I believe that the pushing hands is there only as a training help. When I was learning about T'ai Chi Ch'uan we only had methods of training. (rough translation, which means training methods). These methods were more complete than today's pushing hands but people need something definite to practice and the pushing hands filled that need.

H: *I know about you ideas on pushing hands and that it should never be used for competition, but surely one must attack our opponent in order to learn.*

C: We must attack in order to help ourselves. We learn to only attack at the opportune moment in time and body movement. If we attack at the wrong time, then the opponent will be ready for us and so we will be defeated. If we attack when the opponent is at his weakest then we will win. This is what can be gained from the practice of pushing hands. What I have said earlier is that the pushing hands should not become like fighting where one man is trying to defeat another. If we have this thought in

our minds then we will never be able to rise to the highest level of fighting because we are trying to defeat another human being and that is not real human nature. We do not wish to fight! We only fight because we are threatened physically and then it should be to the death. In pushing hands we do not practice deadly techniques, only pulling and pushing. This teaches us about body movement and learning to move with another person. But there is also another area of pushing hands that can be detrimental to our T'ai Chi Ch'uan learning. Until we have advanced our minds to a high level of fighting, we must move with the other person and that usually means that when he comes forward in pushing hands, we move backward, the nature of the exercise dictates this. But this is not in keeping with the classics which say that if he moves forward, so too do you move forward and if he moves backward so too do you move backward. So it is my view that when we do the pushing hands, even though we must move backward when he comes forward just to keep the movements smooth, our minds

JOHN McMAHON SIFU

John McMahon holds black belt 3rd degree in the World Taiji Boxing Association and has been a student of Erle Montague for many years. And also teaches karate.

GOLD COAST AREA:

John McMahon holds classes all over the Gold Coast of Australia and the Hinterland regions with private and group tuition available.

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WORKSHOPS EUROPE

1991 With Erle Montague

20th April Manchester
22nd April Leicester
23, 24, 25th April Swansea Wales.
27th, 28th London.

Phone WTBA Headquarters or your nearest rep.

must be thinking the correct movements.

In our next issue in June, Chang Yiu-chun talks about exactly how to attack and he gets on to the healing benefits of T.C.C.

BACK ISSUES

Because of the huge success of T.C.C.&H, we have had to print more back issues so that people can start their subs from the beginning. So we now have all issues in stock. Just add an extra \$5.00 to your next sub payment and I will take your sub from the beginning issue.

WORKSHOPS USA

1991

Erle Montaigue will be in the USA in Boulder CO for a weekend workshop on the 4th and 5th of May 1991.

To book for these workshops phone;
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COST: US\$ 100.00 12 hours.

WORKSHOPS CANADA

Erle Montaigue will be in Ottawa for the 30th April, 1st and 2nd of May
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Included in these workshops:

Advanced Pushing Hands, Small and Large San-Sau, T'ai Chi Dim-Mak and qigong, The 12 Secret Palm Techniques.

Plus anything else that people would like to cover.

MICHAEL BABIN

Teaches Yang Style T'ai Chi form, Pushing hands, da-lu, self defence and weapons. His emphasis is upon the martial art of t'ai chi ch'uan but also stresses that in order to perform t'ai chi for health and meditation, one must learn it as it was originally intended, as a fighting art.

Phone Michael Babin

Ottawa, Ontario Canada on

(613)7397805

Wind Pierces Ears

An article by Rolf Baur, Switzerland:

In the traditional Yang style form after the posture of 'hit tiger' and heel "kick", there is the movement called "both fists hit the ears". This name seems to be a clear enough description of the movement, why then is it also called "both winds pierce the ears"? Why this variety of names which doesn't seem to make sense, and which one is the original name?

For an answer, we have to look at the name of this movement in the Chinese language. In mandarin, the name is "shuang feng guan er". This means "both feng pierce the ears". But what is a feng? Feng does not mean fist, so "both fists hit the ears" is not the original name but has been created later to avoid the confusion.

The variety of the other names arises from the oral tradition and the Chinese language. When you hear "feng" in Chinese, this can mean "wind", or "peak", or, with a different intonation, "phoenix" (a mystical bird). Now, which one is the original meaning of "feng" in our context? For some time I was puzzled by this question, but finally I came across a sentence in a book "Tales of the Shaolin Monastery" (Joint Publishing Co. Hong Kong 1988) where the original application of the movement is described. This sentence reads: "He struck out with 'a wind blows through the ears' and tried to break his opponent's eardrums by the open-palmed strike to each side of his head".

With this application in mind, the name of the movement begins to make sense; the original meaning if feng in this context seems to be 'wind', i.e., the shock wave created by the cupped palms striking the ears.

Besides piercing the eardrums and causing pain and a knock out, this technique can also damage the hearing organ and cause hearing loss. So, please, don't try it on your friends!

Rolf Baur is a teacher of human anatomy at the University of Basel, Switzerland. he has been practicing taijiquan since 1983, and judo, aikido and karate since 1958.

If you would like to write to Rolf Baur, or indeed any of our fine writers and if their address does not appear in the Magazine, write to us in the first instance and we will forward your letter and leave it up to the recipient to reply from there.

The 3 Stars Martial Arts Club

Edward Hiles Star teaches the three internal styles of martial art at his club in Fresno California as well as Aikido and weapons.

He is a founding member of the WTBA

To Join Ed's club write to him at:

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T'ai Chi Secrets

By Michael Babin Ottawa Canada

To paraphrase a famous line from the literary classic, *Animal Farm*; the following "secrets" of taiji self-defence are all of equal value; however, some of them are more equal than others.

Which you find the most relevant to your own training will depend on the talents and inclinations of whoever you study with as well as your own personality, approach to taiji (as exercise, self-defence, competitive sport or combination thereof) and level of skill and experience.

DON'T GET HIT:

The taiji approach to self-defence in terms of accepting and redirecting on-coming force implies that you keep from being hit. Ideally, you do so without any desire to harm your aggressor and without any pre-conceived course of reaction to the attack. In theory, your attacker will become discouraged by his lack of success and cease his aggression without either of you being hurt.

As an example, like the "entering" (Irimi) of aikido which is the basis of allowing the attacker to throw himself, the famous Grasp Bird's Tail sequence of taiji allows the defender to stick to an oncoming force until the attacker persists in blocking his own actions or bouncing himself away. At the highest (and rarest) level of understanding, such sticking goes beyond the realm of self-defence into a metaphysical calmness which not only refuses to contend but is beyond such concepts as fighting/not fighting.

ATTACK AS YOU DEFEND

If, like me your skill and emotional maturity doesn't guarantee that you can live up to such lofty ideals/skills then I recommend the taiji tactic of attacking as you defend. Here the emphasis lies in both deflecting/neutralizing the oncoming force and using the appropriate level of force to cause pain, damage a joint or, if circumstances warrant it, use potentially lethal force.

While it seems a more aggressive approach, it is really, under examination, a lesser manifestation of the first secret. By causing pain or inflicting the appropriate level of damage as you neutralize his attacks, you increase your own margin of safety by encouraging the attacker to decide -- immediately -- that he is better off going somewhere else with his anger or aggression.

DON'T GET HIT FIRST:

If you can't avoid being struck (and it happens unless your skills are superhuman), make sure you achieve contact as, or better still before the aggressor's strike sinks in. Keep in mind the taiji axiom: "starting after your opponent, but reaching him first". By striking even marginally before he does, you will, at the least, rob his attack of some of its impact and, at best stop it completely.

It is also important to remember that the first strike or any real fight is often the deciding factor in survival. Whoever is struck first may well be put psychologically on the defensive. (which is quite different from being a "defensive" fighter) or physically put out of commission by the type of force used and the target hit.

In addition, once the blows start flying, both participants will find that the hormonal rush caused by the fight-or-flight syndrome negates the pain/trauma induced by all but the most effective blows.

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU'RE HIT:

In the tradition of philosophical Taoism, this does and doesn't contradict the value of the first three secrets. Absorbing, re-directing and discharging energy are most easily done when using a hand or forearm to stick with and lead the opponent's power where you want it. However, at a higher level you stick with whatever part of your body is struck and use it, not the hand/arm to neutralize whatever force is thrown your way.

Whatever the real reasons (mind over matter, training the qi flow) such skills can discharge or minimize the power of strikes to all but the most important meridian points and parts of the body: eyes, throat, cranial hinge and testicles being the most obvious exceptions -- though there are styles/instructors who claim to have developed such skills.

One well publicized American Jujitsu instructor of a few years ago was renowned for his and his senior student's ability to take full power kicks to the unprotected groin. Such demonstrations are impressive on a superficial level; but, are also perhaps examples of being unhealthily obsessed with one aspect of self defence.

Neutralizing being hit bears some relationship to the apparent insensibility of the "slugger" who wades in, ignoring the pain, until he scores or is hit somewhere vital. Such brawling does illustrate the use (or absence) of mind in absorbing and ignoring pain that would stop someone who

fears pain and is not used to being hit.

Feeling pain is the mind/body's "trigger" for removing yourself from danger before the damage is too great. Ignoring pain can be stupid in the sense that you may be damaged beyond biological repair. However, the untrained individual usually over-reacts to even the suggestion of pain (ie. the fear of the event) and tries to compensate for that fear by undertraining or being overly cautious.

Proper training teaches that pain can often be safely ignored and that being struck when you move with and/or "sink" the attacking energy no longer hurts -- in part, because you no longer fear being hurt.

Being used to being hit is what makes the average bar brawler, boxer or kick-boxer (no matter what the style) able to use their combat experience in a way that most traditionally trained martial artists cannot hope to match.

In other words: "Being hit is, in some ways, irrelevant to self defence unless you think it matters." Accepting and internalizing this on a gut level is one of the most difficult skills to develop. In some ways it is also most important.

CONCLUSION:

To deal with pain in a self defence context, you must have learned to deal with it in your training. How you react to being hit (relaxed or tense, fearfully or calmly) and how you return that aggressive force are the yin and yang of taiji self defence.

Unfortunately, these are difficult skills to develop safely as it is easy for injuries to occur, especially at the beginning level. It is also easy for such training to degenerate into reliance on physical technique or macho masochism.

Finally, finding an instructor who can balance a playful class atmosphere, combat realism, the safety of the students while training and transmit the martial expression of taiji skills is, in some ways, the real challenge.

Michael Babin is a regular contributor to FIGHTING T'AI CHI. He has studied taijiquan since the mid 70s and has been teaching a yang style since 1985 in Ottawa, Canada. The main influences on his approach to taiji have been Allan Weiss and in the past few years (through seminar and correspondence), Erle Montaigue and William C.C. Chen.

Formerly a writer/editor with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, his articles have been published in numerous North American and International Police and martial Magazines.

Wutang The Original T'ai Chi

By Dong Kit-yung

Translated by David Chow, London University Hong Kong.

This article was transcribed from an interview taken by one of the journalists from Beijing who first visited the Wutang village in 1973.

Dong Kit-yung is the leader of the Wutang T'ai Chi Ch'uan style which still exists today on Wutang Mountain in China, said to be the birthplace of T'ai Chi. This style is not to be mistaken for the Wu style of Chen Ting-Hung in Hong Kong who has assumed this name.

T'ai Chi Ch'uan has existed for many hundreds of years, some would say thousands of years but I do not think it is that long. The name of T'ai Chi Ch'uan is a recent invention of one of the modern founders of one of the famous family styles in China, before that it was called something like 'Loose boxing' or sometimes 'swinging boxing'. My ancestors would not be so presumptuous as to call their style the 'peak of ultimate boxing'.

All forms of modern day T'ai Chi originated from my ancestor's way of the fist as can be clearly seen by look-

ing closely at two of the modern styles, the Chen and the Yang. There is some controversy as to who taught who when it comes to these two forms but it is my belief that the Chen family first of all learnt some of my ancestor's forms and then one of the original Yang people firstly learnt that form. Then, one of our students, not one of our family members visited the Chen Village and began to teach both the Chen leaders and the Yang visitor. We are told that the Yang visitor became very good at our family form and then left the Chen village returning at a later stage to teach the Chen family his form of T'ai Chi.

Today, the Yang style of T'ai Chi is no more known to the masses but a newer easier form is only known to the masses. My family form is not known to the masses, only to my family members and we have taken a vow to never reveal the secrets of our inheritance. Some have come to our village and begged us to show them, many from the West have come and we have only shown them the first two or three forms. The other nine forms are kept for our own family. Many people ask me and other elders of our village why we do not wish to share our T'ai Chi with the rest of the world and my answer is always the same. Look what the rest of the world has already done to the Original Chen and Yang styles, it is almost impossible to see any resemblance to the Original forms but a few of the explosive movements inherited from our original forms. This is my answer, our family forms are precious to us, handed down from generation to generation through the hundreds of years and we do not wish this form to be taken up by people in the Western countries so that they are able to claim all kinds of lies about our style and their own knowledge. Only in our situation are we able to train our children in the true boxing of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, the children grow up knowing this form and it has become a part of their lives. In the West, people want to learn their forms in one or two years and this is wrong, there can be no inner mind learnt in this way.

People who visit us ask me what is this inner mind and I say to them that

it is like asking a great artist how they paint. It takes many years of hard training and mind study to gain the inner mind and only after at least twenty years of practice does one only begin to enter into the T'ai Chi but it cannot be learnt.

Yes, all of our family are able to defend themselves in a very short period of time but to gain mastery of the self it takes many years more, fighting is only the first steps in attaining the inner mind. Men must go past the initial barrier of the self and not be afraid of human attack, only then will they be able to go into the inner mind and learn. This is why we teach our family members how to defend themselves first of all. We do not really need to know how to defend ourselves today but deep down in every man's mind, no matter how much he has nei kung, he is always wanting to know if he is able to defend himself against attack. Only when he is able to put that part of his fear behind him will he be able to continue on ward and inward to self mastery. Mastery should not be counted in years practiced or in money spent or in physical attributes but in how the master has been able to master his own destiny and inner spirit.

I began this talk because I was hoping that I might be able to help some people to try and find their own way but upon reflection, it will be very difficult for anyone who reads these words to be able to gain many centuries of handed down tradition and to put aside their physical fears in order to gain the inner mind.

There are sometimes very special people, who with only a small amount of the correct teaching will be able to know how to teach themselves. Some people are able to learn through the inner mind even though it has not yet been opened. These people are known to us as 'large people' (rough translation, there is no real translation to this word), they are able to take in information from the without in order to teach the within. Most of these people will never know that they have this ability, only that they are able to understand their own inner martial arts better than anyone else and sometimes there comes to them in dreams or

just ideas, methods that have taken hundreds of years to perfect. This leads us to believe that these people are able to communicate with the outer world and the spirits of this world.

No, I do not mean ghosts but ideas and thoughts that come in the form of energy into the front of the brain so that we are able to use it. Energy that comes into the back of the brain is not able to be used in this current physical lifetime but is stored for a later period. By your questions it is plain to see that you want me to speak of talking with the dead or something like that but I will disappoint you because we cannot speak with the dead, how can you speak with something that is dead, we are only able to receive communications with something that is alive but it is on a level that we do not know about and is impossible for someone who has not experienced such things to understand so I must not speak anymore about this subject.

On a physical level the practice begins with simple coordinated movement as a child and this is all we give to our children. If we try to teach any more then the progress will be slowed. Every child must take his own path in learning boxing, some will learn quickly while others will be natural at moving in a coordinated manner. The breathing methods are not given to the children as this is impossible to learn until one has reached adulthood. All that we are able to teach the children are ideas and living skills and in this way the inner skills will come naturally. We do not tell the children about any limitations in life but prefer to allow them to find out for themselves, in this way every child will only learn about his own limitations and not take on anyone else's.

Yes, the forms are learnt at an early age but only when they wish to. Because the children see everyone in the family performing the ritual exercises, it is natural for them to copy and to want to learn what their family is doing. Their kung-fu becomes like walking and talking to them.

One short set of movements is learnt every two years until the whole twelve sets of movements are learnt. This takes the child into early adult-

hood, and it is here that we begin the inner training. The inner training begins with simple breathing ways and then we teach them to lower the breath. No, not just the external physical breath, I mean the inner breath. But here again I am finding it quite impossible to explain something that is just learnt through experience. I can tell you something now and you will feel something immediately and you will say to yourself, "Ah yes, this is what he means". But this is wrong as you will only have the first physical experience of Ch'i Kung and this is not what you are looking for. You see, it will take you another twenty years or more before you will know what I am talking about so you will write in your newspaper that you have experienced Ch'i Kung but this will not be true and after that twenty years you might want to explain it to someone and you will also have the same problem. So it is not good to try and explain Ch'i kung to anyone who has not yet been learning it for many years.

This is my son, he is Po nien and he has attained the inner mind, he is only thirty five years old. When he was twenty, he thought that he knew it all and would want to go out of our village and fight with all others and sometimes he would, and he would win. Now, he does not want to fight with anyone because he has finally realised that he will die some day and that he is not so good after all. This is what happens in the Western world, I see and hear about people who fight for money and for glory but why do they do this. These people have not yet mastered themselves and so they should not be fighting with others for money.

At this level of understanding, I can only tell you to master yourself before you can master others.

T'ai Chi Combat & Healing

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NEW AGE TWADDLE: ANTIQUE VIOLENCE

Frazer Ward on T'ai Chi.

This article was originally published in the Sydney Review. It is interesting because the writer, Frazer Ward is a heavy weight boxing champion.

Martin Kyle is himself a writer and student and teacher of T'ai Chi in Sydney Australia.

Readers might have noticed an emphasis on sports which, if they are not actually violent (boxing, rugby league) or don't represent violence (fencing), are at least gut-wrenchingly hard (rowing). I like to think this is not simply the exercise of a misplaced machismo.

There are questions of more general concern here.

For example, what are the relations between the inside and outside of patterned violent exchanges? What kind of pleasures are there in these activities, one's investments in which are partly repaid in pain? Like it or not, sport is a major cultural activity. These questions boil down to the relations between these sports and the complex of other activities which go to make up a life. While art has enough cultural prestige to be an end in itself, sport is often regarded as an adjunct to everything else. It's what you do after work or at the weekend, to relax, to keep fit, to lose weight, to socialize, to stay nice, let off steam; it's something you do to maintain the serious bits. This is so, if to a lesser degree, even the case of professional sports people, the limited span of whose careers means they must look to setting up their "retirement".

Violent or extremely physically demanding sports test the limits of these assumptions. The reason being the pain and injuries, even the straightforward exhaustion it's possible (though not necessary) to sustain just in training. Pain is pain, oblivious of distinctions between

work and weekend. A bruised rib from Wednesday night's sparring session, a shoulder separated by the weekend's football and a back muscle in spasm after straining on the harbour hardly seem conducive to a comfortable and productive week at the office. (The same might be said for tennis elbow, but that is a less direct result of tennis than a crack on the ribs is of boxing.) There is an argument for saying that such risks are necessary accompaniments to doses of excitement which support otherwise humdrum routines, but I know a number of boxers who seem active and alert in pursuit of their range of other interests on only a couple of training sessions a week.

If their meditation through pain blurs the boundaries of sport and life, how do these sports fit? They don't seem to serve other ends, at least not in the ways in which we ordinarily suppose, pompous clichés about lessons learnt on the playing fields notwithstanding. I don't propose to provide answers to these questions. Rather (perhaps surprisingly if only because of its popular image), I'm going to look at the light T'ai Chi sheds on them.

Unfortunately, T'ai Chi is subject to a great deal of insufferable (and occasional) New Age twaddle about cosmic harmony and the whole self. The familiar slow, fluid movements and stances which are the foundations of the martial art have become a trendy form of exercise among people who buy and sell that kind of claptrap, perhaps because they've given in to the desire for results without effort. Happily, I am assured that while what they are doing won't hurt them it's unlikely to do very much good.

Martin Kyle, who knows about these things, and I have disconcerted people at a couple of parties, discussing and demonstrating the relative merits of various techniques of violence. A writer, he is thirty and has been studying Yang Family style (the dominant form of T'ai Chi) for five years. For three, he trained about forty hours a week, and his conversation about T'ai Chi reflects that intensity. He is at some pains to debunk hippie appropriations of T'ai Chi. To begin with, he maintains, T'ai

Chi metaphors are over-interpreted. If the remedy for a technical problem is 'to look at the root', whatever essential references this may suggest, make sure you first check your feet. And the comfort people take in mystical Chinese art, veiled in mists of time just means they have been taken in by 'typical Chinese mythopoeia'. The Chinese, he suggests, are pragmatic and secretive: his teacher, Erle Montague, was asked to pay to refer to himself as a disciple of the Yang family's descendant. But Montague is distinguished from other teachers by his ability to trace his lineage from main disciple to main disciple in a straight line back to the originating Yangs --- sometime in the 18th century. This is not to say there were not older martial arts, but to dispel the ahistorical approach which fluffs up the cosmic pillow. The problem with the way T'ai Chi is often taught is that meditative, formal expressions are divorced from their practical, self-defensive applications. It's not enough to be told of these effects: the failure to practice them leads to poor technique, or form. According to Kyle, unless the exercises and their applications are regarded as the two sides of the coin, the forms suffer from a lack of consequence. A form may demand a straight back for instance, but the student, not mindful of its martial ramifications finds it more comfortable to bend, which in the circumstances it was designed to deal with means 'some bastard knocks his head off'. I might add that his demonstrations tend to be con-

T'ai Chi in Pennsylvania

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vincing (and he says he's not vicious enough).

Technique is crucial to T'ai Chi, perhaps more than boxing, where brut strength and fitness do occasionally prevail. He still has a sore back after Erle Montague whipped his arm in a particular way a year ago, his fault he says, he attacked too fast. Which brings me at last to qi (ch'i). This is what hippies get really carried away with. Universal energy inherited from the mother, taken in or reinforced through life via the nose and mouth, etc. ...It's Ch'i which provides for explanations of T'ai Chi's efficacy in terms of turning the opponent's force field. I don't know Martin Kyle that well, and I was a bit apprehensive when I asked him, but he came good. Ch'i, he says, is a pseudo-psychological explanation for things. For instance some might be tempted to explain his back injury in terms of Erle Montague's incredible Ch'i. He is not dismissive of Ch'i, and says that if you adopt the Chi kung stance, half squatting, arms raised as though to hold a tree trunk, hands apart, which is meant to concentrate your Ch'i, you will feel something, some resistance between your fingertips (although of course, you can touch them together if you want to). But he argues, Ch'i is an X factor. Erle Montague may have incredible Ch'i, but he also has nearly perfect technique, which involves being highly receptive to your assailant's balance, to where his relaxed and where tense. With a grin between pensive and wicked, Martin Kyle comments on the not unusual coincidence between levels of Ch'i and technical competence.

Kyle's back was hurt in training. This is not surprising; there are no T'ai Chi tournaments. Although he says training feels pretty sporty to him, T'ai Chi is not conducted as a sport. Indeed, it is virtually impossible to spar: the necessity for gloves and padding means that the palms, fingers, elbows and feet really can't be used which may result in poor technique and risk the less efficient dispatch of an assailant.

Aside from the solo and push hands exercises (in which the forms are practised in pairs) the closest things to sparring are attack-defence forms.

These involve training partners taking it in turns to simulate attacking and defensive roles. Now, T'ai Chi is an exclusively defensive martial art. Its practitioners never attack, but use aggression against itself (something like the way a boxing counter-puncher goes through openings provided by an opponent's leads). So, theoretically it's not a good idea to practice attack-defence forms too often, in case you become too used to moving first and run into defensive error as a result. I mean that someone must initiate the attack and so it is this area that must not be done too often in training. In T'ai Chi the defender always wins. But on the other hand, according to Kyle, taking the attacking role, even occasionally, provides useful exposure to the all action ruthlessness of T'ai Chi reactions. These appear to the untutored eye as a continuous flurry of arms and legs: Erle Montague looks as though he fights 'like a little kid', no statuesque stance or cleanly distinguishable moves; but a simple error in the face of this whirligig, says Martin Kyle, 'and you know it's over'.

This is an experience analogous in part, to being manoeuvred against the ropes in the sparring ring, having your hands worked down and being tapped on the temple: you understand that in other circumstances, you would now be unconscious. The difference lies in T'ai Chi's still more problematic relation to sport. Boxing can be simulated in training, and even the fullest expressions of its violence -- professional championship bouts -- have referees. T'ai Chi alternatively, can be worked towards like a sport, but only ever represented so far: even its practitioners may never see its effects. Attack-defence forms, according to Kyle, provide intimations of consequences, effects of this activity so full of horror they guarantee his ability to walk away from violent confrontation.

T'ai Chi exceeds the category of sport: by extension, in doing so it suggests that 'sports' which necessarily involve (at least) the potential for pain and damage may be ways of using that potential, to understand violence. That may seem a bit trite or, it may risk a kind of vaccination argu-

ment. The followers of some martial arts finish training wanting nothing more than a fight. It may better be expressed like this: violence or heavily physically taxing sports provide an experience or intimation of extremes and limits of behavior. Perhaps they may in turn allow for useful perspectives on the rest of the world.

The Yong Nian Yang Shi Taijiquan Association

Fu Sheng-yuan is the son of Fu Zhongwen. He now lives and teaches in Perth Western Australia. The Original Yang Cheng-fu style of t'ai chi ch'uan is taught specialising in pushing hands.

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Yang Shi Video

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How Do you know It Works Part 2.

By Dr Martin Eisen

In this article, Dr Martin Eisen continues his essay on kung-fu. This article presents more principles for the practical application of kung-fu. This next principle is one of the most important.

Drills For Bridging The Gap Between One Attack and Free Style Sparring:

In modern times, very few people engage in hand to hand combat. Thus, most students do not have actual combat experience. Accordingly, the former's Masters of the system must transmit their combat experience to their students by simulating actual fighting. Real fighting is continuous. You attack; your opponent counters; you counter his counter and so on. The master must devise drills of this type based upon his fighting experience and the principles of the system. The drills should contain techniques which are known to work. They should emphasize relaxation, feeling, timing, distancing and using the opponent's strength against him. There should be drills for all ranges of fighting. Master Mark was able to devise such drills because of his experience in combat and from the many systems he had studied.

Every form in Master Mark's system has two or more men breakdown to teach the students the use of the techniques in the forms. In addition, there are many two men fighting drills. Master Mark says that these type of exercises were present in many systems when he was younger. However, nowadays the majority of these drills have been lost in many other systems.

As an example, part of a medium range drill will be described. You throw a straight, right punch to the face which is blocked by a right mwashu, (your right palm in two knuckle position blocks and slips up

his arm on the inside to attack maybe his face at the same time). Spin your

with a right gwashu punch. He blocks your punch with a left mwashu block as in photo No.1

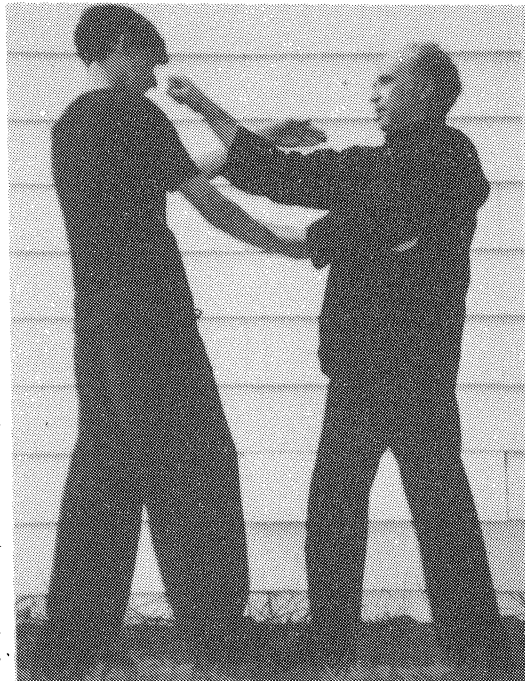


Photo No.1

right forearm horizontally about your elbow using the force of your foe's blow and attempt to hit him

Use the force of this block to spin your right forearm horizontally about your elbow joint and execute a right gwashu punch. He blocks your punch with a spear hand strike to the eyes as in Photo No.2. Block his spear hand with a right gwashu, downward block. This is immediately followed by a right punch to his exposed body.

Some might argue that the same skills can be developed through free style sparring. Free style sparring makes you tense and your techniques sloppy because you want to win. Most of us have seen boxing matches in which one of the fighters is trying to use a new strategy. As soon as the going gets rough, the fighter reverts back to his old style. He has not drilled enough on the techniques or strategy he wants to use until they are second nature.

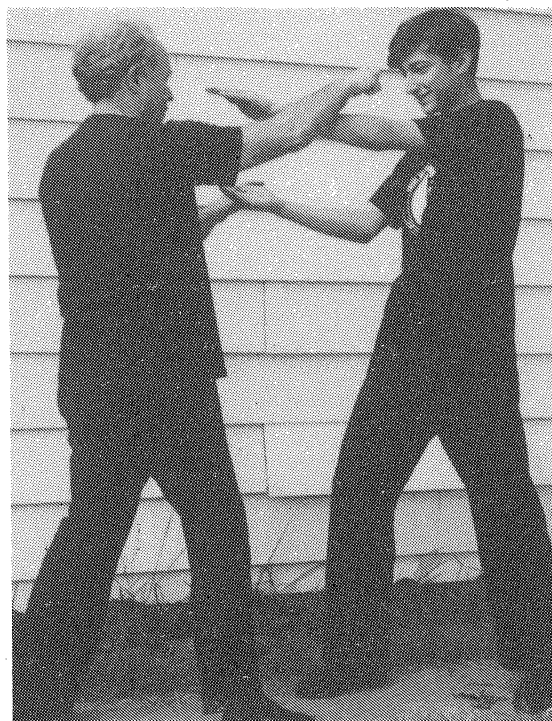


Photo No.2

Free Style Sparring:

The praying mantis system has many different free style sparring exercises. For example, there are one and two hand free style sparring and weapon exercises. These are done with and without protective equipment. Fighting multiple attackers is also practised. Such training is necessary to simulate actual combat conditions and also to test your mastery of the skills produced by the drills

ever, too much free sparring can be detrimental. Moreover, many dangerous techniques, essential for self defence cannot be practised in free sparring.

Short Power.

The ability to generate great power over a short distance, without having to withdraw a limb, in blocking, kicking, or punching is essential. This ability enables you to execute multiple or combinations of techniques rapidly. Moreover, if you have short power, then you have long power, but not conversely.

Short power is developed in praying mantis through special exercises and the forms. For example, the Three Step Arrow Formula contains the 3-power strike as seen performed by Master Mark in photo No.3. It consists of three rapid strikes performed successively without withdrawing the arms.

single blow should be practised. However, some techniques are impractical because of the nature of the striking surface or because of insufficient strength. I have had many people from other styles come to me and I have asked them to use any of their punching techniques to punch a hole in a free hanging piece of paper or even a thick pizza box and none of them could do it. But using the Phoenix Eye fist from Praying Mantis, it is relatively easy to do and also easy to teach someone to use it. Phoenix eye is a sort of one knuckle fist.

The reason why this kind of fist has more penetrating power than an ordinary fist is its smaller surface area. The tip of the proximal phalanx (get yer anatomy books out! Editor) of the index finger is about 1/20th the area of the two knuckles. Hence the pressure, which is force per unit area, is about 20 times greater than a knuckle punch exerted with the same

strengthened by special breathing exercises, (Qigong, or Ch'i Kung), the use of Dit Da Jow (Chinese herbal liniment) and isometric type exercises. For example the index finger is held in the phoenix eye position and pressed against a wall to strengthen it.

Many students do not gain full power when in a realistic situation because they are used to pulling the punch in practice etc. Master Mark instructs his students to use full power but to aim outside of the opponent's body when training.

Vital Points.

Some muscular people are able to withstand heavy blows. Therefore you should study where to hit. A strike to a vital point is most effective only in a small area about the point. Thus, the phoenix eye fist is particularly suitable for such strikes because of its penetrating power and its small area. Besides nerve pressure points, known in western medicine, acupuncture points are also taught, called Dim-Mak.

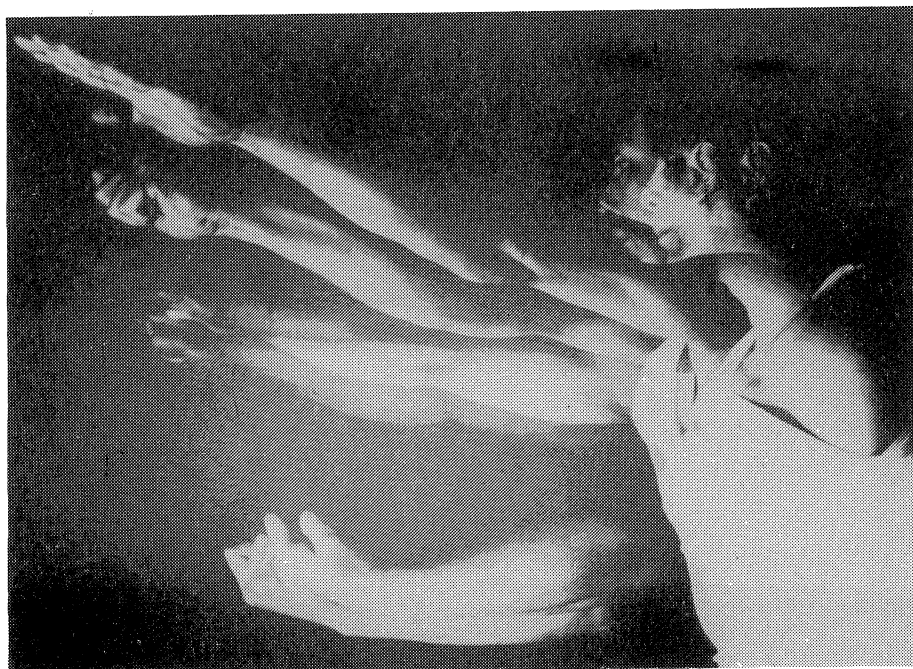


Photo No.3

Devastating Punches, Kicks And Strikes:

Punching, striking and kicking exercises which develop the ability to incapacitate an opponent with a

force.

Finally, your hands and feet should be conditioned so that you don't hurt yourself when you punch or kick. In praying Mantis, this is done through internal training which minimizes the danger of hurting yourself. hard objects are not struck. The bones are

Ability To Block Multiple Punches Strikes And Kicks:

The blocks commonly practised in forms and drills should be applicable for blocking combinations of techniques. The mwashu block seen earlier, is used to block multiple straight punches. It is a small sweeping motion which cuts and redirects the opponent's power. Many of the blocks used in karate do not work in the ring or in the street because of their hardness against multiple attacks. Soft style blocking is particularly important in self

defence, especially if attacked by multiple opponents or weapons.

Groundwork and Chin Na.

Groundwork is especially important when facing an opponent with grappling knowledge or multiple opponents. Many are able to rush at you taking a few punches in order to get you to the ground. Therefore one should be able to grapple on the ground as well as perform locks and holds and to counter throws. Short power is extremely valuable on the ground. With practice you can punch just as hard as if you were standing.

Weapons:

In Praying Mantis System, self defence is practised for all possible types of attacks with classical Chinese weapons in which you are armed or unarmed and so is your opponent. This may seem impractical, since you are not likely to be attacked with a kwando. However, people have been attacked with sticks, axes, knives, etc., all of which are used like some Chinese weapon. The ability to use improvised weapons such as canes, sticks, aerosol sprays etc., is also developed.

The System Eventually Reduces To No System:

Many martial artists believe that they must have techniques for all situations. Therefore they keep learning more and more techniques, frequently studying many different styles. Some eventually learn as many as 30 different defenses to a single attack. How can you defend yourself successfully if you must decide instantly whether or not to use 10 or 29?

The purpose of the two man forms and sensitivity exercises in Praying Mantis is not to learn more techniques, but to learn to react without thinking. The system is ultimately reduced to no technique. Only the principle of yin and yang remains.

Fighting Spirit:

There is an old saying in Chinese "First comes courage, then comes strength, then comes kung-fu". There are many instances where an unskilled fighter has beaten a highly skilled one. Some people cannot hit another person under any circumstances.

Fighting spirit was developed in ancient times by having one man fight one opponent after another. For example, in some Japanese schools of swordsmanship, such battles with wooden swords went on for days. If a trainee quit from exhaustion, his opponent was instructed to beat him with the sword. Such training taught one not to quit. However, more importantly, the swordsman frequently became enlightened with tremendous improvement in his skill. Perhaps this improvement occurred because the trainee's physical strength was exhausted and he was forced to rely upon technique and inner power.

In modern day kung fu, the ability to withstand pain and the determination not to quit is fostered by holding stances for a long time. Before the Praying Mantis system was passed to Sifu Mark, he was tested for a few days. Perhaps the purpose of such tests was not only to determine the candidate's knowledge, but also to promote endurance and fighting spirit.

Ch'i Development:

Praying Mantis relies on inner power and sensitivity. Thus, its practitioners can continue to improve with age. Ch'i Kung exercises for health and longevity are also practised.

Master Mark's system of Praying Mantis has been used as a model for self defense because it is more intact and has more practical techniques than most classical systems. It is not claimed to be superior to any system. Ultimately, fighting ability reduces to individual skill and not to the system studied.

Doctor Eisen teaches in New Jersey and he can be contacted by phoning him in the USA on 215 7878604.

The Legacy Of A Classic Taiji Master:

By Leroy Clark, Seattle WA USA.

In his 1948 book, "T'ai Chi Ch'uan Explained", Master Tung Ying-chieh states that its purpose is to develop the quintessence of the Chinese culture and reveal its true heritage. It was his intention, in his maturity, to share his experience after a lifetime of seeking knowledge and skill.

Of absorbing interest to this student at least is his description of the slow form. Master Tung indicated that forty years prior, he observed taijiquan performed by master Yang Soa-lin, the son of Yang Feng-hou (King-Hou), the eldest son of the founder of the Yang style, Yang Lu-Ch'an. Yang Soa-lin was taught by his uncle, Yang Ban-hou. This form was compact and well knit. It was neither quick nor slow when compared with the current forms. The form of Yang Shou-hou, (Cheng-fu's older brother) was compact and quick. The form of Yang Cheng-fu was extensive, soft and slow.

Master Tung, in his maturity, consolidated the good points from these three masters and created his own. His form is condensed and also neither quick nor slow when compared to the forms of others. Neophytes are counseled to learn the form of Master Yang Cheng-fu for basic training.

The claim that the method used to gain significant skill has been lost or watered down, is simply not true. Perseverance and diligence will eventually reward anyone who studies and practices incessantly. Intelligence is also a factor in attaining skill in taijiquan. Other prerequisites to being taught were morality and humility. Teaching of any depth was limited to diligent, industrious, moral, intelligent students. Proper

respect for the teacher was certainly required for a student to be accepted as a disciple. Master Tung also chose to share twenty four of the old 'Thirteen Postures Classics' handed down to him by the Yang family.

A second matter of absorbing interest to this student, is the biography by Tung's student Mr Lee Qi-chia.

As a young boy, Tung first began to learn martial arts from Master Liu Ying-Zhou, a friend of Tung's grandfather. Liu, over seventy years at the time, taught him only the method of grasping the bird's tail and oral explanations of the martial arts. Later he learned the complete form from Lee Zhung-kwei, a student of Master Liu. The following year, Liu introduced him to the famous Master Li Xiang-Yuang, a wealthy resident of Wei Ning village. Li was impressed by the young Tung's manner and accepted him as a disciple. Li demonstrated his skill by a mere finger touch that caused Tung fierce pain deep within the bone.

Tung practised conscientiously more than a year at the home of Master Li. After outstanding progress, Li suggested that he return home to continue his practice. He did and studied both the civil and martial aspects of the art. He seldom ventured out. Later he went to Beijing to learn from the famous Yang family. He was told that the Yangs did not teach outsiders. Yet he thought that with such a strong desire to learn and showing a wholehearted respect for the teacher that the Yangs would not refuse to teach him. After all, Yang lu-ch'an had learned from Chen Chang-H'sin. Later he was in fact accepted by Master Yang Cheng-fu as his disciple. Still much later, when Yang Cheng-fu travelled South to teach, Tung followed him. There he stayed with Yang Cheng-fu over three years learning taijiquan. Later still, Tung himself travelled over the Southern countryside. While in Suchou, Master Li Xiang-Yuang, his former teacher came to visit. Li told him that there were many skilled martial arts masters in the South and that it would detract from the fame of his teacher should Tung be defeated during a confrontation.

With that, Li stayed with Tung in Suchou over a year teaching him deeper skills in the use of internal strength. Master Li emphasized and demanded enlightenment and hard work, and successful skills.

Around 1932, Yang Cheng-fu was invited to teach in Guangzhou. Tung Ying-chieh again accompanied him. After the death of Yang in 1936, Tung continued to teach in Guangzhou with Yang Sau-chung the eldest son of Cheng-fu. During the Japanese invasion, Tung lived in Macau. There he pursued interests of painting, calligraphy and writing.

Master Tung Ying-chieh, and others left us a great legacy. His stated intentions were noble and open minded. One has only to look at his old photos to see the lively spirit reflected in his eyes. As students we should take painstaking care to learn from the succinct, profound wisdom of these classic masters. Therein lies the path to success in this deep, internal art.

Leroy Clark is a student of the Yang and Wu styles of taijiquan. He learned the Yang style originally from Mr Pang Tze-yau and his student Robert Fong. Mr Pang was a student of Master Tung Ying-chieh. Prior to beginning his study and practice of taijiquan, Leroy Clark was a disciple of Mr John SS Leong of the Hung Gar system. To write to Leroy Clark, send your letters to us and we will forward them to him.

The Wonderful Hand

By Alan J Sims New York USA

Although there are many books in English dealing with several aspects of taijiquan which are very important, I feel that there are certain aspects that have received little or inadequate attention altogether.

If important and profound principles are not even recognized, not to mention practised, to call ourselves serious practitioners of Taijiquan is a joke.

Large schools, many students, winning trophies, and writing books for that matter, have little if anything to do with the mastery of even one aspect of taijiquan not to mention several aspects or being an actual master of the entire system.

One of the keys to reaching high aspirations is found in deep inspiration.

Without being particularly partial to this or that style, I hope that the following translations from Chen Chia-Jen's book on the Chen family's Taijiquan, will inspire those reading it towards high aspirations, which they may receive from perhaps other books and literature written only in Chinese at this time.

I have transcribed as much as possible as soon as possible, what I felt to be neglected in terms of important principles of taijiquan.

MOVEMENTS DIRECTED BY CONSCIOUSNESS AND BREATHING UNDER THE COMMAND OF THE BRAIN:

Quotes from the classical texts say; "direct the energy with the heart, make sure the energy is well sunken in as is to be sucked or absorbed into the bones, direct the body with the energy, make sure that there is a sense of smoothness so that one could coordinate with the heart, with the heart as the commander and the energy as the flag".

"Focus the consciousness where one's attention is directed, and not on the energy. Focus on the energy leads to stagnancy".

We can tell from these quotes that taiji is a martial art strongly directed by consciousness. And also a martial art that applies the theory of energy flow.

As one practices the art, one should direct the energy flow with the heart. The heart sends the command the energy passes on the command. Every single move should be directed by consciousness, and not with force. First, the consciousness moves and then the form stirs. Only in this way could one achieve the principle of consciousness and not with force. First, the consciousness moves and then the form stirs. Only in this way could one achieve the principle of consciousness and the energy arriving simultaneously.

If the energy and the power arrive together, the movement would display a sense of calmness. After lengthy practice, the energy could be wrapped into the bones, and at this level one would have reached the deepest level of transporting the energy.

Therefore, taijiquan is a form of motion applying mostly the consciousness and the energy. Using consciousness and not raw power is the first characteristic of taiji.

INTERNAL ENERGY AND THE USAGE OF CONSCIOUSNESS:

As was mentioned before, the energy is commanded by the consciousness. But this energy is not what we normally refer to in the word ch'i as the air that is breathed in and out through the lungs. It is a kind of internal energy. In the classical theories of Chinese medicine, this type of energy is referred to as "vital energy" of "central energy". The kind of energy that travels between the meridians, the kind of energy that comes from the Mother.

In acupuncture and qigong therapies, this term and the theory on which it is based, are

still used extensively. Martial artists also refer to this kind of energy as "central energy" "internal energy", "internal power".

Only as one practices to a point when one can actually feel and command this type of energy could one say that one has reached a level of sophistication.

To summarize, even since the ancient days whether in classical medical theories, martial art circles, or in classical Chinese religion, the existence of this kind of energy is acknowledged by all schools, and its existence has also been attested to by practical experiments.

Modern science has not yet determined the essence of this kind of qi, and the scholars who study the meridians of classical Chinese medicine do not have consistent interpretation either.

Therefore, one couldn't follow any unified theory. For example, some say that qi is not very different from what we refer to nowadays as the nerve. Some say it is the biological electricity, some say it is a special kind of function in the human body. Everyone appears to have a different interpretation and further exploration is still awaited.

But the physiological phenomena in the body are holistic and integral. It is not possible so say that the consciousness moves and the nerve biological electricity does not move.

Therefore when we try to illustrate the so-called qi, we should assume temporarily that the so-called nerve biological electricity or oxygen within the blood are one single thing or function within the body that is yet to be determined.

As one practices, taiji consciousness is constantly emphasized. The movements of the body are but manifestations of this consciousness.

When the consciousness is stored inside it is a process of rejuvenation of internal energy. When the consciousness is displayed outside, it is the vibration of the energy. The energy could be sent from inside out, and can also be stored from outside in.

Although the practice of taiji requires moving the body with qi, one should not focus the mind on the transportation of qi. One should instill a sense of consciousness into the motions. Otherwise one would have a stagnant expression and the qi would not travel smoothly but randomly, and the consciousness and qi would both suffer.

Just because of this reason as one practices taiji, the external expression is very much emphasized. Because the expression is the manifestation of the internal mood and consciousness. And internal consciousness and external expression cannot be separated for even one minute. At the slightest separation, external consciousness will travel at random. This point must be constantly remembered.

In Chen style taiji, it is emphasized that movement must contain soft resilience and hard power, both the circle and the square, both slow and fast motion, and opening and closing. We think that these combinations correspond well with the physiological rules of the body. It is understood that when the body moves, the biological electricity is enhanced, and when the body is still, the electricity would be decreased.

The hard, soft, opening, closing, fast and slow motions very appropriately enhance the surging and falling of the electricity level. At the enhancement of the biological electricity the blood circulation will be enhanced, and at the dropping, the oxygen and the blood will rapidly disintegrate from one another and the practitioner will feel the flow of qi.

Under the normal circumstances, the nerve cannot remain at a constant level of excitement for too long a period. Therefore, usually the biological electricity is displayed in shapes of constantly vibration waves, and the surging and falling of hard, soft, fast, squares, circles, correspond very neatly with this rule.

From the viewpoint of the energy, the rules of Chen taiji correspond well with the scientific discoveries. It was said before that exter-

nal energy and external expression correspond to one another and both correspond with internal consciousness.

The central link of the manifestation of consciousness outside is to instill the external motion with internal consciousness, and to display a sense of concentration of energy, strength of the will, and liveliness without stagnancy through and only through the motions and the actions.

But the focus of attention and speed of the focus have the same function as the internal nerve system. They have the wave and vibrating characteristics of constant enhancement and constant descending. Therefore, only with focused energy could one avoid the straying of the mind towards unimportant matters, but it is not possible to maintain a constant level of attention for too long a period of time during the practice. In fact, even within an instant, the focus of the attention also displays a sense of vibration.

Therefore if during the time of practicing, one adopts the approach of the constant (maintaining) level of concentration, this would not only be violating the physiological rules, but the very stability of the focus itself. In order to stabilize the focus of attention, taiji adopts a series of approaches that correspond better with the nature of one's attention, such intervals of fast and slow motion, opening and closing, mutual birth of squares and circles, and the unification of hard and soft movements. All these rules cause a natural sense of vibration of the consciousness and the energy.

And also cause a coordination between external expression and the internal vibration of energy. Therefore, the whole movement(s) would enhance the internal energy and also the external energy.

Because taiji is movement directed by consciousness, anyone who practices over a considerable length of time would be able to guide the qi to different parts of the body through the focus of the thought. Some people practice the form on a daily basis, correcting their movements constantly with precisely the above aim in mind. After the practice has reached a stable level, the exciting and repressing function within the skins of the brain, would precisely replace one another according to certain procedures, and the muscles will also be contracting and relaxing with smoothness. Even with sudden stimulation this smoothness will not be harmed. To have achieved this level means that the movement of the muscles and the internal organs have established a very stable coordinating relationship. Whenever the consciousness arrives, the qi would arrive, and when the qi arrives, the power would arrive.

THE REALIZATION OF THE MOVEMENT DIRECTED BY THE CONSCIOUSNESS:

What should be pointed out is that in using the consciousness, taiji is the same as any other kind of meditation, like sitting, standing, or lying down meditation. They all practice the focus of consciousness and the qi.

But taiji is practiced through movement, and tranquility is sought through the movement. Therefore, it is called movement with consciousness. Other kinds of meditation contain no movement and they only seek tranquility. The two cannot be combined or mixed.

Because taiji practice uses both this inside and the outside, and seeks tranquility within the movement, one should first seek to cultivate the internal movement of energy.

In one classical text it is stated that: "the form should be like an eagle about to snatch

a rabbit and the expression should be like a cat about to pounce on a mouse". To reach this level of internal and external integration, and mutual reinforcement, one must meet the demands of the seven characteristics mentioned later on. That is to say that only by realizing those seven characteristics will the movement of consciousness be realized. In other words, although they only exist in fact in one unified body, with internal connection to one another.

The Martial Art Vs. The Self Defence

By Ed Star Fresno California

Whether we study an internal or external system, with the likely exception of western boxing, there is a big difference as to what we practice as a martial art (form training, push hands, san sau) and what we can use of it on the street. And before I get a group of angry Asian Masters at my door offering to re-arrange my limbs, allow me to point out that they may be the exception either through training or ability, but not the rule.

Since I don't claim that much knowledge on martial arts in general, allow me to centre on the use of Taiji as my focus point. I do believe that at least 30% of the taiji postures can be used effectively in the first few seconds of a fight, but that does not necessarily mean that the best techniques are the ones from the taiji form. Likewise this also means that as much as 70% of the Taiji postures were meant for an earlier time in Chinese history when people fought very much differently from today and as such are very antiquated and are of value mainly for their ability to train the body to have the balance and flexibility, which by the way is no small thing. And while I am making fairly broad generalizations and using percentages in a somewhat arbitrary manner, the point I'm trying to make hopefully will bear itself out. The main value of any martial art is as a personal 'way' or path of physical excellence (you'll notice that I didn't use the overworked term, 'spiritual') and as such is far more useful to the individual than the mere means of boxing skill. Taijiquan in particular, putting the postures aside for the

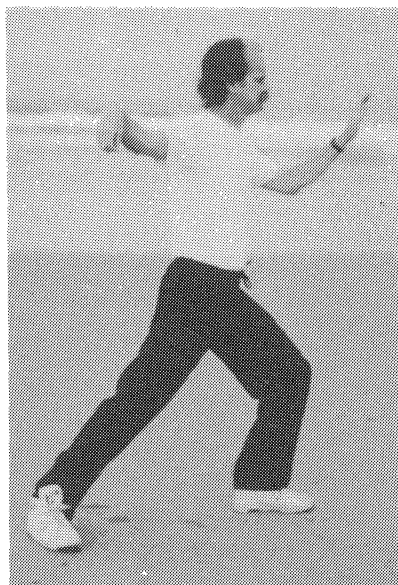
moment, teach the body structure, balance, flexibility, timing, distance appreciation and internalism (a natural physical way of centering, an instinctual knowing), 100% of which is useful in any situation, street fighting, business, domestic, playtime, etc. Of course some might suggest that if this is so, why not just practice self defence tactics directly and not martial arts. Well, the problem is that survival skills are too basic (the constant repetition of a few straight forward, non flowery hard hitting techniques) and lack philosophical depth, do not have the ability to internalize movement (which is not the same thing as honing a technique) and maybe even more importantly are terribly boring. It's pretty hard to get excited about going to the garage or backyard to strike a bag for a few hundred times, but on the other hand when striking the bag is just one aspect of a far more indepth art, the drudgery isn't quite as tiresome.

Self defense also has another requirement that a martial art doesn't necessarily have, the few exceptions that it shares in common is penetrating power, speed and a willingness to work through pain (a strong will to survive). The one technique that at least seems in the short run to contradict the martial art view, is to instantly get extremely angry (sorry but in order to hurt another human being it is often very necessary for the average person to get really pissed off, and to do so instantly!). I might add that even the anger can be centred, it is a lot harder than the control of about anything else but if you work on it, it can be done.

If this article offends some, I apologize, but I spent a few years in East LA when I was a young teenager and if anyone has fantasies that they are going to be standing in the calm centre with several thugs surrounding them, well, there are times I wish I was Bruce Lee too! And of course I remind the reader that I'm not talking about fighting someone who has had too much to drink at the bar or anyone else who while they might wish to bloody your nose, don't have any predetermined intention to cripple or kill you, though robbers are fair game.

Lastly, this article purposely excludes the use of dim-mak in the taiji posture applications, as I am not that good at it and it does represent extreme deadly force which is not the intent of this written bit, besides my approach to taiji is very physical and mundane.

Edward Hyles Star, director of the Three Stars Taiji Association: Yang Style T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Pa-Kua Chang and Ta-Ch'eng. And Murshid, the Suhrawardiyya Sufi Order of the East.



Ed Star; Single Whip

Chin-Na

Chin-na is an essential part of one's taiji training and so I thought that an article by one of our expert WTBA members would be of interest to all. Hence the inclusion in this issue of an insight into this sometimes misunderstood grappling art. (Editor)

Essentials Of Correct Chin-Na

By Richard Mooney Sifu Florida USA

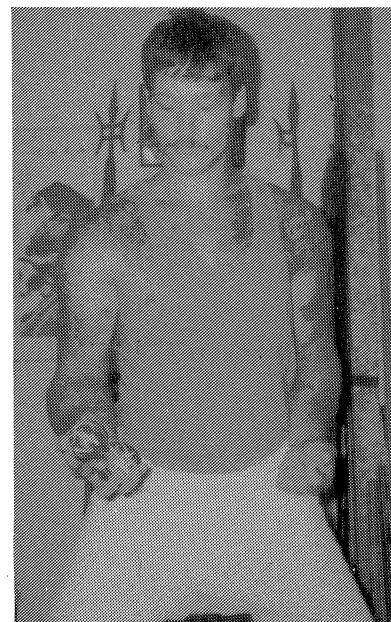
Grab the Joint; Twist". So goes the old adage of Shao-lin grapplers. With the growing interest about the seizing art of Shao-lin Kung-fu called Chin-na, many people are becoming negligent of certain essential points. The following points that will be detailed must be stressed from the onset of training, lest the technique should fail if attempted in a real life situation.

First and foremost of these essential points are a strong grip and powerful fingers. If you cannot catch and hold an opponent's limb, or access pressure points for Tien-Hsueh attacks, then it will avail you naught to study Chin-na.

The following four basic exercises which have been handed down to the followers of Shao-lin have been designed to help the novice gain tremendous strength, endurance and stamina in the fingers, hands, wrists and forearms.

1. Exer Balls.

These devices also go under the Chinese name of "Bao-Ding". They are hollow metal spheres that are rolled around in the practitioner's palm, in either a clock or counter clockwise manner. These devices serve to build up dexterity and strength of the fingers and hand. In addition they also help to stimulate the acupuncture points located in the hand and are useful in promoting general overall good health. They come in a variety of sizes and weights. In the absence of the iron balls you may substitute golf balls, ping pong balls, billiard balls etc.. If you desire something heavier, try small shot puts. To do the exercises, simply rotate them in a clockwise



Sifu Mooney Using His "Exer Balls"

direction; 3 sets of 30 reps constitute a good beginning workout.

2. Sand exercise.



Sand Exercise #2



Sand Exercise #4

Also called "Tiger's Claw Grabs Sand", this is a popular Southern Shao-lin Tiger Claw exercise. To do this exercise you will need to make a trip to your local "K-Mart" and purchase a large plastic planter capable of holding about 50 lbs (20 kgs) of sand. Then go to your local "Scottys" (got me on that one Richard, ed) household store and pick up some playground sand. Make sure that the sand has been marked "sterile". I must stress

the term sterile because when doing this exercise, the pores of your skin will open, and if there is any bacteria present in the sand, then you will be opening yourself up to an infection. If you live near a beach, and want to get some sand from it, I suggest that you put the sand in a pan and place it in an oven at 450 degrees for about 4 hours. This will serve to kill any organisms that may be present. After you have baked the sand, make sure to sift it of any debris that may remain.

This exercise will help you to develop a tenacious crushing grip, so when an opponent encounters it, he will find it almost impossible to escape. 3 sets of 50 reps constitute a good workout for this exercise.

To do the exercise, assume a medium high ma-bu (horse stance) stance, with the top lip of the bucket at navel height. Use cinder blocks of a sturdy table to support the bucket at that height. With your body one fist width away from the bucket, gently thrust your hand, in the form of a tiger's claw, into the sand. Firmly and strongly grasp a handful of sand and slowly exhale and crush it out from between your fingers.

Do not wildly thrust your fingers into the sand or shrug your shoulders when doing it, as this would detract from the exercise, which is solely designed for your gripping strength.

3. Yellow Dragon Claws The Air.

This is a simple exercise that may be done from any standing or sitting position. Simply hold your arms out in front of your body at shoulder height and clench and unclench your fists with speed as your primary focus. As you become more and more adept at this exercise, make your grabs tighter and tighter with a cadence of "Grab-Hold-Squeeze-Release". 3 sets of 100 reps is a good starting workout for this particular exercise. After a time, you may want to alternate between fast and slow. This exercise will build up endurance and stamina and will serve to build up your forearms after a short period of time, making for a quick speedy and powerful grip.

4. Bamboo Sways in the Breeze.

For this exercise you will need to get a 6 foot (1.7 Metres) staff with a diameter of 1 inch (2 cm). Assume a medium horse stance, raise your arm up to your shoulder height in front of your body, with your fist targeting the centerline of an imaginary opponent.

If you have weak wrists you may wish to grab the staff in the middle, so as not to put undue strain and stress upon your wrist joint. Rotate the staff to your outside and exhale, upon returning to the starting position, inhale. Make sure that your wrist remains straight as you do this exercise.

As your wrist strength increases you will want to slide your hand further down the staff until you can hold it by the end of the staff. Thereafter you may want to weight the end of your staff with fishing weights.

This is a very valuable exercise that cannot be stressed enough. It serves to accomplish 3 tasks at the same time:

1. Coordinate the breath and body motion, a major factor for getting the most out of your

strength when committed to an offensive/defensive action.

2. Develops a tremendous grab and twist ability, while also strengthening the ligaments and tendons of the wrist.

3. Takes your fist through the three basic punching positions - Top fist, Standing fist, and Laying fist. Of course you know that a proper alignment of the wrist to the fist is paramount for correct and effective punching!

25 reps constitute one set, and 3 of these make for a good workout.

Further Essentials:

In order for Chin-na Technique to be effective, you must keep to these guidelines:

a. It is the threat of immediate pain and injury that acts as a deterrent against any opponent. Therefore, you must insure that when you apply a grab that it has conviction, and will serve to deny the opponent any range of motion, other than the way you wish for him to move.

b: Control is the major factor, both in the training environment and in an actual confrontation on the street. When training you do not wish to harm your partner, and if you get into a scrap on the street, you may only use enough force to make the opponent cease his activity. The use of unnecessary force is looked upon very dimly by prosecuting attorneys during trials. You may be legally sued for any undue force that results in injury to the opponent, that will leave you with a lot of medical bills to pay, and perhaps a stay in the care of the local gaol (jail) - where you may have to use your skills on a rather regular basis.

c: In a Chin-na technique that puts the opponent on the ground, face down, make sure you ground his shoulder and/or elbow. This will help to deny him the ability to counter effectively or attempt to nullify your technique. You should also firmly brace his back to prevent him from rolling out or twisting away.

d: If the technique puts him face up, make sure to ground him on his side, facing away from you. This way he won't be able to kick, punch or grab at you with his free hand. If possible, you may also wish to grab one of his legs and bow his body towards you.

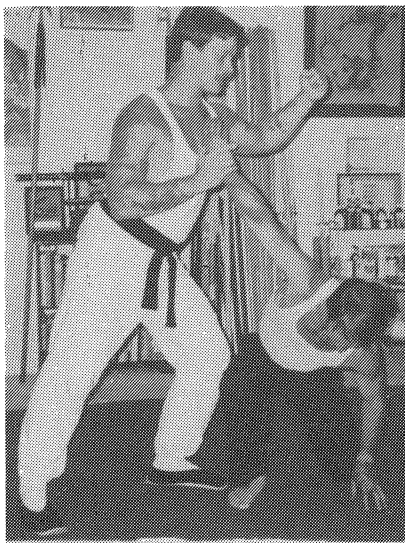
If he happens to land on his back, you should deny him the chance to kick or punch you by inserting a knee between his chest and elbow; nutcracker fashion. Any motion he attempts to make will be easily detected and countered by leveraging down on his wrist, thereby endangering his elbow joint.

e: If you use a technique that will leave the opponent on his feet, make sure his heels are off the ground, this way he will be left without root. No root - no power. A good example of this is seen in a standing elbow bar upon the shoulder of the defender. If his feet are flat on the ground, it will be relatively easy for his to counter by punching or kicking you. By stressing the opponent's elbow joint, he is in immediate pain. For him to alleviate this pain he must stand up on tip toe, thus wasting his own energy. Use 4 ounces to uphold 1000 pounds.

f: In employing Chin-na techniques against punches, try to off balance the opponent and

take advantage of his loss of control. If you are to the opponent's inside, let's say a roundhouse punch, you may want to apply a tien hseh to his biceps, this will temporarily cause paralysis of the muscle, allowing you to follow through more effectively.

g: Also keep in mind that pressure point attacks serve dual roles: They cause the opponent pain - which uses energy, and they also serve to distract him from what you are doing. By way of example; if I were to grab a wrist pressure point, your attention would temporarily rivet to that point and focus on the pain.



Sifu Richard Mooney is a 20 year veteran of both Chinese and Japanese martial arts. His specialty is Chin-na Joint Locking techniques of the Southern Shao-lin School of the Tiger Crane Fist. In addition, he also holds 4th dan in Shinto Yoshin Ryu Ju -Jutsu. He can be reached in writing at the Sarasota Shao-lin Academy, 4655 Flatbush Ave, Sarasota Florida 34233-1920 USA Phone: (813) 923-2077. Richard M Mooney represents the WTBA in his area.

BEN LO

By Rolly Brown USA

Ben Lo is one of the recognized main three or four instructors who learnt personally from Cheng Man-Ching. Many claim this personal instruction but it still up to only three or four who can claim seniority along with William and Abraham Liu (Ed.)

In 1949, Benjamin Pang Jen Lo was a very sick young man. Diagnosed with a nervous system disorder, he was very weak when his family referred him to a famous herbalist recently arrived in Taiwan from China. "When I took the professor's prescription to the herb store, the pharmacist refused to fill it" Ben recalls. "He said, 'You can't take these herbs! They'll really hurt you'" With further assurances, and the revelation that the professor was president of the National Society of Herbalists on the mainland, Ben got his herbs, but the disease was persistent. Prof. Cheng told him to study taijiquan for therapy. Ben asked if Cheng could recommend a teacher. "Oh," replied Cheng, "I know a little bit of taijiquan. Perhaps I could teach you". Thus began Ben's 26 years of instruction with grandmaster Cheng Man-ch'ing, during which time he has become one of the most well respected taijiquan practitioners in the world.

At age 63, Ben has what appears to be the body of a 25 year old athlete. In demonstrating his adherence to taiji principles, he inspires his students with an uncompromised level of achievement.

"When I first studied with Ben", one student commented, "he was in his mid fifties. One day he demonstrated a posture, 'tan pien hsia shih' (snake creeps down or squatting single whip). He did it perfectly, with the back perfectly straight and both feet flat. His left leg was relaxed; straight, but not locked. Then, to demonstrate the separation of weight, he lifted his

left foot one inch above the ground and held it there. It would have been very impressive even from a younger master. Ben still demonstrates this when he teaches this posture.

No Secrets

There is no secret to what Ben Lo does. The result has been obtained through hard work and the unflagging courage (yes, that's the word) required to hold relaxed and correct postures for long periods of time. "No burning, no earning, no pain, no gain" he says as the students struggle through yet another class of posture holding. "Prof. Cheng kept no secrets. Some people have said that they received secret techniques from Professor. Don't believe that because it's not true. He taught everyone the same. The secret is to follow the principles and work hard" he said, "To practice taijiquan, better follow these five basic principles:

1/ relax, 2/ keep the body upright. 3/ separate yin and yang (full and empty leg), 4/ turn the waist, and 5/ beautiful lady's hand".

It's easy to follow one or two of these principles, but much more difficult to simultaneously follow all five. The first principle (relax), is the hardest of all, partially because it has no limit. To relax, you must not only bend the hip joint and sink down as low as possible into your stance; you must also resist the temptation to lock the muscles of this hip area. Everything must stay relaxed. But this causes the legs to burn after a while. When the legs really start burning, the students start to forget all the principles.

Students who have attended Ben's seminars have become familiar with his good natured but serious chiding. "You know it, why don't you do it!" has become a catch phrase to many. It's a challenge to relax under the utmost stress, and follow the principles espoused in the classics.

To promote understanding of these classics, Ben, who studied classical Chinese writings while in college, has collaborated on the English transla-

tions of several important texts, including, *THE ESSENCE OF TAI CHI CHUAN*, Prof. Chen Wei Ming's *TAI CHI CHUAN TA WEN*, and *CHENG TZU'S THIRTEEN TREATISES ON TAI CHI CHUAN*. These books have been of enormous importance in the dissemination of taijiquan information in the english speaking world. They often feature Ben's beautiful Chinese running script calligraphy as well.

Of all Ben's skills, though, the most lauded in his pushing hands ability. In the past three annual US taijiquan Championships held at Winchester, Virginia, Ben, who doesn't even encourage his students to compete, has seen many of the gold medals in the four weight classes go to his proteges. Lenzie Williams, (16 years with Ben) has twice been push hands grand champion. (Another quarter of the gold medals have gone to students of William CC Chen or Yu Cheng-Zsiang of New York, both of whom studied with Professor Cheng.)

PUSH HANDS

Ben has little to say about push hands technique, but emphasizes the principles, especially relaxation. Students who spend hours scrutinizing his push hands, looking for technical secrets, come away totally baffled. Eventually, it becomes clear to them that Ben's push hands ability is totally interrelated with his high level of relaxation, which, in turn stems from his form training.

In pushing with students, Ben mostly says, "You're too tense", "You're stiff as a board, and relax", meanwhile gently knocking the student off balance or more energetically bouncing him off the wall. If the student is open to learning, he'll gradually realize that Ben's pushes are showing him exactly where he is to stiff, as well as reminding him that relaxation "in the moment" is fruitless if one hasn't put in the hard work which gradually raises relaxation to higher levels. These high levels are demonstrated when the tables are turned and the student attempts to push Ben.

I've had this opportunity, and, in ten full minutes of pushing, tugging, twisting and manoeuvring, I've come away with strained muscles and virtually no success. Many people define various martial arts as being either hard or soft. Ben isn't soft, and he isn't hard. He's just relaxed; very relaxed. If he chose to, he could easily neutralize my attempts by yielding, but, using his root, he was all but immovable. No tricks, no gimmicks, no sleight of hand, just real gongfu. Skill achieved through relaxation.

Ben says, "When doing the postures, everything should stay relaxed". If you press your belly, it should feel like a water bag, not an ice bag. The buttocks muscles should stay soft, even during the kicks. In postures where the heel rests on the ground, the toe shouldn't be pulled upward too sharply, as this will tense the leg muscles. If the body leans forward, the back muscles will tense up. Most errors of position can be corrected simply by relaxing, but correct alignment must be maintained. Don't let the knee sag inward, as this may cause injury. In 'beautiful lady's hand' the wrist must remain straight. When Ben was young, he found the photos of Yang Cheng-fu and took them to Prof. Cheng, asking about the bent wrist in yang's postures. (The hand was pulled upwards.) He told Ben, "Unless you can hold that position and keep the hand totally relaxed, you better use beautiful lady's hand."

These are the so called secrets of attaining tai chi expertise. Easy to understand, but difficult to execute. Ben has done all he can to spread these principles of tai chi throughout the world. Embodying the higher principle he says, "When Prof. Cheng told us to point the front foot straight, he also meant for us to follow a straight path in life. When he said we should strive to be upright, he was talking about more than just tai chi ch'uan".

We hope to have some more on Ben Lo now that he has consented to this rare article in T'ai Chi Combat & Healing.

Rolly Brown

Rolly Brown began studying Chinese martial arts in 1973, and has studied T'ai Chi Ch'uan extensively with William C.C. Chen, Ben Lo, Erle Montaigue, and Maggie Newman. He is also an acupuncturist and an award winning guitarist, (to say the least, Ed.) See the advertisement in this issue for Rolly's contact number.

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- **No.3** *Pauchui San-Sau*. Including small and large san-sau, the two person sets from both systems and solo fast explosive taiji forms. This san-sau is not the normal run of the mill Yang Cheng-Fu version but the more explosive Chang Yiu-Chun version he learnt from Yang Shou-hou.
- **No.15** *Combat Wrestling And Dim-Mak*. This video contains the best from the West And East. Many believe that Dim-Mak was the first Taiji. Taiji was a form created by Chang Sang-feng to cover up the most deadly dim-mak (death touch) strikes that he invented.
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- **No.21** *T'ai Chi Secrets*: This is a 3 hour video (2 parts in the NTSC system.) Containing never before published information about the most advanced 4th level of both the Yang Cheng-fu and the Old or Yang Lu-Ch'an styles of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Both forms are gone through uninterrupted and then explained. Also contains the little known Dim-Mak Applications of each posture from both forms. And, if that isn't enough, I have included the 12 secret hand techniques. Secret because they were so dangerous.

All of the 21 videos from Moon Ta-Gu Books are available from us in the PAL system for Europe and Australasia but Wayfarer in the USA handle our Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11. In the NTSC System.

Write to Moon Ta-Gu Books for a free CattleDog at our address for the Magazine.

IN THE JUNE ISSUE:

The June issue will be the beginning of our 2nd year publication. Many of your subscriptions will be due with this issue and there will be a notice on the envelope when you receive it. Please send in your next year's subscription promptly as we run fairly close to the wind and will keep this Magazine running no matter what.

- The 2nd part interview with Chang Yiu-Chun. Continuing his revelations about Taijiquan and how to use it.
- An article from Michael Babin on H'sin-I
- One from Robin Whitewood on H'sin-I.
- Notes On The Chen Family's First Routine: By Alan Sims USA.
- Fu Sheng-Yuan continues his interview on pushing hands et al.
- And much more.
- An article from China of Yang Zhenduo, son of Yang Cheng-fu.
- A revealing article from the archives of China Wushu on Pa-kua chang.

Please note that we may not have enough room for all of these articles so don't be disappointed if they are not all there, they will appear in the next edition of T'ai Chi Combat & Healing.

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