

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO: The Internal Martial/Healing Arts

# *Combat & Healing*

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## **QIGONG**

**Reptiles & Rejection of Rules**

**On Teaching**

**Taiji & Left Right  
Hemispheres**

**Mind in the Martial Arts. 2**

**Seeing with your Mind**

**Conscious Evolution**

**PLUS**

**WTBA News, New Videos  
etc.**



# COMBAT & HEALING

The Magazine of the World Taiji Boxing Association

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## FRONT COVER

A Couple of Ninjas disguised as Elephants. Good disguise isn't it!

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# QIGONG

By Wally Simpson

**Q**igong Practice can be traced back to at least 400 AD. Though there are hints of it dating back 3000 years.

## What is Qigong?

The name Qigong can be broken into Qi meaning Energy and or energy on the verge of becoming matter. Gong means work. So Qigong's meaning roughly translates as 'energy work'. While there are many forms of Qigong, there are only 3 basic types.

- 1/ The 1<sup>st</sup> type the individual does for themselves.
- 2/ The 2<sup>nd</sup> type that a Qigong master does to you. These gifted people are quite rare though there are many who claim this ability.
- 3/ The 3<sup>rd</sup> type is a special Martial Qigong.

All Qigongs have health and well-being as part of the benefits of their practice regardless of what type they are. There are specific Qigongs from all 3 types that treat specific diseases or imbalances within the body (often called Medical Qigong in much of the literature available in English), examples of these are given later.

All Qigongs have health and well-being as part of the benefits of their practice regardless of what type they are. There are specific Qigongs from all 3 types that treat specific diseases or imbalances within the body (often called Medical Qigong in much of the literature available in English), examples of these are given later. The first type can also be seen as a standing or moving Meditation, where we learn to empty the mind / consciousness of the chatter of ever day life and place this void (our consciousness / Shen) in our Dantian. From here we learn how to harmonize and move Qi within our bodies with the intent of becoming / staying healthy, happy, secure, contented and balanced individuals. The secure aspect hints at the Yin and Yang of successful Qigong practice, it is of both a healing and martial type. Like Yin and Yang neither can exist without the other. One of the aspects of healing is building the Wei Q, a very

Yang and aggressive Qi, which protects us from invasion by external pathogenic entities. Another is Ying Qi, a more Yin and nourishing energy which not only nourishes our body and spirit but also grants us the stillness we need to for healing. There is of course a Yin aspect to Wei Qi and a Yang aspect to Ying Qi. The Yin aspect of Wei Qi moistens and nourishes the exterior (Skin, body hair etc) while the Yang aspect of Ying Qi protects the interior and provides function.

The first type can also be seen as a standing or moving Meditation, where we learn to empty the mind / consciousness of the chatter of ever day life and place this void (our consciousness / Shen) in our Dantian. From here we learn how to harmonize and move Qi within our bodies with the intent of becoming / staying healthy, happy, secure, contented and balanced individuals. The secure aspect hints at the Yin and Yang of successful Qigong practice, it is of both a healing and martial type. Like Yin and Yang neither can exist without the other. One of the aspects of healing is building the Wei Q, a very Yang and aggressive Qi, which protects us from invasion by external pathogenic entities. Another is Ying Qi, a more Yin and nourishing energy which not only nourishes our body and spirit but also grants us the stillness we need to for healing. There is of course a Yin aspect to Wei Qi and a Yang aspect to Ying Qi. The Yin aspect of Wei Qi moistens and nourishes the exterior (Skin, body hair etc) while the Yang aspect of Ying Qi protects the interior and provides function.

*One of the aspects of healing is building the Wei Q, a very Yang and aggressive Qi, which protects us from invasion by external pathogenic entities.*

The second type is where a Qigong master transmits Qi from the Dao (void from which all creation springs) to an unbalanced or diseased individual with the intent of balancing and or harmonizing this individuals Qi and so alleviating any existing diseased condition. To some degree this is a two way street and unless you are in some way receptive, then you may effectively block most of the Qi that is being transmitted to you. If the Qigong master is not in balance and harmony with

the Dao then they may lack the ability to protect them self. This might then result in their either draining much of their own Qi or absorbing adverse Pathogenic Qi from the individual they are seeking to help.

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In both of these methods we are soothing and moving the individuals Qi and blood as well as nourishing / building Qi and Blood in the organs and channels. This results in an increased feeling of well-being and resistance to and eradication of pathogenic entities from the body.

The third method as mentioned above is a special martial Qigong where very strong Qi is built often via one-legged Qigong where you remain posted on one leg for the duration of the practice. We are only going to deal with the first method as in order to attain the second method, the first method needs to be mastered and practiced for a long time. The 3<sup>rd</sup> method should only be taught face to face by an accomplished teacher or master.

For healing the first method is the strongest method as it empowers the individual to help them selves without having to rely on another's intervention. If we all nourish our individual Qi then we also nourish each others Qi as there is a constant intermingling of our Qi with the Earth and Heavenly Qi. Healthy Qi creates healthy blood and healthy Qi and Blood creates a healthy Shen. A positive



*Wally Simpson*

or negative input from one individual may do little to influence the existence of life as we know it, but a positive or negative input from many may influence the outcomes of a whole generation and those that follow.

The best time to practice Qigong is early morning or late afternoon and it is best to practice on an empty stomach.

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## **BASIC STANDING QI GONG**

### **Also called 3 CIRCLE QI GONG**

First be sure you are wearing loose comfortable clothes and will be free from interruptions for the duration of the practice. It is also a good idea to remove all tight articles such as belts, watches, bangles etc. Ideally it is a good idea to do this practice in a shaded quite open space where you are protected from the wind. Later you should be able to perform your Qi Gong or a short modified versions of your Qi Gong almost anywhere e.g. waiting for a bus or standing in line at the Bank etc though it is always best out of the strong wind.

Stand with your feet together and parallel. Take your toes out sideways as far as you comfortable can while keeping the heels together (no more than 45 degrees).

Next while keeping the toes where they are, bring the heels out so the feet are parallel and

roughly at shoulder width. The insides of the feet are what should be parallel and straight.

You now bend your knees so they are in line with the toes. To do this you may need to stick your head out so you are looking straight down at your toes, otherwise you may think the Knees and Toes are in line but in fact the Knees will not be far enough forward.

You then elongate the spine; a good way to do this is to imagine you are suspended by the point in the center of the head (Baihui Du 20). This stretching of the spine will gap the vertebra (Each vertebrae has a disk made of a soft inner core and a more solid outer casing, they act as cushions between the vertebra. Over time through bad posture, incorrect or heavy lifting and from the action of gravity, these disks may deteriorate and shrink in size. This can leave the vertebra with no shock absorber between them and as a result put pressure on exiting spinal nerves. Stretching can help rehydrate the disks and begin to open up the channels associated with the spine; this will flood the area with Qi and Blood. If Qi and blood are sufficient and flowing through a region then there is no discomfort or disease in the region. A bit of tension initially will also make for greater relaxation in the next step.

Now tuck in your chin and allow your spine to relax. I like to imagine my spine like an iron chain enclosed inside a stiff plastic tube that is slightly bigger than the chain. When I elongate my spine the links of the chain become taut and don't touch the sides of the plastic tube. When I relax my spine the links of the chain flop down on top of each other and they are only held erect by the stiffness of the plastic tube against the sides of the chain. If the chin is gently tucked in, then the spine is more likely to be straight. The head should be erect and the eyes looking straight ahead.

Holding your head so you are looking down causes the Qi to sink excessively and places pressure in the neck as the cervical vertebra are hyper-extended thus blocking Qi flow through this area. Holding the head so you are looking upward causes the Qi to rise and you lose your center and cause your spine to become bent with compression in the neck.

To complete this part of the stance we need to make sure the curve in the lower back is as much as possible straightened out. We can do this by gentle tucking in the lower part of the pelvis, as if we are just sitting on the very edge

of a stool or bench top. Another way is to back up against a wall so our heels are touching the wall, our knees are bent in the correct manner (as described above), the back is also touching the wall as does the back of the head. Remember to tuck in the chin gentle! If you now place your hand behind the small of your back you will find there is a natural curvature which will allow you to slip your hand in behind this region. You need to take out this curvature! To do this you gently tuck in the lower part of the pelvis in a slight pelvic thrust. Some people have what is called A sway back@ and this curvature is quite pronounced. To take out the curvature in these circumstances is impossible and you should not use excessive tension to try to force it straight as this tension is what we are trying to avoid. This is also the case for the head and neck in some individuals. Their head is thrust forward and try as they might they can not have their backs flat against a wall and tuck in their chins making the back of their heads touch the wall at the same time. Be gentle with your self and if these are your circumstances and you have to use excessive tension of to tuck in the buttocks just do the best you can without making too much tension. Using force to pull in the bum is as bad if not worse as having it stuck out.

The shoulders should be relaxed, not raised and tense.

Once you have achieved the best stance you can manage with the spine you have been blessed with, take the whole stance out away from the wall and reproduce it as best you can without the support of a flat surface at your back.

What we are standing in now is called Horse stance and it is used in many Qigong and martial arts forms.

The main thing is to be as relaxed as possible while standing upright and to have your feet shoulder width apart and parallel with your back as straight as possible. Not leaning forward or backwards. Even the face should be relaxed with the lips just gentle touching and the teeth not clenched but also gentle touching together.

The tongue is placed lightly on the roof of the mouth on the hard pallet just be-

hind the teeth. This last factor allows for communication between the Ren and Du Mai's. These are most often called the Conception and Governor vessels or channels in English. They run up the center of the front and back of the body respectively. They are seen in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as being 2 of the 8 Extraordinary Vessels and so act as reservoirs of Qi and Blood.

The Ren / Conception Vessel is called the 'Sea of the Yin Mai' and has links to all of the Yin Mai / channels. It helps regulate the Qi in the Yin channels.

The Du / Governor Vessel is called the 'Sea of the Yang Mai' and has links to all of the Yang Mai / channels, it helps regulate the Qi in the Yang Channels.

Yin channels include the Kidney, Liver, Spleen, Heart, Pericardium and Lung.

Yang channels include the Bladder, Gall Bladder, Stomach, Small Intestine, San Jiao (Triple Energizer) and Large Intestine (Colon).

Thus communication between these two channels is of the utmost importance if we are to maintain a healthy body.

Ok so you have the basic stance or as close as you can manage. You are standing with your feet shoulder width apart and parallel;

Knees bent so they are in line with the toes;  
The spine is as straight as possible;  
The shoulders are relaxed;  
The chin and buttocks are gentle tucked in;  
The tongue is on the roof of the mouth just behind the teeth.

Your breath comes and goes through the nose in accordance to your natural rhythm and where you feel the breath is in the Lower Abdomen or lower Dantian as it is known in TCM. This is a region within the lower abdomen roughly 3 cun below the belly button. A cun is a proportional measurement in TCM. The lower abdomen from the top of the pubic bone to the center of the belly button is seen as 5 cun. The width of your hand is seen as 3 cun when the 4 fingers are held together and it is measured at the knuckles. So to find Dan Tian, first stick a finger from one hand in the belly button and place the other hand so that it rests on the lower abdomen palm down with the knuckles of the first finger is touching the finger you have in your belly button.

Dantian is directly below the point immediately below the knuckle of the 4<sup>th</sup> finger of the hand resting against your lower abdomen. Dan Tian is a very important region and is a major focus for the mind in Basic Standing Qi Gong.

One way to feel your breath in this region is to place your hands palm down over this region so that when you breathe in, the abdomen goes out causing the hands to rise. When you breathe out, the abdomen sinks in causing the hands to fall. This is normal breathing if we are using the diaphragm to breath and not just the intercostal muscles. The right hand is placed on the abdomen first with the left hand on top of it. There are some teachings that claim this is a male positioning and that female positioning is the left hand on the abdomen and the right hand on top. If you feel strongly about this then try both ways and discover for your self, which way feels better for you.

It would be a good idea here to read the paper on Why do we Breath into the Dan Tian to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of this center and its importance in the body's energy system.

After you feel you are capable of holding your mind on the breath in Dan Tian for 10 to 20 mns, release your hands from the lower abdomen so they hang loosely by your side.

The hands need mention here as there is both Yin and Yang in each hand. The hands are held in what is called a Tile Palm or Beautiful Palm. This means the hands are spread so the fingers are open (not touching each other) and relaxed. The fingers are bent at the knuckles and layered over the top of each other like tiles. There is a gentle curve to the back of the hand and the hand is concave in its palm. The thumb also is bent at the knuckles and has enough tension in it so as to make for a single line of skin between the thumb and first finger.

Hold your focus on the breath at Dan Tian and on an in breath allow your arms to rise upward as if they are being lifted by the wrists with the palms facing each other. The tension should be similar to lifting your arms in this fashion while you are submerged to the chin in water. When the arms are at the level of the upper chest the hands are flexed at the wrist. This should form a circle with the hands just below the level of the chin, palms towards you. This means the elbows need to

be bent so the arms are not quite fully extended. The elbows should be just below the level of the wrists. Make sure your shoulders are relaxed and rounded, not pulled back and squared Army style. There needs to be a gap under your arms big enough to fit a loose fist (called a Kwa).

The arms are held in P'eng, this is best taught in person by a teacher who has grasped this concept. Suffice it to say that the elbows are bent at an angle greater than 90 degrees and the muscles of the arms are as relaxed as possible. There should be a space under your arm-pits big enough to fit a loose fist; this space needs to be maintained throughout the whole practice.

It is like you are hugging a big tree where your arms can't quite reach each other. The hands are roughly 3 to 4ins apart and are not forming a closed circle but are angled slightly as if receiving something (the palms are not vertical but rather held on an angle slightly greater than 45 degrees). This is called the Mother Palm, when the hands are held in this position.

There are 2 things left to do and both are quite important if a state of Sung is to be obtained. (This is a relaxed and balanced meditative state where the Shen / consciousness is in the Dantian and all sensory input can and is registered by that Shen /consciousness.)

First the toes are gentle flexed so as to form a gap between Yongquan Kid 1 (the first Pt on the Kidney channel, located on the sole of the foot in the valley formed by the pads at the front of the sole) and the Earth. This gap also puts a little pressure on the outside of the Foot creating Yin emptiness at the first point of the Kidney (Yin channel / organ of the Water element) and Yang fullness on the Bladder channel (Yang channel / organ of the Water element). The effects are an enhanced Qi / energy exchange between the Qi of Earth and the Qi of the individual via the Kidney channel as well as balancing Yin and Yang in the body. The weight is changed by this move so that most of the weight is distributed just in front of the heel. The longer you stay like this the more it should feel like you are sinking into the Earth. This part of a

Qigong is enhanced if you are doing it in bare feet on an Earthen floor. If the ground is for some reason very cold, it is better to wear some comfortable shoes with a sole that is conductive to energy exchange but not the coldness. Not a rubber sole. This gentle clawing of the ground is the precursor of becoming rooted / grounded and can prove extremely useful in many aspects of life including both healing and self defense.

The eyes are next and are best not closed or wide open. They should be Half open and looking at the ground at a point about 20 feet away. They will in this position help create the meditative state of Sung. Opening up the pathway from the Earth via Yongquan

Kid 1 to the Dantian and from Heaven via Baihui Du 20 to the Dantian. The Qi flows in both directions at the same time entering at Baihui and exiting at Yongquan and entering at Yongquan and exiting at Baihui.

The Shen is reflected in the eyes and the eyes are under the control of the Liver. Look at the eyes of some one who has just done a 20 mins or longer Qigong and you will see a very contented balanced Shen in most cases.

## Checklist

- 1/ You are standing in Horse stance, with your feet at shoulder width and parallel;
- 2/ Your knees are bent so the kneecap is in line vertically with the tips of the toes;
- 3/ Your spine is as straight as you can manage and as relaxed as possible;
- 4/ The chin and sacrum are gently tucked in
- 5/ The tongue is pressing gently on hard palate (the ridge) behind the top teeth
- 6/ The Breath in and out is through the nose
- 7/ The breath is felt in Dantian
- 8/ The mind is empty of chatter and in the Dantian
- 9/ The arms are raised and held in P'eng so the fingers of opposing hands are 3 to 4 ins apart just below the level of the chin,

- 10/ The hands are Mother palms, towards you but at an angle greater than 45 degree as if receiving something
- 11/ There should be a gap under the armpits big enough to fit a loose fist
- 12/ The shoulders are relaxed
- 13/ The toes of each foot are gently curled creating a synapse with the Earth
- 14/ The eyes are half open slits looking at a spot 20 ft in front of you. Not staring.
- 15/ The Stomach should be held totally relaxed and the anal sphincter is held lightly closed.

Now you stand there for 15 to 20 mins feeling the breath in Dantian, relaxed and like an empty vessel. When we are learning to breathe into the Dantian, after a while you may find that your breath is being felt in the chest or even the shoulders. As soon as you realize the breath is no longer in the Dantian, gently bring it back there. This at first will happen over and over again. This is the point when the mind kicks in and says things like "What are you doing standing here looking into space? You've got a dozen things to do; you don't have time for this! I wonder what the surf / beach / pool / golf course / gym etc is like? What am I going to cook / buy for breakfast / lunch / dinner?"

The mind wants to be the center of our focus and will struggle to prevent you obtaining a no mind state. This is a major reason to focus the mind on the breath. It will escape to other things again and again and when you become aware of this then gently bring it back to the breath.

A Yoga trick to hold the mind is at first to make the mind listen to as many sounds as possible, moving from one sound to another until your mind calls it quits and shuts down into a no mind state. This can take a short time or a long time depending on how Yang your mind is and how much you return it to the breath in Dantian.

A visualization you can do to stop the mind from wandering and that encourages Qi flow and helps with your awareness of this Qi flow within the channels is: -

As you stand in your basic Qigong stance as covered above with your mind empty and in

Dantian. Feel your Breath causing the abdomen to rise and fall. On an in breath as the abdomen rises, feel your Qi traveling from the Dantian down to Huiyin Ren 1 in the perineum then up the back via the Du mai, through Mingmen Du 4 over the head to Baihui Du 20 and down to Yinjiao Pt Du 28. Located between the inside of the upper lip and the upper labial gingiva, in the frenulum of the upper lip.

On your out breath as the abdomen sinks feel your Qi traveling down the front of the body via the Ren mai through Shanzhong Ren 17, through Jueque Ren 14 (Middle Dantian) through Zhongwan Ren 12 to the lower Dantian.

The breath should be deep but not forced. Don't become too attached to this pattern of breathing, just be aware of it as a consequence of the breath. Be sure not to allow your center to rise as you witness the Qi rising up the spine. Keep your knees bent and your main focus should remain in Dantian. After some time breathing in this state you may notice that the breath and Heart rate will slow down. The breath will become rhythmic and flow like a tide within the body and the abdomen will rise and fall like gentle waves washing up on a shoreline and then receding. This type of Qi flow is called Grand Circulation as it stimulates your awareness in 2 of the most important channels of the body, the Ren and Du Mai's.

As you stand in this posture, think of beautiful things, let them create a slight smile on your lips. Not an all out grin! Just a gentle softening of the features.

Imagine a string holding you in a relaxed state from Baihui Du 20 on the crown of the head so your head feels like it is floating just above the spine. You can feel your arms, legs and buttock becoming heavy and your feet feeling as if they are sinking into the ground. You should be very stable in this position. If you are leaning forward or backwards that stability may be lost. Just try to sit into the posture and feel the perfect balance that it brings. Occasionally doing your Qigong in front of a mirror is a good idea so you can check on your posture eg. See if you are leaning forward or backwards. If you have no mirror get someone to check it

for you. This form of Basic Standing Qigong is sometimes called the Universal posture because Yin and Yang should be in perfect balance in your Hands, your Feet, your internal organs and in your whole body in relation to the universe.

After a while you may notice that one of your palms has moved slightly up, down or away from the other palm. This is a reflection of some internal imbalance and by gentle bringing your hand back to the correct position you tend to bring the whole body back into alignment. You might find that your body feels like the spine is slowly twisting or turning, as if unraveling this is exactly what it is doing. Providing the movements are not violent or too jerky, just concentrate on your breath and the body will find its correct alignment. The muscles of the arms, legs or back may ache, try breathing into the sore area and this should in time relax the ache, be sure this doesn't cause your center to rise. This position makes your body want to find its correct alignment and ever bone in the body may be moved to achieve this end.

A short time in this stance may bring on shakes in the legs. This is not because your legs are not strong (Ok for some of you it may well be that your legs are not strong). What is generally occurring is that the Qi is flowing down the legs to Yongquan Kid 1 in an unimpeded manner because there is no tension. When it tries to flow back up it finds tension and acts like a wave hitting a wall and slowly eroding it, it can make the ground / legs shake. As the obstruction clears and the Qi flows freely, it tends to relax the muscles more and more until the shakes disappear and Qi flows in a completely unimpeded manner. This may happen in the first session or in any session thereafter. Depending on how long and how often you practice. The more often you practice, the less it will occur until it stops all together.

You may feel a warm sensation in the Dantian or a warm buzzing sensation in the palms of the hand at Laogong Pc 8. This can indicate that Qi is filling these regions. Accumulating Qi in Dantian is desirable if a long and healthy life is what we are hoping to gain from our Qigong practice. The accumulation of Qi in Laogong can indicate the point is open, Qi is flowing freely through the body and Tai Qi (Qi of the Dao or creative Qi) is flowing through this point. We can use this Qi for healing ourselves and perhaps others. This doesn't mean that you should be standing

there during your Qigong practice thinking, "I am using my Qi to heal my wife, family, self etc". Better to feel the breath in the Dantian and just be open to what you are experience. Remember, "This is just an experience" as one of my old yoga teachers would say. The mind is an incredible potent entity and it is very easy to convince yourself that something is happening physically when it is just the imaginings of a mind primed with the thought that it should or could be happening.

It is best to develop and use your Qi for healing your self for a long time before you try to use it to heal others. It is easy to drain your own Qi and if your Qi is not in balance (nourished and flowing freely), you risk inflicting this imbalance on the individual you are hoping to heal. Also you must be sure that if you have intent you have no attachment to this intent and that you feel your self only as a channel (an integrated part of the Dao) in order to protect yourself from the Xie (pathogenic / adverse) Qi of the individual you are hoping to help. As a general rule I would say do 3 to 4 years of regular extended Qigong practice (at least 20 to 30mts at a time 1 or 2 times daily) before you go messing with someone else's Qi in this way. Qigong practiced correctly will bathe every cell of your body with Tai Qi, the precursor to and the bases of Life force.

The warmth you feel in Dantian is a byproduct of the chemical reaction involved in the changing of Qi from 1 form to another. It is the breath that lights the fire. If any pain occurs then check your posture, if this is all right then the pain and discomfort is probable part of your body trying to pull its self back into correct alignment. As the pain begins to subside and your muscles and tendons become more relaxed, your partially blocked meridians will begin to flow freely again and every cell, tissue and organ will be bathed in life giving Qi

When we stand in Qigong stance we tend to use only the outer cells of our muscles to hold us in place and these start to become quite painful. If we push on through the pain the muscles will become even tenser and Qi will begin to stagnate. The Liver is in charge of free flowing Qi within our bodies and so it searches out a path of least resistance. Qi penetrates deeper into the tissue of the body to locate a path of less impedance and in the process brings life force to dormant cells in our depths right down to our bones. This pro-

cess can not help but enliven and clear the Jing Luo (channels and collateral's).

## So after 20 to 30 mts of Qigong what happens now?

There is a settling Qigong that you should do now to consolidate and finish the "Three Circle Qigong". In Western terms it could be thought of as a warm down exercise.

Don't just stand up and walk away. Slowly drop your hands and bring them up and out to your sides as you breath in. Bring them across in front of your chest palms down and as you breath out push down to the sides as you straighten your legs.

Place your hands behind your back so they are crossed at the wrists, right over left. For females this is left over right. Now you have to pedal backwards. First as you breath in lift your left leg until the thigh is parallel to the ground allowing the foot to hang loosely and then as you breath out place it back on the ground next to the right foot. Now do the same with the right side. Repeat each leg 5 times, breathing deeply and slowly throughout the movements. After you have finished, just move around slowly for about 5 minutes, don't sit down, continue standing and relax out of it.

For the above Qigong we have used a Yin or Mother Palm, it brings Yin Qi into your palms and nourishes the Yin within.

If you turn your palms out / away from you have a Yang or Father palm, this brings more Yang Qi into your palms and nourishes your Yang.

If you turn your palms down you have Daughter palm, this is Yin becoming Yang.

If you turn your palms so they face each other with the fingers pointing away from you, this is a Son palm and is Yang becoming Yin.

The last 2 palms encourage the changing of Yin to Yang and Yang to Yin within the Channels and organs and so can be used to move Qi in situations where stagnation or imbalance has begun to occur.



Remember Earth is your center so all your Qigong should in some way nourish and regulate the Earth (Spleen / Stomach).

Absolute Yin is Water (Kidney / Bladder). Kidney is seen as being the basis of Yin and Yang within the body and is part of the complex called lower Dantian. Our Mother palm nourishes and regulates Yin so works on the Kidney and because of their special relationship with the other organs this has a nourishing and regulating effect on the whole body. The Mother palm also has an effect on our ability to regulate Yin in general and all of its implied ramifications (stillness, coolness, introversion, structure, etc) within the body. Absolute Yang is Fire (Heart / Small Intestine-Pericardium / San Jiao). Yang Qi is functional, warming, aggressive, protective energy. Our Father palm nourishes and regulates the yang and so targets the Fire phase and all of the implied ramifications of Yang within our body.

Yin becoming Yang is Wood (Liver / Gallbladder). Wood energy is in charge of free flowing movement (of Qi & Blood) and all cyclic phenomena (menstruation, anabolism and catabolism, etc) as well as with utilization of pure substance and detoxification of impure substance. It is about the marshaling and ordering of life force. It is Spring, Morning and the beginnings of things. Liver Yang gives us the ability to move forward and act in a positive way. Liver Yin allows us to retreat and wait or be still. This is about the balance of stillness and movement, Yin and Yang in our lives. These qualities and all the other ramifications of this transformation are regulated and nurtured by the Daughter palm.

Yang becoming Yin is Metal (Lungs / Large Intestine). Metal energy gives us the ability to transform and expand existing bonds by letting go of attachments and being open to new possibilities. This is the Metal Yin which allows us to bond (like breathing new air into your Lungs), while Metal Yang allows us to release our attachment. It is acceptance of the breath (in breath is governed by the Kidneys) that provides the fuel for transformation in Dantian while release of waste (the out breath is governed by the Lungs; release of waste of course includes the action of the Colon Metal Yang). It is Autumn, Afternoon and the winding down or finishing touches of activities. These qualities and all the other ramifications of this transformation are nurtured and regulated by the Son palm.

Record in your journal the possible benefits to your body and life in general from the use of these 4 palm changes.

You can do the "Three Circle Qigong" using any of the above palms though it is better to use your Mother palm for quite a while until you feel completely at ease with your Qigong (no more muscular discomfort or shakes).

Another Visualization that may enhance your awareness of Qi flow within the body is; -

### As you stand in your basic Qi gong stance

- Feet apart and parallel:  
Knees bent so they are in line with the toes
- Back straight and chin and buttock gentle tucked in:
- Arms raised to the chest in p'eng
- Gap under the armpit and in the perineum big enough to fit a loose fist
- Using a Mother palm
- Toes gentle tucked under to form a synapse with the Earth
- Tongue on the hard palate behind the top teeth
- Breathing through the nose into the Dantian in a relaxed rhythm way :

From the points Laogong Pc 8, Neiguan Pc6 and Shaohai Ht 3 feel a warmth and a flow of Qi reflecting and emanating from these points to Shanzhong Ren 17 and to the Dantian region. Feel your arms as relaxed and resting on this triangle of Qi flow. This is just an experience. You should be sure that in doing this visualization that you don't raise your center. The mind should be empty and focused in Dantian, it is the Shen / Spirit that witnesses, with out attachment, the flow of Qi through these points. The moment you become attached and try to hold this feeling it will dissipate.

Spend 15 to 20 minutes in your basic Qigong stance doing this visualization. It should make your arms feel supported and strong. This Qigong can nourish and regulate Zhong Qi (Qi of the chest: Heart and Lungs) and the Lower Dantian.

Do this for 15 to 20 minutes daily and record any sensations felt in your Journal.

After standing in the above stance for a period of time you can drop your arms to a 45degree angle so your palms are at the level of Dantian while maintaining your Mother palms and p'eng. Make sure your arms are hanging loosely and that you continue to maintain your Kwa's. This increases the concentration of Qi in the Dantian and nourishes the Kidneys.

### Record any sensations you feel in your Journal.

Generally if you do a 20 to 30minute Qigong you should do two thirds of the time with your arms in the chest position and one third in the lower position. Then finish with the settling Qigong.

## Moving Qigong

**SAN JIAO QIGONG** (Triple Burner or Three Heater Qi Gong) also called The Charging of the Sinews Qigong

This latter name is interesting as it hints at a concept expounded by Matsumoto & Birch in their book *AHara Diagnosis: Reflections on the Sea*. In it they suggest a connection between the San Jiao and the fascia / connective tissue of the body. In this book it is pointed out that the fascia that surrounds the muscles, tendons, ligaments, bone and organs in continuous throughout the whole body. The San Jiao is said to communicate, carry Qi and control fluids in all regions of the body. (See chapters 6-7-8 of the above mentioned book for further reading) This Qigong can nourish and regulate Qi in the San Jiao and balance the Yin and Yang of the organ complexes.

Write the pathway of the San Jiao in your Journal including the Internal Pathway. Stand in horse stance as described in the 3 Circle Qigong.

Your arms are in the lower position and have Sister palms.

Make sure to maintain your Kwa's throughout the whole of this Qigong.

Your breath is through the nose and it rises and falls in Dantian.

Your mind is witnessing this breath and is empty of the chatter of daily existence. Your head is to the front squared



with the shoulders and you are looking straight ahead, not up or down. Your movements are performed in a relaxed unhurried manner.

On an in breath, the hands scoop down slightly and turn palm up, fingers pointed towards each other. As you rise slightly onto the balls of your feet the hands are lifted to around chest height.

### Lower Heater:

As you breathe out scoop the hands turn over and push downwards as you bend your knees to allow you to squat. Making sure to keep the back straight and the heels on the ground. Only squat as low as this allows you to go.

At the bottom of the squat as you breath in, scoop your hands upwards so they become palm up with the fingers facing each other as if gathering Qi and stand up again. From the bottom of the squat the palms are up and you are lifting your hands like there is something precious in them. Be sure not to loose your kwa's and maintain p'eng. Keep your knees bent as you stand up, going slightly up on to the balls of your feet allowing your arms to rise to chest height. Then turn your hands over and press downward with the out breath as you go into a squat again.

These 2 above movements should be coordinated with the breath. Both should start and finish together. So the in breath finishes at the chest and the out breath starts at the chest. The out breath finishes at the bottom of the squat and the in breath starts at the bottom of the squat.

From the top of the movement with the arms in the upper position you press the hands downward with the out breath, scoop and turn them over at the bottom of the squat as you begin to rise again with the in breath.

This whole cycle is repeated 3 times with an in and an out breath counting as 1 cycle. It should be done slowly while corresponding to the rhythm of the breath.

### Middle Heater:

You Squat down after the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle for the 4<sup>th</sup> time and as you rise up you gather Qi with your hands and draw it a little close to the body (make sure you don't loose your kwa's in

this move). As you stand up you lift palms up to your chest as you go a little higher on the balls of your feet. As your hands reach the level of your chest (Shanzhong Ren 17) you turn the palms away and push out until you have p'eng with hands in the father palms configuration. This is all an in breath to this point. The out breath begins as the hands now sweep out to the sides and begin to press down to around waist height as the heels touch the ground.

You continue your out breath as you squat down again. The hands continuing to press down till the bottom of the squat where they scoop and turn palm up and lift as you stand up and continue upwards on to the balls of your feet where the palms turn out and you push out with Father palms.

### Remember to

Coordinate the movements with the breath:

Maintain kwa:

Be aware of the changing of the hands from a Yang state to a Yin State. This should be achieved without creating tension in the wrists:

Repeat this cycle 3 times.

### Upper Heater:

You squat down again at the completion of the Middle Heater section (this should be the 7<sup>th</sup> squat). Your hands scoop and turn palm up as you begin to stand up. The hands have gathered Qi close to your body as in the Middle Heater section, only this time they continue to rise rolling over as they pass your face to end palm up flopping above your head as you stand up on to your toes. Arms and legs remain slightly bent. This is an in breath from the bottom of the squat to the hands over your head position. You begin your out breath as your arms sweep down to the sides and you lower your self onto flat feet. The arms continue down, the palms are yang as the arms are dropping and you squat down. They become Yin as you reach the bottom of the squat and begin to scoop up Qi as you breathe in and rise up again.

This is repeated 3 times

After the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle the hands flop over the head and move down to the waist. You do not squat, the hands scoop and rise again to the upper chest and then roll over and push down.

## New Video Titles

### MTG205

#### Wudang Form (Qi Disruption) No. 12, Volume Two

PRICE: \$US70.00 Plus Postage: £40.00 Plus Postage:

### MTG204

#### Wudang Form (Qi Disruption) No. 12, Volume One

PRICE: \$US70.00 Plus Postage: £40.00 Plus Postage:

Wudang Form (Qi Disruptive Form) No. 12 is the last in the series and is called "Finishing Form" as it completes the set. This form is the epitome of the Chinese way of integrating healing into the fighting methods. It is an excellent way to lose weight, to keep a youthful appearance and to keep one's Life-force at a high level. It works upon the Kidney Jing both physically and internally. This form is both physical and internal in that the movements are not easy to perform with many of the very low movements not unlike some of the Shaolin forms. This works upon the Kidneys, Liver and Spleen. In fact, there are 12 main parts to this form with each part working upon a main meridian. There are more than 12 movements but all are either one of the 12 main movements or derivations of them. There is quite a potent Qigong method again in this form which also works directly upon the tantien balancing out effectively the amount of Yin and Yang energy.

By the time the masters of old got to working out this form, they were beginning to understand exactly how movement and internal Qi movement worked hand-in-hand so this form more-so than any others is closer to what we now know to be Taijiquan.

### MTG203:

#### Wudang Form (Qi Disruption) No. 11. Volume 2.

PRICE: \$US70.00 Plus Postage: £40.00 Plus Postage:

2nd part of this Wudang Form No. 11.

### MTG202:

#### Wudang Form (Qi Disruption) No. 11. Volume 1.

PRICE: \$US70.00 Plus Postage: £40.00 Plus Postage:

Called the 'Prenatal' form, this one is very powerful working upon the prenatal Qi. Before we are born, our three 'parts', 'spirit', 'mind' and 'body' are as one. Once we are born, (postnatal) over time, we begin to see those three separate into their respective keeping places in the body. So they became separated as we become more human. This No. 11 form rejoins those three areas as much as possible given that we are human beings. So a much more balanced life and mind follow the use of this form. Some of the health benefits are: Weight loss, helping to fix impotence in men and low libido in both sexes as it works upon the life force and Kidney Qi. It also helps with diabetes as this condition is also related to Kidney Qi.

This form contains some very powerful Qigong methods as well as some very physical movements that work upon the hip area thus, as the Chinese say, gives a youthful appearance. This is also gained when one enhances Kidney Qi.

### Combat & Healing Price Increase

Due to greedy post office we have for the first time since we began producing this magazine, had to increase our price.

**\$US30.00** (For the USA)

**£20.00** (For Europe)

**\$AUST: 30.00** (For Australia) **\$35.00** for NZ.

# Of Reptiles and the Rejection of Rules

## The Art of Taiji and the Science of Cognition

By Brad Hayhow

Ever noticed how jerky and artificial some kata appear? Perhaps the similarity between the stylist and the robot is more than just skin deep...

In taiji we are furnished with a martial art which is uniquely attuned to our human anatomy and physiology. This is true not only of the more gross specifications of our body, but also of the design of our nervous system and the styles of cognition that it supports. Those who developed the internal arts were thus deeply aware of our human character, for it is from this deep integration of our physical, emotional and cognitive self that the power of taiji issues. By way of contrast, studies in artificial intelligence provide some illuminating suggestions as to why the scenario-based martial arts may not fare so well in real life (or real death) situations. My feeling is that it is, at bottom, a matter of cognitive style that is reflected in the relative power of these systems.

Broadly (and briefly), there are two models of human cognition currently available to the theorist: the classical symbol processing model, familiar since the advent of computers, and the non-symbolic, connectionist model based roughly on the design of real neural networks.

In the early days of theorising about the cognitive mechanisms of the human mind, the logician and

codebreaker Alan Turing developed a model of information processing upon which the computer age was founded. For most of this century the digital paradigm established by Turing has dominated models of intelligent behaviour, even to the extent that human cognition has been purported to be some variety of digital computation – after all, we too are intelligent information processors. Lately this movement has become known as Strong Artificial Intelligence, or Strong AI for short. The classical position holds that, like complex PCs, the intelligent behaviour you and I exhibit also arises from the manipulation of cognitive symbol states in accordance with certain processing rules. On this account, we are digital computers whose brain is the hardware that runs a cognitive software.

A peculiar problem was seen to develop for AI as it progressed towards real-life complexity. Engineers involved in computer simulations of human intelligence began to find that, contrary to their expectations, programming more knowledge into their AI systems (in the form of more symbols and rules) did not convincingly improve their performance in navigating realistic problem domains. When placed in such domains, even the most intelligent robots can quickly become stumped by the question “What are the relevant features of this particular problem?” Programmers have tried to assist their creations by providing schematic, or “typical” strings of commands for their AIs to follow in a given problem domain. However, for each variation in the problem domain (such a block being here in-

stead of there, or an extra feature entering the frame) a new subroutine (or set of contingency plans) has to be programmed in too.

The problem at hand is this: as the operational domain of a digital system becomes more complicated, the system has to “pay attention” to a potentially unbounded number variables, and this of course takes time. The trade-off at hand, then, is this: either the system ignores potentially important aspects of its environment in order to arrive at a decision quickly, or else it sits and “thinks” about its environment (perhaps right down to the shade of the wallpaper) indefinitely! Keep in mind that the problem here lies not just in processing speed or raw knowledge, but in identifying the aspects of a situation relevant to a solution.

The analogy to scenario-based martial arts is clear. In the dojo one can learn about all sorts of specific defences for specific attacks, but whether one will ever meet with an attack fulfilling such and such criteria is at best a bad risk - the possibility always exists that an opponent will throw something at you you’ve never seen before. You just can’t account for every possible attack, and in fact, you have to waste a hell of a lot of time getting the right script up and running even if the attack is familiar. Worse than that, human beings do not in fact have the digital processing speed available to modern computers. The

whole situation reeks of the problematic if-then programming routines of computer science, and you'd better believe that computers can do this rule-and-symbol style processing an awful lot faster than we can.

A recent computational paradigm does, however, suggest a resolution. Inspired by the obvious processing abilities of real neural networks (like our brains), connectionism recommends a cognitive architecture that is fast, sensitive, and orientated towards real world scenarios. Without going into too many details (the story can become a little complicated), connectionist networks process knowledge as patterns of activation across extensively inter-linked, neuron-like cells. These patterns, which stand for things in the world by virtue of a structural similarity, can be processed quickly and effectively because the data they encode are distributed across a set of nodes, and thus can be holistically processed in parallel. What is interesting about connectionism is that cognition turns out to look more like pattern recognition and completion than the operation of rules over symbols. Through a training process that adjusts the influence of the various inter-nodal connections, networks learn to transform input patterns to output patterns, which can in turn be linked up to effective machinery (like an arm or a leg).

One of the attributes of this processing strategy is that information about the environment is encoded to an almost arbitrary level of detail and almost literally at a glance – this is due to the structural similarity of the environment to the models encoded by the network. Although a network becomes trained to recognise the most salient aspects of a

problem domain (such as corners on an obstacle course or word boundaries in speech), it also remains sensitive to occasional idiosyncrasies (such as novel shadow patterns or a strange accent). This is all somewhat controversial, since the field is relatively new, but the way such architecture gels with human cognitive strategy is suggestive.

So now to Taiji. As those of us who practice know, our art is fast and devastating. One of the reasons for this is that our system teaches us not to focus on individual aspects of our opponent's attack, but on the attack as a whole. In his latest book "Reflex Violence", Erle acknowledges the importance of such a strategy by embodying it in his second rule of fighting: "Never fight the peripheral attacking weapon, fight the whole body" (p26). The logic of such a strategy is now looking intelligible to the cognitive scientist. There are patterns to human movements which go far beyond our ability to map them in frame- (or scenario-, or rule-) based schemes. However the patterns are there, and if our cognition is connectionist in nature, we do have access to them.

In taiji we train both to sense patterns of movement and to execute them ourselves. The best way to do this is not to channel energy into the conscious, logical cortices of our brain, but to hand the controls over to the more primitive parts of our brain which are trained, as a matter of survival, to recognise certain types of movement and respond to them as quickly and efficiently as possible. Taiji training hones the sensory systems of our brain to recognise threatening human movement in a way which modern, day-to-day living does not encourage. By going into eagle vision

(which essentially ignores the focus zone of our normal visual perception) we give our brain the most possible resources to deal with the situation as a whole without becoming obsessed by individual elements - there are all sorts of associative pathways which link foveal (or focused) images to specific, narrow range, fixated responses, and this is not what we want. The entire profile of the attack is relevant, and so a fight should literally pass in a blur of movement. The context-sensitivity of this strategy will ensure that the potentially lethal nuances of different attacks will not go unnoticed, and the pattern recognition and completion resources at our disposal will delight in finding, instantly, the optimum solution. Our training therefore teaches us not focus down on the elements of an attack, but, through a fine familiarity with the way the human body moves, to recognise a dynamic attack posture and meet it with a response which has been trained to exploit the body's innate structural architecture.

The speed of this holistic, integrated behavioural response is assisted by a rush of nervous activity originating from the lower, more primitive (reptilian) structures of the brain. Well before one becomes consciously aware of danger, early sensory nuclei will recognise a threat and send alarms to various other primitive structures. A primary response will thus be routed through the limbic system which includes the structures known as the hippocampus and amygdala. These structures were built for

survival – they are experts at recognising danger and jump-starting a fight/flight reaction. The frontal cortex, which is an evolutionarily recent neuroanatomical adaptation, is usually responsible for inhibiting these responses in a socially acceptable manner – it is definitely not cool to fly into a psychopathic rage whenever someone says “Boo!”. Ironically, it is also the nuclei of the frontal cortex which are most actively recruited to perform those troublesome rule-and-symbol sorts of operations I mentioned earlier. The moral, then, is that turning on the frontal cortex is a brake on one’s survival response.

Taiji gives us everything we need for real fighting and real survival. By teaching us how a predator moves and how we too can move, it allows us to tap in to the benefits of a fast, unconscious pattern recognition and completion architecture which is more than up to the challenge of finding the best possible solution *fast*. Remember also that these categories are broad: pattern recognition at the limbic level includes events that occur throughout the sensory modalities, so sight, smell, sound, touch and proprioception are all taken into account.

The point which Andy Clark makes about these sorts of cognitive resources is that they naturally accommodate the human (or at least student) tendency to be “good at frisbee, bad at logic” (1997, p. 60). This expression highlights the fact that *thinking* is a luxury when action is required. It also ties in to a concept which I believe was first introduced by the Dreyfuses – that expert cognition, as most of us trivially experience when driving an automobile, is not governed by rules and over-attention (find the clutch, cover the accelerator, release the clutch

while...), but by an embodied flow of ability which feels entirely independent of such considerations. Taiji-style fighting is like playing improvised jazz, in that it is a dynamic and situated ability which goes beyond the resources of the logical brain, and feeds off the local environment to which it is coupled. If you’ve ever improvised yourself, you’ll know that it just can’t be done if you think about what you’re doing.

Learning scenarios is not only boring, it is dangerous. Even in a near textbook attack (ever seen a reverse punch in the street?), any idiosyncrasy will render the learnt response potentially ineffective. Although both rule and pattern based processing strategies can be automated, the rule-based procedures are inflexible. What is more, the extra cognitive steps involved in consciously identifying an attack are consuming time which is scarce – this is particularly dangerous if someone comes at you with something your brain has never before seen and has not been trained to adapt to.

So the message is this: enlist the classical wiles of your logical brain in a fight and you will lose, because logic is slow and anathema to the raw emotion which can send you from a dead start to hyperspace. To survive, turn the controls over to your more primitive brain structures (or rather, don’t try to arrest them when they go there automatically) and let the fast, intelligent architecture at your disposal do what it does best. The reptile is absolutely attuned to pattern recognition and completion (the source of those “switches” Erle tells us about), and given a fighter trained in movement instead of technique, it is extremely well equipped to draw on embodied intelligence.

In Taiji we use all of our anatomy and physiology to our advantage – why should the same not be true of our best cognitive strategies? Taiji fighting is effective because it is integrative, and if you’re into survival, that’s the way to do it.

## **W.T.B.A. Workshop Camp 2000 Wales UK**

You are invited to attend the WTBA Wales Training camp at Silver Cross, West of Swansea.

Training will start on the 8<sup>th</sup> of July. Please arrive no later than 7.00 pm on Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> of July. The camp will finish at 4.00 pm on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July.

The fee for the weekend will be £60.00 inclusive of all training, camp fees and meals and including a barbeque on Saturday evening.

### **What To Bring:**

Tent, Sleeping Bag.

Topics covered this year will be the Erle Montague Fighting System and we will look at the Yang Cheng-fu form, Qigong and Baguazhang forms.

**The camp will be run by Peter Jones and Keith Jones.**

To ensure a place, your booking needs to be taken in advance.

Please contact the Club Secretary, *Adrian Jones* on 01269 592 927

Many Thanks

Peter Jones, 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree in the Erle Montague System, Senior Instructor, Wales 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree, WTBA (0777 597 6722)

# ON TEACHING

Werner Horsmann: Germany  
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A teacher has to be a peg-man, a trader in reality pegs. What reality pegs are? Things you can hang your mind onto when learning something new, especially something complex. Everyone probably knows the old joke about this guy asking you in a street: "Can you, please, tell me where the other side of the street is?" To which, of course, you point across the street, and tell him: "Over there." To which, of course, he will answer: "Funny, they always send me over here." To which a teacher would, then, reply: "You choose where your "Here" is to be, the "There", which, however, is your "There", then follows from that."

The teacher broke up the (termino)logical impasse by introducing a reality peg in that he told the guy to choose one side for and by himself. One often hears people say that learning is, or least should be, fun. To which my friends from the North of England would say: "Bollocks !" If it were fun, people would fall over themselves to get jobs as teachers, which they somehow don't do, astonishingly.

I have taught all kinds of subjects in many and varied environments for some 30 years now, and I tell you that learning and, therefore, teaching is really hard work, at the least. Ability is like a three-part harmony: Knowledge - Practice - Mastership. Acquiring the knowledge for the first time, which is normally called learning, is work; Full Stop! It may be quite interesting, if you are of the

self-motivated, inquisitive type. Or it can be made quite interesting by a good teacher; cf. the next paragraph.

Practicing what you have learned, which is done best in a systematic and step-by-step manner (Remember: Everything you can do well slowly, you can do equally well fast later on, but not the other way around.) is just plain toil and trouble, regardless of your level of progress at the respective point in time. It is always heart breaking to see your teacher do things you can't do, now that you have some, and hopefully increasingly more, knowledge of what is going on.

*Only if you have both instruments can you do your job as a teacher in the classroom in real time,*

Maybe, it is just a simple thing like falling on your back using your bums and back correctly; and I tell you that really can hurt. Then he tells you: "Now for some additional, and more advanced, exercises to get you really going!" And the only thing you can think is: "Oh, s... ! Not again. "

The only part which is definitely fun is the last part, i.e. having the ability. How reality pegs tie into this? These are my ideas about it.

What a student needs most of all to keep him on the hard job of learning are two things, I think: **encouragement and gauges**. And for both of them pegging the aspects of the subject and the levels of his achievement onto reality is very efficient,

because you can't argue with reality; it just is.

I have to assume that you as the teacher know the subjects you are teaching, and have practical experience in them. Please don't go out there not knowing what you are going to tell your students; not for even one lesson! Instrumentally, what you need are a syllabus and curriculum and a grading system. Both don't have to be very formalized or ritualized, as e.g. in Karate, or bureaucratic as in schools or universities. But both of them must be clear in content and structure.

The syllabus and curriculum will give the student the contents of what he will have to learn when in order to attain the respective ability or abilities. The grading system will help him gauge his progress, at least formally.

Only if you have both instruments can you do your job as a teacher in the classroom in real time, and that is giving the students reality pegs to a) help them acquire knowledge and b) let them feel how they are progressing.

## **Pegs for Learning**

Whenever a thing is new to you, you are, of course, insecure how to behave in relation to the new subject and your environment. Pegs for learning will, then, help you to orientate yourself. In the context of learning Tai Ji, reality pegs are driven into the student

by touching the respective parts of his body.

Let us say he has to learn the "Single Peng", left posture in the Yang Ch'eng-Fu form. His teacher will tell him to hold his left arm in an arc at chest height in a way that this arm is part of a steel band through the shoulders that cannot be collapsed; which is what Peng is about, arm-wise. The teacher may take quite some time there, explaining about Yin and Yang, their balancing in and through the postures and so on, and probably the student will nod his head; perhaps he has even understood his teacher's explanations. But then it is down to brass tacks:

*The student goes into his version of the posture, and in the beginning - as sure as God made little apples - as soon as the teacher puts pressure on it the student's arm will go in, at least at the elbow.*

The student goes into his version of the posture, and in the beginning - as sure as God made little apples - as soon as the teacher puts pressure on it the student's arm will go in, at least at the elbow. Which is not astonishing because the student has not had the opportunity to feel his arm being manipulated in this way previously.

Therefore, one of the first tasks of the teacher, if not the first, is to peg these feeling into his student(s). This job can be quite complicated; time consuming, and definitely frustrating if the students are too dumb and/or lazy. But that's what teachers get their money for.

## **Pegs for Gauging**

I have friend who has a very simple criterion for gauging abilities in the martial arts: "Power talks!".

This can be generalized to: "Ability talks!" or "Put up 'or shut up !"

Let us go back to an example from Tai Ji. As there is no formal grading system, which is more or less, accepted worldwide as in Karate - and mind you, I am not advocating a system like that for several reasons -, a student will have to. Get his gauging pegs from his master or accordingly qualified instructor. The pegging may take a lot of different forms because there are a lot of aspects to the art. A really high-level one would be a free-style fight against the master/instructor with all, or only some, punches pulled; please read or hear stories about the way Yang Sau-Ch'ung or his father tested his students, for instance.

A rather simple one would be to "get into" a solo form, i.e. one student starts the form, and at some point the teacher calls without advance warning, the next student has to take over and so on.

In conclusion, I think that it is a major responsibility of teachers to provide reality pegs to their students, because it really facilitates learning. And it puts quite a load on the teacher's imagination to devise appropriate pegs for various gauging situation. If his students don't accept what they are offered it is definitely their fault, not their teachers'.

*Werner Horsmann is the WTBA's main representative for Germany*

## **NEWS:**

Please note that we have had a price increase for C&H. This is the first hike since we began publishing 9 years ago! And they said it wouldn't last! They did not know this mule!

Rob & Mause Eaglen have build double handedly an undercover training area for the WTBA in our headquarters area. Our mobile kitchen is on-site along with a beautiful 'thunder-box' built in the traditional Aussie outback style. (That is a toilet for our overseas readers).

Steve McDermott (WTBA senior instructor in Australia) has just come top in his acupuncture final exams and will head off to China on his scholarship in a few months. Congratulations Steve from all of us.

We now have a new Web Site whose name is [www.taijiworld.com](http://www.taijiworld.com) This site is faster and more reliable and is based in Australia.

European workshop tour is filling up, so get in early with your registrations. Covering Oslo and Wales in November.

Colin Power was graded to WTBA Instructor because of his dedication to training. He travels 300 miles round trip to get to training! And of course because he knows his stuff!

I will have a report on Camp 2000 next issue. However, it is shaping up to be one of the biggest yet.

# Taiji & The Training of the Brain Hemispheres

Jens Bartelt: Germany

**A**n important aspect of all martial arts is training your coordination, which also means training the hemispheres of your brain until they function equally well together, which is not the normal state of affairs.

Normally, one of the hemispheres more or less dominates the behaviour and body abilities. For me, being right-handed, even practicing normal Tai Ji routines, which are routinely made for right-handers, nevertheless has continually improved my control of the left half of my body. Also, I am more sensitive with respect to the my left half of the body, because I have to do any left-oriented exercises or exercises done on both sides, e.g. Brush Knee & Twist Step, with more awareness, and therefore put more Ji into them. In order to make a really substantial improvement in this area, I would, of course, have to learn and practice the (Old Style or any other) form "on the left", i.e. with all movements fully mirrored.

Until now, I could not bring myself to undertake this quite time consuming project. Therefore, I would like to present two rather simple exercises, which help in connecting the brain hemispheres.

As a preparation, let us start with a very simplified view of the brain. Seen from above, the brain looks like a half a walnut with a groove between the two halves ("Mr Left" and "Ms Right"). "Mr Left" is in charge of external aspects (analytical arguments, language, relating to

the external environment, etc.) A major part of "Mr Left's" abilities are taught and learned in schools of all kinds and types. "Ms Right" is in charge of internal aspects (emotions, mind pictures, holistic insights, etc.).

With respect to these halves, the training and practicing of Tai Ji has two tasks: a) to foster "Ms Right's" intuition, creativity, etc., and b) to join both halves of the brain, so that both are able to work as a unified whole. In the beginning of my Tai Ji career, when I did my meditation exercises I took the following posture: Spine upright, and both hands in front of the body at Dan Tien height, both palms upwards, the left one on top of the right. Everything felt fine, and I was feeling balanced and content during the exercise.

Years later, when I saw a picture of Buddha I was shocked. For years on end I had meditated in the wrong posture, because, according to that picture, the light hand had to be on top ! Of course, I changed to "Buddha hands" immediately in my next meditation session. Only to find that this posture did not feel right, I even had a sensation of nausea. The palms and the thumbs repelled each other like two identically poled magnets.

Fortunately, when I told this to my friend Werner Horsmann, he had encountered the same problem when his praying hands were folded "wrongly". You can experience this phenomenon yourself very easily. Start by folding your hands as you would normally as if in prayer, then look which thumb is the uppermost (It will be either the left or the right

one.). Now, fold them the other way, i.e. if your left thumb is normally on top, change all the fingers through so that your right thumb is on top. The feeling accompanying this, when you do it the first time is usually: "Ugh !"

In my opinion, the tenseness in the palms is linked to the groove between the hemispheres of the brain and a lack of tissue connections between them, and vice versa.

The whole thing is really just another example of that age-old fact, which we overlook all too often :

There was, is, and will always be an unbroken and two-way connection between mind states and body postures.

Elaborating on that, we developed the following set of exercises during meditation for better joining the brain halves. "Buddha Hands"

1/ with your right hand on top,  
2/ with your left "Praying Hands",

1/ with your right thumb on top,  
2/ with your left

In the course of time, the "funny" feeling in your palms will go away, and the halves of your brain will work together more efficiently, because you have generated more links between them by doing the exercises. You will combine left (intellectual) and right (emotional) brain processes better. And then you will be able to listen more to your intuition and your higher self!



# The Mind in the Martial Arts & Eastern Thought

Tony Court

Part 2: The Conditioned Mind-Seeing Things As They Are-The Two Truths- Impermanence.

In any investigation, we have to begin with a clean sheet. A sheet that is not stained with preconceived ideas, and opinions.

This of course is extremely difficult to accomplish. Difficult, because the very tool that we are going to use to investigate i.e. "the mind" is already highly conditioned. It is conditioned by our culture, education, environment, parents and family and by everything that we have come in contact with from our birth.

It will be impossible (at first) to drop our conditioning. We must begin with some sort of compromise. Firstly we must try to keep an open mind, (but not so open that our brains fall out) and we should endeavour not to demand a scientific answer for everything.

Both ways are extreme and should be avoided. In other words we should learn to see things as they actually are, and not as we think they should be, or as someone else thinks they should be.

The conditioned mind, dualistic mind, ego, or self, whatever you wish to call it, lives in fear, and it is rooted in fear. For the average human being fear is the main motivation for all our actions. Why is this so? It is because the conditioned mind sees everything in the Universe as impermanent, and it cannot accept

that it too, is part of this same flow of life, death and is therefore, not immortal.

Buddhism, Taoism, Bon and a few other traditions realise that "this" must be the place to start, for if we cannot accept that our minds are conditioned, and therefore deluded, how can we take any steps toward liberation?

There is a Zen saying that goes: "The great way is not difficult, except for those who pick and choose" So what is this "picking and choosing"? It is a lack of recognition of our real condition, or our actual state of existence. The Tao Te Ching states this immediately.

*All that we are is the result of our thoughts; it is founded on our thoughts and made up of our thoughts. With our thoughts we create the world.*

For example:

- The Tao that can be talked about is not the true Tao.
- The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
- Everything in the Universe comes out of nothing.
- Nothing the nameless is the beginning;
- While Heaven, the mother is the creator of all things.
- Follow the nothingness of the Tao, and you can be like it, not needing

anything, seeing the wonder and root of everything.

- And even if you cannot grasp this nothingness, you can still see something of this Tao in everything.

These two are the same, only called different names- and both are wonderful and mysterious.

- All mysteries are Tao, and Heaven is the Mother:
- She is the gateway and the womb door.

In some translations it says "The mother is the creator of Ten Thousand Things" this "Ten Thousand Things" appears regularly in Eastern literature it means basically "everything", everything that is created by the mind. So the Mind is literally the cause and creator of all of our lives, and it can create both heaven and hell.

**The Buddhist Dhammapada states:**

All that we are is the result of our thoughts; it is founded on our thoughts and made up of our thoughts. With our thoughts we create the world. If a man speaks or acts with a harmful thought, trouble follows him as the wheel follows the ox that draws the cart.

All that we are is the result of our thoughts; it is founded on our thoughts and made up of our thoughts. With our thoughts we create the world. If a man speaks

or acts with harmonious thought happiness follows him as his own shadow, never leaving him.

So the mind can be both our worst enemy, and our greatest asset. Any one who realises that mind must be understood, and directed towards an enlightened state for the benefit of all life is called a ““spiritual warrior”” This term “spiritual warrior” is used quite often today in ““New Age” literature and “Martial Arts”” writings, but actually the concept is more ancient than we may realise.

For example in the ancient Tibetan Bon Tradition (18,000 years of history) the term is “Yungdrung Sem-pa”, and later in the Buddhist Tradition, “Bodhisattva”.

Maybe I should take some time to explain why I bring in the Tibetan Buddhist and Bon teachings in an article about the mind and Martial Arts.

There are two reasons; for many ears Tibet was isolated from the outside world where it developed the science of the mind to heights beyond our everyday comprehension, using many techniques to explore and understand the world of conciseness, meditation, psychics, colour, sound and an array of practices that lead to states of Wisdom, Compassion and Ultimate Enlightenment.

Not only have we access today to these teachings in the West (because of the Chinese invasion which force the Tibetans to flee their own country) but because at one stage in history, before Tibet was a country, there existed an area call Zhang Zhung which was spread over the Himalayas, China, and Ancient Persia which was complete with its own language and culture, and it is in

this culture I believe that the ground of all Eastern metaphysics was laid. .

I hope to show in a forthcoming article that the seed of all the Yoga, Qigong, Martial Arts and Meditation practices have their roots firmly planted in the Zhang Zhung culture, and I have been fortunate enough to have received Tibetan teachings for many years, and today I have direct access to the pre-Buddhist Tibetan culture through my root teacher Lama Khemsar Ripoché who, currently, is the only Bon-po Lama resident in Europe.

Taoist Sages on the other hand are not so easy to find outside of China, and Taoist literature is very often heavily hidden in symbolic language.

*It is said that conciseness is aware of its self, and by being aware, sees itself as separate from the rest of life.*

It is said that conciseness is aware of its self, and by being aware, sees itself as separate from the rest of life. This very illusion of separateness, is the root cause of all problems, as the mind then starts to create the “Ten Thousand Things” it then separates, divides and names things, so that it feels permanent and in control, but it is not so.

The mind creates countries, politics, language, religions, philosophies, and labels everything in the Universe, and then thinks that they are real. This is called “relative truth”, true only in the sense that when we call a “table” a “table” we can communicate with each other, but **ultimately** there is no such **thing** as a ““table”” it is simply a label of convenience.

This can be understood by analysis, such as, is the table the top, or the legs? If you take one leg off is it still a table? Is the table the sound or the word table? And so on.

So how does this relate to the Martial Arts? Actually it is very important, because the mind thinks in concepts, we must understand that the conceptual mind cannot have a relationship with an object.

An object can only be understood by the senses. For example, if we take Taiji as the object, then it cannot be understood by the intellect, by academic thought, by the conceptual mind, in other words you cannot learn Taiji by thinking, only by practicing.

Today we see Science and Business destroying our planet simply because the intellect is valued more than the senses. A child can sense what is wrong and what is right with our world, but the agendas of politics, religion, science, business, and idealism, have no **sense** of how things really are, they **think** that they **know**.

So in the Martial Arts our practice should be effortless, without thought, spontaneous, so that we avoid even thinking of ourselves as Martial Artists. A Martial Artist with a mind that is conditioned (ego) has no ability to ever reach a high level of accomplishment, because of the very limit that he places on his or her understanding.

Author Steven Harrison in his book “Doing Nothing” about the spiritual search has a wonderful

story of how our minds become conditioned by our culture, and how some cultures can see things as they are. He tells of a scenario where two people live in New York. The first person works lumber futures, earns a six figure salary, and is highly respected in the community. The other man walks down the street while talking to the Gods. He is considered by the community to be mad, and should be locked away.

Now lets take this scenario to the South American rain forest. The man who sells lumber futures would be considered crazy, and the other man would now be the Shaman, to whom the people would bring their troubles.

So we can see here how our outlook and attitude can become conditioned. With Martial Arts training how ever it is possible to condition the mind even further. I'm sure we all know the importance so people put to grades, badges, uniforms and titles; unfortunately this only adds to our confused state. Retaining the beginner's mind is so essential.

**Yet another Zen story illustrates this:**

A Buddhist scholar had an interview with an old Zen Master. The scholar was determined to impress the Master with his knowledge of the sutras and teachings of Zen. They met, exchanged greetings, and sat down around a low table. Immediately the scholar started talking, expounding his views, and opinions. On, and on, he went proudly displaying the knowledge his academic training had given him.

After a while the old Zen master (by now rather tired) stopped him and asked. "Would you like some tea?" To which the scholar replied that he

would. So the old master started pouring the tea into the scholar's cup, but when it was full, instead of stopping, he carried on, until the tea ran all over the table and into the scholar's lap. "Stop!" cried the scholar "What are you doing?" "Well" said the old man of Zen, "you see, just like this cup your mind is so full of it's own self importance, that, to understand anything at all, you must first empty your cup"

When the mind wishes to feel important it invents things. Competitions are a good example. Why do we need to be competitive, if not for "ego?"

Look again at ancient Tibet. Where is the Tibetan Olympic team? And despite all the suffering at the hands of the Chinese, where are the Tibetan terrorist groups? As the Dali Lama said, "Violence only brings more and more problems". People who panned for gold in Tibet were thought to be crazy, when the real gold is in our natural enlightened state.

*And herein lies the answer to our neurotic monkey mind, we need to create some space in our lives, through our internal arts*

There is a very famous saying in the Dzogchen tradition. It says, "Do not be distracted". But our lives are nothing but distraction, we are surrounded by distraction, and we are addicted by distraction. No wonder that the mind finds silence, emptiness and space threatening.

And herein lies the answer to our neurotic monkey mind, we need to create some space in our lives, through our internal arts, meditation, yoga or formal spiritual practice, such as Ngondro, or Tantra

(but not the New Age kind, which has nothing to do with Tantric practice at all) seeing in nature a reflection of ourselves, and not some thing to be conquered.

Mount Everest is a sacred place for the people of that region, not a rubbish dump for Western climbers. The conditioned mind sees nothing as sacred, the environment, the animals, the landscape, because it is fractured and not whole. The late Zen Abbot D.T.Suzuki addressed a gathering of many faiths from around the world, in Switzerland some years ago. He began with these words:

"Man against God

God against Man

Man against Nature

Nature against Man

God against Nature

Nature against God

Very funny religion!"

So there are Religions that condition, and methods that points toward liberation. Eastern thought often differentiates between "Mind" and "Nature of Mind".

The nature of our mind is said to be like the sun, which is always shining, but it is obscured by our disruptive thoughts, which are like the clouds, that hide our true nature.

Many ancient cultures associate the mind with the heart centre. Value is put more on intuitive feelings, and ""**knowing**"" through the senses, rather than conceptual and academic knowl-

edge. They understand the need for harmony with the environment, and accept the way things naturally are.

Only the conditioned mind wants security and permanence, it cannot accept that it is not only deluded, but also not even **real**. This of course is difficult to comprehend. Once we see that the mind is not what we think it is, and that there can be no such thing as security, or a permanent self, only then can we begin to relax into our natural state, which releases an amazing amount of energy.

Even today science has no working model for conciseness, we seek answers on one level of perceived solid space, and call it reality. We think reality is, what we are told it is. And live out our lives in confusion and distraction. Or we may seek answers in the spiritual quest. There are many practices, techniques, that can keep us amused for years, and this is not to say that they have no value, but at the end of the day the "Self" the "Me" is still there. And so are all the same old problems. What is important is to have the right "View" an understanding that while there is a "Me" there will be confusion. Ultimately there is no "Way" there is only "Seeing". When the mind sees that there is no way out, it becomes very quiet. And in this stillness we may just find answers.

The Wife of Colonel Lesley Weir, had an audience with the 13<sup>th</sup> Dali Lama in the days when Britain and Tibet had diplomatic relations. News of Amy Johnso's epic flight from England to Australia had just reached the capital Lhasa. She conveyed the news to His Holiness, about the single-handed flight over shark infested waters etc. The Great Lama chuckled and said "Yes, yes, very good, very good". (Having no idea or conception about the outside world whatsoever) then he looked her in the eye and said "but why was she in such a hurry?"

## Seeing With Your Mind

This is what we are taught in the Internal Martial Arts. To 'see without seeing' is one of the most difficult aspects of one's training. On the one hand it is an important part of the martial arts as we learn to see with the mind which is much faster than using our eyes. And on the other hand, in doing this, we learn that we no longer need the martial arts once we have learnt this. But it is the initial internal training that gets us to the stage where we no longer need the martial arts.

And once there, it can become quite lonely as the Internal Martial Artist sees things quite differently from others. One is continually asking oneself, 'why?' Why for instance do people like Bill Gates want to earn more money? Surely they have enough to live on. I guess it becomes easy to give it all up once you have enough but the harder and more courageous thing would be to stop striving when one has nothing to begin with! Difficult when one has responsibilities like providing for a family etc.

However, we can go half the way there by seeing with our mind. I am always aware of my own destiny and from whence I have come. This is very important in one's development as a spiritual being as it lets you know that you aren't important at all and that you really are only a spec of dust, totally unimportant. I will die physically so what was it all for? People tell me that what I do is important because I teach people good stuff. But they will also die and sooner or later what I have taught will become paler and paler until every trace of my presence physically has gone, just a vague memory about someone's great, great, great, great ancestor. So over time, I will become very unimportant.

However, my greatest importance is the addition that I can give to the over-all great energy of the Universe. I am here for some reason and no matter how spiritually aware I think that I have become, I will never really know. I can only assume. And no matter how high up in any faith I could become, I have only read books to gain such knowledge.

The knowledge of course is within me. Everything is within me. But only my inner-being can access this knowledge as it is far too great for my puny brain to handle, I would explode. All I can see are very brief 'flashes' of what really 'is'. And the knowledge that I impart to others, I really do it for my own benefit as that is what I was meant to do. And isn't it a wonderful feeling to actually know why one is here physically. You can then get on with business without striving, without worrying, without trying to push other avenues that you THINK you should be into. You can then enjoy your physical life without all of the human B.S. That comes with conscious thought.

The road to this is however is learning something. And for that I really do need a physical mind to begin with. Because ultimately, our physical, conscious mind is only ever that part of the inner mind that is allowed to run the shop while the boss gets on with business!

*By Erle.*

# CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION

*Mark Walford: London*

It was The Classics, I think, that led me more than anything toward the more sublime internal attitudes of Taiji, and so I thought I would try my hand at writing something in similar style :

We must give form to Mind as well as Body.

Mind needs Spirit as much as Body.

Sharpen Mind to its point of openness and experience Mind as Body:

One thinking form.

We must expand Mind in all directions and feel.

Expand Mind to its full openness.

Feel from the source.

Breathe from the source And give form to Mind as Thinking Body.

I have been thinking recently about Evolution. Basically this ~ that we arrived from a one~celled life form to this complex organism we find ourselves clothed in. And that it would be arrogant to assume that we are the pinnacle of this amazing voyage; that it ends here with us. Evolution is a continual process of change consciousness making shapes and forms with itself.

The Evolutionists promise us that we are fast heading for a major turn in the evolutionary spiral the equivalent of when we crawled out of the sea as fish!

Obviously, with the present state of our world and our place in creating that, there are

Serious doubts as to whether or not we, as a species, will survive this leap. I like to think we will.

But what will it look like? What will it feel like?

We already have hints with the vast, sprawling escalation in Human Intelligence over the last few decades and with our athletes pushing their bodies through the boundaries.. each new generation excelling past the previous generation. Pure intention governing the growth of Mind and Body; Evolution no longer ruled by the laws of necessity, but by the laws of choice, the choice to expand and explore.

Indeed, our Evolution seems to be becoming conscious. And with fields such as Neuro~Linguistic Programming creating new systems for our use of Mind, I see the possibilities stretching out before us.

And what place does Taiji have in all this?

Well, Taiji is Yin~Yang Fist and The Yin and The Yang are the Mother and Father of all change. More than just an art. More than a science. More than just a martial art or movement meditation and more than (as I have recently heard it classified here in Israel) a sport. I like to see Taiji as a physical and energetic technology.

The body is a complex matrix of physical and energetic dynamics with thousands of tiny electrical impulses firing down their pathways in the nerves to carry information to the pertinent body parts. And each of these pathways is strengthened every time

this process is repeated. This is how we build physical patterns. Body's habits. These myriad patterns of electrical impulses act as a matrix of information and programming which, in turn, formats the general construct of the physical; that is,

the web of muscles and the network of tendons within that web.

These patterns are subject to change. It happens constantly throughout life as our daily habits change. For instance, I began practicing Thai Massage a year ago and it has created changes in the structure and build of my musculature, but more than that ~not just the flexibility of tendons or the density of muscles. I'm talking about the dynamic of the whole; the subtle relationship between muscle groups. And although these changes that have evolved in my body from practicing the massage are far from negative, they are at odds slightly with the form of body my Taiji training has been leading me swiftly toward. Now I am practicing the massage between six and twelve hours a week which forms strong patterns and the changes are obvious to me. But what about our lesser body habits that are rendering change throughout our physical system on a more subtle level?

I am of the opinion that Taiji can help guide our Evolution toward its= highest point.

Therefore, I believe that it is important for us to seek out those dynamics that Taiji teaches us in everything in our lives, from our professions to the way we walk, sit, make love. Everything.

Why not make every tiny thing in our lives an exercise in empowerment and make our personal Evolution conscious?

Why not *choose* to enhance and perfect those patterns of impulses of energy and Information?

Who knows where it might lead?