

Combat & Healing

June 2001 Issue

Issue Number 45

Single Pushing

Realistic Self Defence

A Weekend with the Man

To Hell & Back

Time Will Show Us

Fa-Jing

The Hands Say It

PLUS

WTBA News, New
Videos etc.



COMBAT & HEALING

The Magazine of the World Taiji Boxing Association

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FRONT COVER

Goodbye Horse's Head. Some of our students attending the last great gathering of WTBA and Erle Montaigne personal students at "Horse's Head" Farm before our move to Oberon.

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This issue has been published much earlier than normal due to our move to our new farm in Oberon, NSW (See Left).

As a consequence of this, some articles that we had slated for this issue by our very popular writers, **Michael Babin** and **Tony Court** were not able to get to us before going to print. I apologise to our readers and to Mike and Tony but will definitely include their articles in the next issue due September 1st 2001.

So, because of this you will have to put up with more than usual ramblings from Erle Montaigne!

Single Push Hands: The Entry into Fa-Jing

By Erle Montaigne

Most so-called masters of Taijiquan regard single push hands as an entry into double push hands and usually push their students into double push hands long before they should even be thinking about it, or worse, by-passing single push hands altogether!

The reason for this relatively modern trend lies in the reason now for doing Taijiquan. This reason is mainly for being good at push hands and not for why the art was originally invented, for self defence physically and internally. Masters and other teachers think that one's ability in Taijiquan is concomitant with one's push hands ability! This could not be further from the truth.

If one practices a sophisticated self defence art such as Taijiquan to be good at one of its training methods only, then this is like purchasing a Porsche motor car and leaving it in the garage! Push hands, single or double or Da-Lu is only a passing or continuing phase in our total training and should only ever be looked upon as an excellent training method to gain what it is that we are striving for in our Taijiquan training. If one wishes to only be good at push hands, then that is all he or she has to practice! You would

never have to learn form or fighting methods, only push hands, but that is where you will stay forever, being good at push hands!

Even when I was left alone to learn by myself using my own resources, it was single push hands that I would practice with my then students day in day out.

When I was first training, single push hands was the most important part of my initial training and I remember spending hours each day in its practice. Even when I was left alone to learn by myself using my own resources, it was single push hands that I would practice with my then students day in day out. Nowadays, when I am asked how I learnt about 'fa-jing' (explosive energy strikes), I now say that it is the amount of single push hands that I did in my earlier training.

As I progressed into my advanced training and got well into advanced 'Double Push Hands', I would always begin a training session with single push hands as this seemed to draw up the Qi better than going straight into double or da-lu or any of the other training methods.

Now that my children are getting older and they are now ask-

ing to be taught seriously and classically, it is single push hands that I am relying upon to give them what I have gained from my own training. Of course we learn form and indeed, very comprehensively with only one or even only on half of a move learnt each day, but we also spend around one hour each morning just doing single push hands. And I am again re-discovering this wonderful and very sophisticated training method. 'Sophisticated', in that this relatively simple exercise (just try to tell my children that it is simple!) Gives you all that is necessary for self defence in the way of muscle tone and especially upper body tone including the waist which is the power source for fa-jing.

It's amazing how much one's power will increase once you have stopped using adverse muscle groups!

This exercise works all the right muscles and groups of muscles purely to gain very powerful strikes from all angles and positions and at any time, close or near. It's amazing how much one's power will increase once you have stopped using adverse muscle groups!

This exercise above all others also works upon one's lungs and the amount of air you are able to draw in. In the past when teach-

ing push hands, I have always noticed that when training with in particular, younger and physically stronger people, that I am always able to keep going for much longer with no huffing and blowing!

This is nothing special on my part, but just that I have learnt over the years through thousands of hours of training in push hands, to use my power source (lungs) to their utmost. This enables me to conserve energy and only use what is necessary. However, younger people will always use all of their available power, thus wasting it and become tired quicker than this old work-horse even though they have much more Yang Qi and are physically stronger. My son Ben who is becoming and will be one of the best practitioners of the internal arts that I have ever trained, asked only this morning why it is that he is gasping for breath after only one hour of very powerful training, and I am still in a relaxed state. I did not give him the answer of course, as I wish to be able to give it to him for a bit longer! However, there will come the time of course when he, and my other children will far surpass my own ability as they will have been training for relatively much longer having begun at a very young age.

I have begun my children on single push hands at the 'medium frame' level as I do not want them to make the same mistakes that I (and just about everyone else) have made in going into a wide, low stance therefore losing a realistic fight-

ing ability and having to regain it much later. We have begun in the 'power stance' method of push hands so that if they are ever attacked, they will have trained in a normal stance, one that they would be in just standing in the street! All of the basics are still taught, how to hold the p'eng posture and why, how to work the waist as the power source and not the triceps muscles only, how to use 'eagle vision' so that in a real situation they will never wait until attacked but explode into ferocious attacks as an animal would, never giving a sucker an even break! Never leaning to or fro, relying solely upon the waist for the power source and not upon the legs to push or pull but rather that the legs are only used to hold you up in a balanced position, reacting to any little change in weight such as the power of one feather landing upon one's shoulder or reacting violently to a larger and heavier weight attacking to the chest or face, learning how to give more than is given (in life as well!)

Learning how to combine yin and yang and not just using yang, learning about how to defeat a force using yin (soft or mental) methods. Learning respect for all animals and things on this earth (yes we learn this from push hands when done properly without ego!) And with a Father like me, knowing that to take oneself too seriously, is to invite defeat in life and physical attack!

All of the above and more can be learnt and should be learnt from one's single push hands

training long before you go on to the more physically advanced double push hands. My sons and daughter Kathleen said something that made me stop and think yesterday after they had gone to play with friends at the local creek, swimming and generally bugging around as kids do! Ben had jumped into the creek and rolled over striking his right buttock on a rock causing him some pain and a large bruise. Of course when this very protective father heard of this, it was "right! Never again" etc., etc., you know the score.

But then all three children piped up in defence and promptly told me that they received worse damage while simply practising push hands!

But then all three children piped up in defence and promptly told me that they received worse damage while simply practising push hands! What they meant of course was the fact that one's muscles get a better work out that spending hours in the gym which causes the muscles to make lactic acid which causes pain for a while. But they did not complain as they knew that this was a good muscular pain.

And I must admit, that not having practised single push hands for some time, I too was feeling the strain the next few days after our initial training sessions.

In only one month of solid single push hands training, I have noticed a huge increase in the upper body and all over body strength and power and bulk in my children, even in little Kathleen who has amazing triiceps for a little girl! This causes their punches and kicks and all other attacking methods to become harder and more penetrating which in turn has them now training on the heavy bag more often without my having to tell them to train because they can see the difference in their attacks and internal as well as external power.

And it's just great, because prior to my children beginning formal push hands training, they were all into weights! Thinking that it would make them strong. However, after only one month, they all have now given up the weights as they can see that single push hands is far superior in building both body bulk, power and muscle tone.

Eli is one of the best drummers (rock and roll/blues etc.) in the area and because of this has very powerful forearms. However, after doing his push hands training, he has noticed that his drumming power has increased several fold as well as his endurance! His forearms are getting like Popeye! Ben is a wonderful pianist and he too has noticed that his endurance and power on the piano as well as his subtleness (yin and yang) has also increased. So push hands has helped Ben to control his playing between yin and yang and to differentiate their dynamics of the piano. Kathleen is a singer

and pianist and her voice has gone from being soft, to very powerful, so much so that when we practice music (in our family band, Moontagu Blues), acoustically, she does not have to have a microphone!

Single push hands can alleviate many mental disease states as well because it emulates normal good old fashioned hard work

Single push hands can alleviate many mental disease states as well because it emulates normal good old fashioned hard work. Hard work is something that many modern people are lacking in having mostly sedentary jobs and trying to compensate for this by going to the gym which never quite makes it.

Because we are working with another person exchanging yin and yang Qi between to people (or three or five in the case of multiple push hands), the mind is also given a workout sub-consciously so that when you finish a good strong training session, you seem to be more alert and refreshed ready for the day's work. And depression (the worst epidemic apart from diabetes, the world has seen) just disappears! Maybe it's just that sense of achievement or perhaps it has something to do with the internal balancing effect that push hands has upon the body. Certainly, push hands has the ability to balance out the yin and yang Qi in the body which is mainly the cause for 99% of all

disease states. And push hands is only of the only things that will cause your Qi to be turned into 'Jing', which is the workable form on Qi; like water is to steam.

Modern Taijiquan is much the same as modern music in that once upon a time long ago, musicians would have to firstly have to have some aptitude, some talent or something 'internal' or some 'soul' as we say in order to make music in perhaps a band.

Nowadays, it seems to me that modern musicians who play modern music has lost the internal part of their craft in that we now have the ability to have computers write the music and even make up the words. Let's face it, not many people actually listen to or even care about the poetry of music any more!

So many modern musicians just don't have any soul and the music nowadays for the most part has lost its internalism and is just an empty shell.

And it's the same with modern Taijiquan where most people unfortunately are only making a set of physical movements which they have learnt over a couple of weeks and call it Taijiquan!

With push hands it's the same, you can tell straight away if someone has that internal essence or 'soul' in their Taijiquan when you join hands with them. Often you will not feel anything, only an empty shell. Often however, someone comes

along, someone who perhaps knows nothing at all about Taijiquan and who has never even trained. But this person will immediately be seen and felt to have an internal essence. And this is every teacher's dream, to find students like this where all the teacher has to do is to fit the key into the lock.

Rules for Single Push Hands:

1/. Only ever have the student stand in the absolutely basic position using the big open stance, (**Photo No. 1**) if you discover that they are not getting it at all! Often you will need to begin at the very beginning for people who have absolutely no body mechanics at all. However, for the most part, most people are able to begin at the next step,

begin with the big open stances, at some later stage, you must change this to the power stance and it is often difficult to get someone out of the habit of taking the easy way and standing

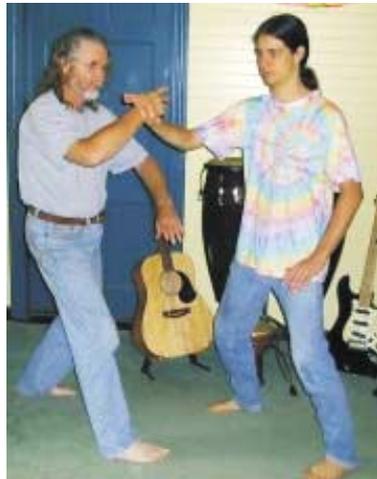


PHOTO number 1

'strong'. So in beginning with the lower stances, we have to teach the student incorrectly in order for them to learn anything at all! However, if you can begin with the 'medium frame'

'frame' stance or 'power stance. Notice that the position of the feet are actually reversed with the rear foot on a N/S line (supposing that you are facing the North to begin with and your partner is facing the South), while your front foot is on a N/W line (45 degrees to the rear foot). You will find while in this stance that you have much more physical power as well as internal power. This enhances the power of the waist rather having to rely upon the power of your legs in pushing. And it gets you away from thinking that 'push hands' actually is to learn pushing! Push hands is to teach you about self defence and attacking as you do not 'push' in a fight! It teaches you about the power of the waist and how to use it in attack. The power stance forces you to rely upon this power, centrifugal or lateral power.

2/. Pull in the chin. This will

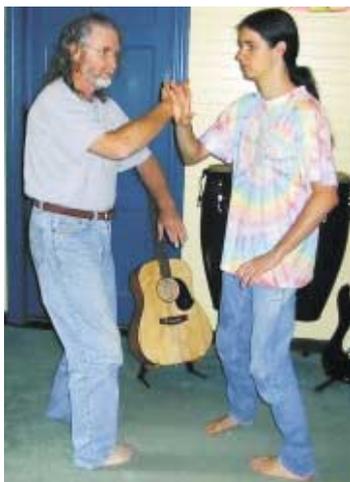


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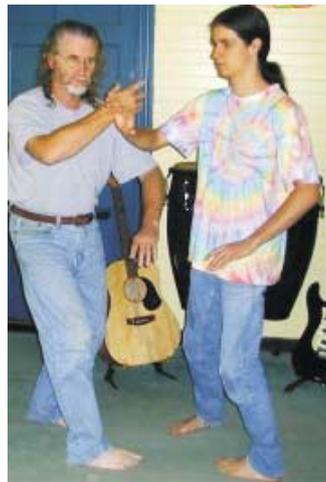


PHOTO number 3



PHOTO number 4

that of the 'power stance' or 'medium frame'.

This to me is essential as when you have to teach someone to

stances then you teach correctly right from the beginning and the more advanced stuff comes much easier later on. **Photo No. 2** shows the 'medium

cause your backbone to become a little taught and straight, thus aligning the vertebra so that you can use the accumulative effect



PHOTO number 5

of each vertebra in releasing the electrical energy stored in each vertebra.

3/. Hold your wrist in your centre at all times. Never allow the wrist to move away from the centre as this is a big mistake that most people make and shows that they are moving their arms and not their centre. For instance when I sit back and turn my waist to my right upon my partner's attack, my wrist must still be in my centre showing that I have turned my waist to my right and not just my arm. **Photo No. 3** shows the correct positioning while **Photo No. 4** shows the incorrect position with my right wrist out of my centre.

4/. In the beginning hold your arm so that there is a 90 degree or more angle at the elbow. This protects 'your garden' not allowing others to enter. Keep the

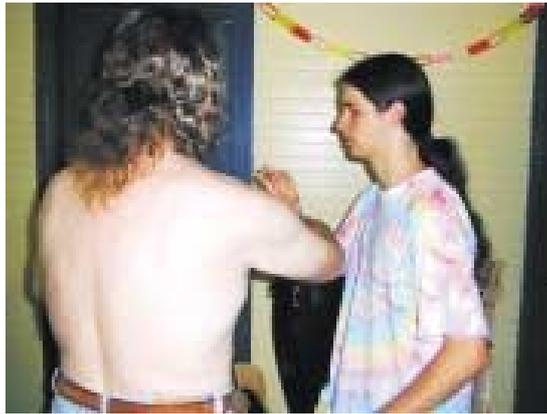


PHOTO number 6

elbow lower than the wrist while using p'eng. (**Photo No. 5**).

5/. Teeth are not closed but slightly open while the tongue is lightly touching the hard palate like saying the letter 'L'.

6/. Breathing should be slow and deep, natural.



PHOTO number 7

7/. Shoulders should be relaxed and dropped.

8/. Chest should be slightly concave.

9/. There should be constant pressure between the two

wrists, do not allow the pressure to slack off for instance when you are rotating your palm to attack.

Never only sit back as you feel the pressure form his attack. This

will invite defeat. You must allow your waist to turn at the exact same time that your weight begins to move back onto the rear foot.

10/. Never dictate the movement, always allow your attacker to cause your waist to move. All you should do is to loosen up your waist and hold a solid p'eng so that it does not collapse when pressed. As you change your weight form front foot to rear, your waist will naturally turn to your left or right (depending upon which hand you have forward) from the power of your partner's pushing.

11/. Use only peripheral vision. Never look at the hand that is pushing you.

12/. Your eyes should stay where they are, do not allow them to move with the turning of your waist. So as you turn, you will be looking out of the corner of your eyes as the gaze has not changed position. This has the effect of toning up your

reflexes by its action upon your hypothalamus.

13/. Never only sit back as you feel the pressure from his attack. This will invite defeat. You must allow your waist to turn at the exact same time that your weight begins to move back onto the rear foot.

14/. Keep vigilant so that your shoulders do not rise with tension, keep dropping and relaxing both shoulders.

15/. When you feel the push, naturally relax your scapular so that it pushes out. This is part of your power system, so that in defence it is like a leaf spring on a car and in attack it is like a canon as it pushes back in. **Photo No. 6** shows the scapular at normal when it is not receiving pressure. **Photo No. 7** shows the scapular when it is receiving power. This is often difficult to master and requires some training. I give a simple exercise of leaning up against a wall on your left or right scapular. Then, using the correct muscles, cause your scapular to push out quickly, thus forcing you away from the wall using only the power of your scapular. However, during push hands, this should happen because of the power coming onto your wrist. You do not push out the scapular using your own power. This has the effect of dissipating his oncoming power over the whole of the 'Power Band' which runs from your wrist up along your arm, around your back including both scapula .

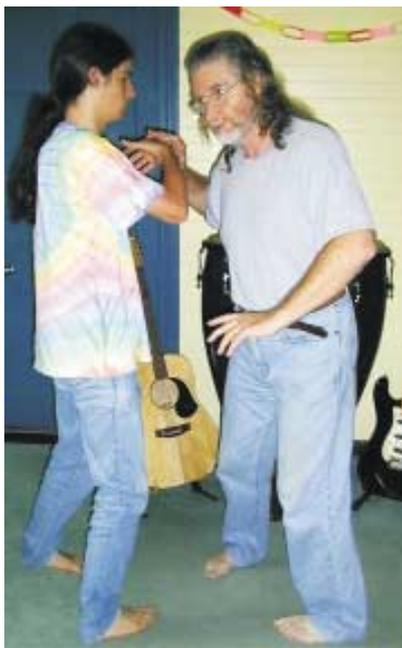


PHOTO number 8

16/. When attacking using perhaps a punch in normal fighting, this scapular action will also hold true in that at any given time, one scapular will be pushed out ready for action.

17/. Push hands until you feel like your shoulder and triceps are burning up. Then change hands.

18/. When pushing against a solid p'eng, do not allow your wrist to leave its position in the centre! For instance in **Photo No. 8**, I am doing it wrong in losing my centre by trying to gain power by leaning using my weight rather than my waist.

19/. Connect the waist to your wrist so that when the waist moves so too does your wrist as the two are totally connected. If you do not do this, you have lost your centre.

20/. As a general rule, when you are receiving, you are inhaling and when attacking, you are exhaling. However, when the pushing hands becomes fast and furious, you will

want to breathe in on every second or third attack and visa-versa. This will stop you from breathing too fast thus causing tension in the upper body.

I will be expanding upon this topic into a small book which will go up onto my site free of charge to download. I will be adding the practical side of things, exactly how to do single pushing with many more photos etc.

NEW VIDEO TITLES:

MTG 218

The Wudang Hand Weapons Volume Two

On this volume, Erle continues with the last six Hand Weapons from the Wudang training system. Included are the following sets.

7/. **COMBINE HAND:** This one combines many aspects of the first six methods and teaches us about instant attack and defence in any given situation.

8/. **DART HAND:** This method teaches us about the use of very quick hands in continually striking with different methods. One hand strikes as the other one controls etc., just like the Chinese weapon called the 'dart'.

9/. **DRILLING HAND:** This method teaches us about one of the most important methods of attack using drilling methods.

10/. **SHOVEL or SPADE HAND:** This one makes use of the flats of the palms for attack and defence as you would if you were using a shovel!

11/. **DOUBLE BLADE HAND:** This one uses the palms as if they were two blades in attack and defence. A very devastating method of self-defence also!

12/. **STUMP PULLER HAND:** This one has a lot of pushing (jerking) and pulling movements which work upon joints to dislocate them along with the more devastating dim-mak strikes.

A WEEKEND WITH THE MAIN MAN.

By Nick Jones: (Wales, UK)

DAY 1

9.30 am Saturday 26th November 2001 the main man stood before a crowd of approximately sixty excited people and opened the Workshop by thanking all of us for turning up. The Patti Pavilion Swansea was an excellent setting for the Workshop with people attending from Canada, Germany, Ireland, England, Scandinavia, France, Australia, USA and Wales.

Erle got off to a blistering pace teaching the Number 11 Wudang Qi Disruption Kata. It was a pretty hefty kata, but fantastic to learn and perform. While learning this kata, Erle brought our attention to areas of the kata that were present in the Yang Lu Chan and Cheng Fu forms making it easier for the students familiar with these forms to learn the kata. By lunch time the whole kata had been taught to us. Very nice food was made available to us which everyone enjoyed, especially me because I am a gutsy bugger!

After lunch we began learning the Wudang Hand Weapons Forms. These have not been seen before and Erle is in the process of getting these down on videotape. These were the precursors to the Push Hands that we practice. They reminded me of Long Har Chuan, 12

Deadly Katas and Trapping Hands.

We learnt the first six of these training methods that were very tasty to perform. However several of us ended up in a reef knot and we had to find a Boy Scout to untie us!

Before ending the first day Erle introduced us to the 12th Wudang Qi Disruption Kata and warned us that we would all suffer with aching limbs the following day.

Sunday morning everyone hobbled into the training hall!

DAY 2

Sunday morning everyone hobbled into the training hall, Snake Creeps Down postures that appear in the 11 and 12 Wudang Qi Disruption Katas really give your Quads, Hamstrings and Glutes an intense workout.

Erle began this second day by taking us through the corrections of the Yang Lu Chan Form, second third, including some advanced moves that do not appear in the basic form. Erle also taught and demonstrated the Sine wave effect that exists in the form and its individual postures. This really is an awesome form to perform when you are ready to do so. Before breaking for lunch Erle went

over the Wudang Hand Weapons forms again.

After Lunch we continued to learn the 12th Wudang Qi Disruption Kata completing it towards the end of the day. Erle, unexpectedly, then showed us some methods to manipulate someone's spine. These were very simple but effective and interesting to watch.

This workshop, though teaching us many new things was very much going back to the roots of Taiji chuan. The Wudang forms are some of the oldest examples of Internal Martial Arts, showing elements of Bagwa Zhang and both old and new Yang slow forms. The part that intrigued me the most was the Qi disruption method being replaced by Qi Gong methods that really got the arms and palms feeling as though they were filling and emptying with something or other.

It was clear that we all enjoyed ourselves and I hope we all realise how fortunate we are to be taught these rare forms by an awesome martial artist and gentleman, who came many, many miles to share his vast and detailed knowledge that he worked and fought so hard for himself. So I am sure that if we all keep making the effort, train hard and listen to what we are taught Erle will carry on teaching us. So come and train with him again in April.

Thanks from us all Erle.

REALISTIC SELF DEFENCE

Nick Jones: Wales, UK

Taiji Chuan is a fantastic method of self-healing through relaxation of the body and cultivation of internal energy. It is even at its highest level a method where by a practitioner can heal other people. There is however another level that of one of the most devastating methods of self-defence ever invented. I know what you are thinking you have heard this all before. But I feel it is necessary to remind some people of this.

at an ultimate level you cannot split Taiji into areas, it simply becomes *your* Taiji and any reactions are reflexive.

Many instructors split their classes into a martial class and non-martial class i.e. slow form and Qi gong. Now in my opinion to truly grasp this art you need to work hard and attend classes in all these areas, as at an ultimate level you cannot split Taiji into areas, it simply becomes *your* Taiji and any reactions are reflexive. With the classes you will find students who train in both areas, and students who train in only one area.

This article is directed at students and instructors who practice the Martial side with or without the non-martial side.

I have been learning Taiji for the past six years with Peter Jones (*3rd Dan WTBA senior instructor and chief instructor of Wales UK who has trained in the WTBA from beginner to Where he is now over the past 14-15 years*) and consider myself to be a beginner when comparing myself to Peter and Erle. Yet I have confidence in my ability, system and instruction enough to know that if I were attacked I would be in with more than a fighting chance. I know this because I have excellent instructors and more importantly because I train hard consistently at home in work and in lessons.

Non-Techniques

When training I give as much effort as possible when practicing non techniques, Long Har Chuan and attack defence sparing and all the other no mind training methods. However often the limiting factor in my effort is the lack of effort my training partner shows. What I mean by this is things like Pissy, telegraphed punches, not punching at the target and punching out of range. If you are practicing non-technique reaction to a straight punch to the chin, then your partner should try and smack you on the chin!

Obviously you should start off slowly and gradually over the months and build up on speed and power but eventually the punch should have real intent behind it. After all on the street

your attacker is going to too try and cave your head in. And no I am not a psychopath just a realist. (I have only been taken away by the men in white coats once and I escaped fair and square!)

The fact that your partner is throwing a punch at you that is of maximum ferocity should not be a ridiculous problem for a hard working student as long as the power is gradually increased.

The fact that your partner is throwing a punch at you that is of maximum ferocity should not be a ridiculous problem for a hard working student as long as the power is gradually increased.

Obviously you should start off slowly and gradually over the months and build up on speed and power

The non-technique will be drilled and stored in your sub conscious and using Fa Jing and Eagle vision you will beat the punch. If you have rushed through your learning then expect to get a thick lip or black eye. But be thankful because in the training hall your partner will apologise, get help, do first aid and look after you. On the street the attacker will carry on

smashing your head in and jump all over your now limp and useless body. At the best some nice people with stethoscopes and a big van with flashing blue lights will look after you, at worst some people with a measuring tape and big black car will carry you off in a big black bag. So if you do get a whack in training don't grumble just reduce the power of the attack and gradually build up again.

Now I am not saying you should run up to your partner and beat seven shades of shit out of him or her.

Now I am not saying you should run up to your partner and beat seven shades of shit out of him or her. (**Nick, only a Welshman or an Aussie could say it that way!**) What I am saying though is don't your self and your training partner short. Just gradually build up and introduce realism into the training. In the beginning the attacks are telegraphed and slow and the attackee knows which side its coming from, but in the end when the attackee is ready they should be as near to a street attack as possible.

No Room For Bullies

On the other side of the coin those student bullies who throw full power attacks at the unexpected and uninitiated should grow up or leave the class.

As an instructor you need to keep an eye out for both these

problems and encourage your students to perform realistically but fairly. There are several methods, ironically Qigong's that can bring out the yang energy. So if a student is willing to learn then be patient and nurture them and in time they will be able to defend against a high power attack. If this problem is ignored then it could cost your students life.

No I am not exaggerating, last week a 17-year-old girl was stabbed and beaten 200 metres from her home. Thirty minutes before that a young man was savagely beaten by a gang of coke heads for no reason other than entertainment.

Taiji was created in a time of much violence and brutality and has excellent methods to deal with that violence.

Taiji was created in a time of much violence and brutality and has excellent methods to deal with that violence. In modern times this violence is just as apparent and so we need to remember our Taiji roots.

Realistic Practice

You may want to wear head guards and definitely arm guards, may be a gum shield. If you are not going to strike your attacker then only the attackee needs to wear the gear apart from armguards, which your attacker should wear. Also on the street your attacker wants to kill you they will be salivating

snarling and swearing at you. That fight build up can destroy you before the fight has even begun, so practice this also. Yes that's correct swear and shout at your training partner. You'll be best friends 5 minutes later.

Taiji is an awesome force to be reckoned with if practised in a realistic attack defence attack situation and can save the lives of you and your loved ones. So train hard and ask yourself are you really capable of fighting off an attacker.

Follow Erle's rules for fighting as all the information is there through him, his books and videos just absorb it and practice. If you are in the UK and passing Peter Jones' club then call in if

you want to see some realistic practice.

Peter Jones runs classes in South Wales and beyond.

Phone him on his Mobile:
01792 881380

TO HELL AND BACK.

Clinton Edwards

Greetings from sunny North Queensland. My name is Clinton Edwards, student of Master Ian Garbutt (Uncle semi-truck, the unstoppable.)

I have an amazing story which is of inspiration and will power, and if this story does for you all, what it has done for me, your eagle vision will be open with wonderment.

It all began on a harmless camping trip with a few friends enjoying a morning awaiting French toast and a cup of coffee. Which was being prepared on a kerosene stove, but the cooker was fueled with methylated spirits. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed him about to refill the burner, then to my surprise! I was bouncing and rolling on the ground in flames of ferocity like bees to



the kill.

Bewildered with the shock, once the flames were out, I headed towards rotating sprinklers in the distance to keep myself cool. With numbing sensation surrounding

my entire body. And appalling the layers of skin, which hung from my arms and legs. The body's instant reaction was to shut down its everyday functions, leaving me with a feeling quite exact to a Chi-kung.

While I walked with the rotating sprinklers, awaiting medical assistance, my whole body shook with a tremendous force, pain did not exist and nor did anything around me, I was just present in the world.

As soon as the ambulance arrived, this feeling disappeared, and the unexplainable pain of burns were eminent, and the world existed again, until the medics hit me with the nitrous oxide, then I really questioned reality.

My girlfriend, who also was burnt, and myself were helicoptered to Townsville general hospital. The days to follow is where my understanding of the beautiful art of Tai-Chi and the body come into realization?

When the morphine was lowered and my consciousness was prevalent, my mind begun to run through the Tai-Chi form constantly. Also having to experience excruciating baths, my mind would also slip into its happy

place (Chi-kung), this I experienced through all trauma.

I was flown to Brisbane a week after the incident, skin grafted with 27% of my body treated, then the

Physiotherapists started their work to make sure the skin didn't stiffen and effect my range of movement. To their surprise, I was practicing my martial arts, performing the Wing Chun forms taught by sifu Ian Garbutt, stretching new skin maximum potential. The physio's extremely motivated, *could only comment* on the will power, and get up and go.

I was released in total, four weeks after the incident, and two weeks after was returning to my first year studding natural medicines (massage, herbalism, chemistry and anatomy and physiology.) Successfully completing the first year with what I had been through, I know that Tai-Chi and Wing Chun was the driving machine to the body's remarkable road to recovery.

With this story I hope to give a little insight to what the magic art has done for myself, and to inspire you all in saying "the body has no boundaries and it shall always fight to survive." Make yourself aware daily with this devine blessing through Tai-Chi!

I would like to give a special thanks to Christopher Scott (Victoria) and Ian Garbutt (Townsville) for teaching me this way of life, and all instructors of the arts of old. Also the **comradery** from fellow students and friends will forever be remembered.

Time will show us where we're thrown

By Robert Reitano

Time will show us where we're thrown, when fate decides to let us know."

These are the first few lyrics belonging to a song that I have written. They flashed back through my head as I started this letter. You see, I have always seen my life guided by fate, and it was fate indeed when I was introduced to Ian Garbett, teaching for the World Tai-Chi Boxing Association in Townsville in North Queensland. I believe it was fate that led me to Ian, and faith that kept me training with him for the past seven years. That faith, with Ian's teachings has given me the strength to take the risk and chase down my dreams. Now that they are a huge step closer, I want to tell my story so far, in the hope that others may realize that their dreams are in reach, but remember, 'If you want to chase your dreams, don't oversleep!'

My dream, is to one day be making my own martial arts action movies. A dream I have had since childhood, seemed not so out of reach upon realizing the dynamic potency of the internal martial arts. Having previously studied various forms of 'external styles', I can fully understand and appreciate the differences involved in such 'internal arts'. With arts dealing most with 'Chi' and define it to

such fine detail enabling excellent control, I know I have a profound tool to carry out my mission.

I am constantly amazed by the beautiful arts to Tai-Chi and BaGwa. The way I see it is that these arts involve many different exercises, all of which, are different explanations for the same thing, to attain fa jing, that internal explosive power from

You see, I have always seen my life guided by fate, and it was fate indeed when I was introduced to Ian Garbett, teaching for the World Tai-Chi Boxing Association in Townsville in North Queensland.

which many wonders are possible. Gaining that power will help a person in whatever they wish, if they use it in healing, they will be a great healer, for meditation, fa jing is instrumental for the highest of highs, in combat, it makes someone very deadly.

Now to have these arts backing me up in the film industry, I have already begun to wake a name for myself in the sense of choreographing fight scenes.

The chance to choreograph fight scenes for a short film in Brisbane was another opportunity facilitated by the hand of fate.

You see, wanting to break into the film industry left me with three options. One of which I am working on part time is to write my own script. Sending it off to a producer, one who would round up the money needed, but, power would fall to him and my ideas may be changed, myself not even used in the making of the film.

Another avenue is through the acting side. Doing audition after audition, perhaps trying N.I.D.A, Australia's national institute of dramatic arts, however this field is terribly competitive.

The final route, the one which I have taken, is through stunt work. Although also very competitive, I considered this to be my best bet as my physical abilities, mainly my martial skills would prove a great head start on my competitors.

Again fate intervened, Ian, my teacher in Townsville was in the first Australian stunt school, and topping the school of over a hundred, was given plenty of work, with the best in the industry. Luckily Ian's connections in the industry are still there and he used them to introduce me, proving a great help in getting me started. Ian's friend Peter Armstrong, known as 'Jurassic Pete' is one of the most loved and respected stunt co-ordinators in the film industry.

I have now completed a stunt course with top marks, especially in the acting and fight choreography. The specialist brought on to the course to teach some fight choreography allowed me to choreograph my own fight, and being quite amazed with it invited me on to a film set in Brisbane to choreograph some of the major fight scenes for the lead actor. Man was that fun! Also a great inspiration to carry out my own ideas and projects.

Since then I have been living out of a suitcase competing in different auditions and thanks to my martial arts and in the bit of acting I have studied at Uni I now have a contract for six months in Japan. I am working on a man-made Island off Wakayama City, dressing up as a 'Viking;', wielding battle-axes and jumping off buildings. There were fifty guys going for three parts, and a lot of those guys have been at a professional stunt level for years compared to my three months, but I have 'that something' Erle always talks about. So I beat them and am now looking forward to working with some top people, one person in particular who has worked with Jackie Chan and on heaps of big projects. Someone from whom I'm sure I'll learn a great deal.

This is the start to my career, things to only get bigger and better! I consider it only to be a matter of time before I am working on my own movie, the script x am still working on. So if anyone out there is interested in any way and would like to

participate please get in touch. There are many things I want to convey in my films, especially the philosophy and veracity of Tai-Chi. Happy to note that other members of the Townsville academy have shown great interest in what I'm doing and intend to join me in the formation of our own stunt team similar to Jackie Chan.

thanks to my martial arts and in the bit of acting I have studied at Uni I now have a contract for six months in Japan.

I would like to end this letter with my favourite saying that I think suits Tai-Chi extremely well,

"Learning is remembering what we already know, Doing is demonstrating that we know it, and Teaching is reminding others that they know just as well as you, we are all Learners, Doers and Teachers."

From this I would like to thank Ian Garbett personally for his years of attention. Ian, you are indeed a special character, thank you, you have 'reminded' me of more knowledge than anyone else ever has.

P.S.A happy hello to all those lovely characters I met at Camp 98, May.

God and his Gift be with you all

New Video Titles from Moontagu

MTG219

The Montaigne Children Learn: (Yang Lu-ch'an's Form Medium frame Level.) Vol. 1

Taught at the most pedantic level ever also showing each application for each posture. Goes up to Double P'eng!

A great series to learn how to teach this wonderful form. As I am teaching my own children and wish for them to get it right, I am teaching them in the classic way of 'in the family'. Because we live together, I am able to teach my children they way that this art should be learnt, slowly, day by day often learning only half of a movement and not going on to the next move until the previous one has been mastered.

MTG220

Montaigne Children Learn: Vol. 2

Goes up to Fishes in 8!

MTG221

Gaining Fa-Jing from Single Push Hands

This tape is the video title from the opening article in this magazine. IT shows exactly how to perform single push hands in the medium frame level so that you will gain the prerequisites for fa-jing. Of ourse you have to know HOW to move the body for fa-jing, however, this tape on single push hands will give you the necessary body mechanics and exact muscle groups to gain tremendous power from very short distances.

The Technical Abilities of Fa-Jing

By Erle Montaigue

This is a follow-up article to the one earlier on Gaining Fa-jing using single push hands.

Single push hands gives you the necessary body alignment and muscle group workout in order to



PHOTO number 1

be able to perform Fa-jing correctly. All of the technical ability in the world will not give you fa-jing as it must be a combination of both push hands and body mechanics which I will attempt to give you in this article.

All I can do is to give you my many years of experience in teaching fa-jing and hope that your automatic brain responses come to the fore and teach you the internal part of fa-jing. Without the internal part, you will be simply doing fast body movement which might look like fa-jing to the untrained eye, but which will only be a karate type of movement with no fa-jing at all.

Again, I am teaching my children to do fa-jing at present and I am learning some new tricks myself. And for the exercise, I am using my left hand so that I cannot rely upon sub-conscious reaction that I naturally have with my right hand.



PHOTO number 2

So I really have to concentrate upon what my body has to do in order to teach this to my children. And I am learning some things about fa-jing that I did not previously know as I always just did it and never really had to learn it physically. My children are really beginning to get fa-jing after only two lessons so I think that I might be on the right track in teaching it.

The Snap Punch

The first basic step is to learn the Taiji snap Punch which is not true fa-jing but which is essential if you wish to go on to real fa-jing. This is one of the main ways that I learnt fa-jing. I remember sitting across the lunch table at one of my around 125 jobs that I have had, and practising with a sandwich in one hand and punching across the table at a young Chinese lad's open palm us-

ing snap punches. Then he would do the same until it was time to return to work.

The first basic step is to learn the Taiji snap Punch which is not true fa-jing but which is essential if you wish to go on to real fa-jing.

The wrist has to be loose; this is one of the most important areas because without a loose wrist you cannot gain fa-jing. The snap punch also relies upon the loose wrist. One of the first exercises that I give people is to simply hold the palm as shown in **Photo No. 1**. Now, using as much snap as possible, flick your palm over so that your palm closes into a fist and as it does this, a noise is heard as the fingers snap into place. **Photo No. 2**. You cannot do this if your wrist is at all stiff or if you are using your forearm muscles to do this. You **MUST** use body movement to cause your wrist to turn over violently thus making the noise. Notice the position of the finished fist, which is the way it should always be used. This will give you what is known as "Yin & Yang" in your palm with the bent thumb being Yang while the last three fingers are Yin. We always (apart from the "penetration punch" and the "back fist") use the last three knuckles rather than the first two as in for instance most hard styles.

Actually, the last three knuckles combined are stronger than the first two larger ones! However, you must use the fist correctly where the last three knuckles make contact at the same time! See how the thumb is held into the crease of

the second knuckle of the index finger. It is not held inside of that finger of course, but rather on the top just digging into the crease. **Photo No. 3** shows the fist.

Now, we'll try the snap punch. Do not worry about the rest of the body for now as we are only getting the body mechanics for the wrist for now. Hold your wrist as shown in **Photo No. 4** with the wrist hanging downward slightly and vertical. To get this, hold your palm with fingers held straight out. Now, simply totally relax your wrist but still holding the vertical positioning with thumb facing up. See how the wrist will drop downward slightly. It cannot bend that much but this will be enough to cause an upward snap upon impact. **Photo No. 5** shows the fist when it makes con-



PHOTO number 3

tact by flicking upward thus causing the last three knuckles to make contact. In reality, this also sends a shock wave up into the brain! Try to hit the hard ahnd held mitt with as much power as possible without tensing the wrist or fist. Once you have made contact, the fist must immediately open again ready for action in its 'ready state'. Do not forcefully open your fist as this indicated stiffness; it should just



PHOTO number 4

open naturally after the impact. **Photo No. 6.**

Once you have this punch with a reasonable amount of power making a thwacking type of sound as it contacts rather than a pushing type of sound, you can now learn about the body mechanics of true fa-jing. And for this we use the Taijiquan "fa-jing" punch, which is one of the main attacking methods in Taijiquan.

Firstly see how the whole body looks before and after the fa-jing punch. **Photo No. 7** (before) and **Photo No. 8**, (after). Note that the left heel is lifted and pushed right out and the waist is turned to the front (not to the left!). The body is also lowered.

What most people cannot get around is the fact that the waist must, upon impact turn to the opposite direction to the punch. So if you are punching with the right fist, your waist will eventually and upon impact turn to your right. However, this is difficult when you are learning, as you have to of course do it slowly. Once it gets up to explosive speed (fa-jing) this will not seem such a big deal.



PHOTO number 5



PHOTO number 6

To begin, stand as shown in **Photo No. 9**. Notice the "power stance" with the front toes pointing in slightly while the rear foot is rather straight ahead. The right palm is pointing downward slightly and relaxed. I always teach this bit in slow motion first so I will try to depict it in photos. Everything must be loose so that when you begin turning your wait to your left violently (once you learn it), this will leave your right fist behind for a split second. So now, begin turning your waist to your left as if trying to punch the mitt and leave your right palm behind slightly. **Photo No. 10**

(Upper Body) **Photo No. 11**, (Whole Body). Keep turning until your right fist is almost to the mitt. **Photo No. 12**. As your right fist makes contact, begin closing it into a Taiji fist as your



PHOTO number 7

waist begins to turn back (violently when learnt) to your right. **Photo No. 13**. As your fist turns over (snaps) fully, it will make contact with the last three knuckles and because of the body mechanics here, it will also snap (bend) to your right slightly thus sending the shock wave into the mitt. At exactly the same time, your waist has turned to your right and then has



PHOTO number 10



PHOTO number 8



PHOTO number 9

snapped back to the front as your right fist has completed a circle of counter C/W and has opened again ready for the next attack so that your whole body is aligned. Notice that the left heel is pushed out and that the whole body has dropped by bending the front leg slightly. **Photo No. 14** shows the impact body position while **Photo No. 15** shows the final positioning.

This has shown the body mechanics for fa-jing using the Taiji fa-jing punch. Once learnt, it can be used from very short distances with great power and speed. You should shorten the distance away from the mitt so that you can eventually begin with your fingers touching the mitt and still cause it to be exploded away upon impact.

The Sound of Fa-Jing.

When you can do fa-jing correctly, you should hear a 'thwacking' or a 'cracking' sound upon impact rather than a dull thud. And you should also have made a sound with your mouth, which is indicative of

fa-jing. For instance you would not make a haaaaah sound as this indicates a push. The sound should be like 'pah' or some other short cutting sound. The vocal is an abstract way of making your punching stronger in that the sound you make tells your sub-conscious brain to make that kind of body movement. So if you make an explosive sound, then your attacks will also be.

Other Weapons Used in Fa-Jing

Any portion of your body can be utilized as a weapon once you have the basic idea and body mechanics of Fa-Jing. Elbows are particularly devastating when used in conjunction with fa-jing as they can be used from very short distances when the attacker does expect it. All kicks can be used with fa-jing in particular the Bagua "Cross Kick", **Photo No. 16**. This kick can be done from the front foot thus stopping any kind of counter, as most people do not expect kicks to come from the front leg.



PHOTO number 11

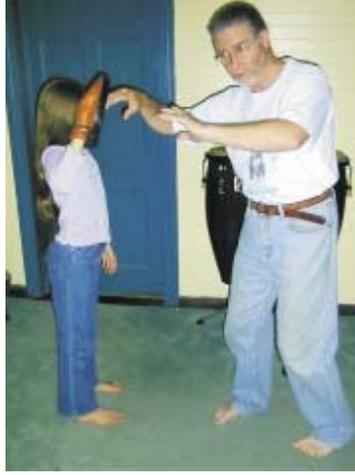


PHOTO number 12

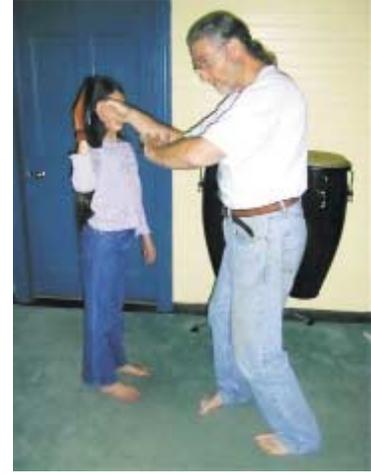


PHOTO number 13

Most people have to get the power by using the rear leg etc.

But Bagua utilizes fa-jing to the extreme with this kick. Notice that the body is twisted to the right while my lower hip area is to the left, thus causing great twisting power when the foot makes contact. The head can be used as can the shoulder and hip and knees. The whole body must do fa-jing and not just one portion. This is why we can use any part of the body in fa-jing as all you have to do it is to hold that body portion in the correct position to strike the object and the body will do the rest. You

can even use your scapular area for very close up attacks.

Sneezing

Sneezing is the closest you will get to true fa-jing without actually making an attacking movement. The whole body sneezes. It is impossible to sneeze with the nose and mouth alone. Your whole body shakes when you sneeze and this is exactly what we do in fa-jing. The whole body makes the body movement and all you have to do is to put out the attacking portion of your body. It's like throwing

shit into a fan! The fan is just carrying on what it does and you throw something into it slowly. When it hits the fan, it is thrown out violently.

So next time you sneeze, upon the explosion, throw out a punch and see how much more power you have. Then try to get that happening without the sneeze.



PHOTO number 14



PHOTO number 15



PHOTO number 16

The Hands Tell the Story

By Erle Montaigne

If the eyes tell the story of the soul (Shen), it is the hands that tell what is happening internally with your Qi.

The understanding of Yin and Yang is one of the most important aspects of anyone's Internal training. It goes much deeper than simply knowing what leg for instance has the weight placed upon it and is therefore Yang and visa-versa. The real knowledge of Yin and Yang is in the sub-conscious knowing about the spaces in between Yin and Yang.

This knowledge and subsequent practice gives us the correct body mechanics to enable to internal Qi to flow freely. We have all heard that the practice of Taijiquan helps to make the Qi flow freely etc. However, just doing the movements of Taijiquan is not enough. It is what your sub-conscious mind is doing that is the main thing in attaining this correct Qi flow and activating in the body.

We are given some inkling of this in the Taiji Classic Saying, "The Power manifests in the hands and fingers". This tells us that what happens in the rest of the body, namely, feet, legs, hips, shoulders and arms, will finally manifest in the fingers like a tsunami which lies unseen miles under the ocean until it finally surfaces when approach-

ing land causing great devastation. It is the hands and fingers that show us finally what is happening deep within the body by expressing the Qi flow and activation from within.

When one is learning Taijiquan for instance, we are taught to do things with our hands. However, if we keep 'doing' things with our hands, we will never learn the true meaning of internal Taijiquan as we are simply using our muscles to consciously make our hands move in certain ways. What we must eventually do through countless hours of training, is to cause the hands to move in accordance with what is happening internally, to move with the flow of Qi and more importantly what each posture is causing the Qi to do. This should then manifest sub-consciously in the hands if there is a free and 'sung' pathway between the tantien and the hands. This is why we have levels of expertise in Taijiquan training, to bring us up until we can attain the highest level of allowing our hands to move by themselves in accordance with what the Qi is dictating. So we have the basic form where we are only learning the basic movements in block fashion which teaches us how to move the body physically. Then we have the 'medium frame' form which teaches us that we must move the hands in accordance with what the body is doing physically. So in this level, you will notice that there are small movements at the end of each

posture of yin and yang. These movements are a kind of to and fro thing which comes directly from the waist. However, if someone were to for instance go onto this level before learning the basic level, he or she would only be copying these tiny movements, making the hands do them and not necessarily allowing them to come from the waist.

We are given some inkling of this in the Taiji Classic Saying, "The Power manifests in the hands and fingers".

What we must strive for in this level of practice is to firstly cause the waist to move in accordance with yin and yang by slowing down and trying to feel the places of stillness or emptiness in between each yin and yang part of each posture. Once we have the waist moving this way, we can then try to connect the waist with the hands and finally cause the hands to move in exactly the same way that the waist is moving. In this way, you are getting close to the ultimate goal in that you are at least moving physically in accordance with what the waist is doing. Your hands are moving because your waist is moving and not because you are simply moving your hands.

Once you have the waist moving correctly, it is then a matter of time and practice before the

waist will be moving without prompting from your conscious mind; you will 'want' to make these tiny waist movements sub-consciously which will eventually cause the Qi flow and the waist movement to combine causing the waist to be moved by the movement of the Qi which is in turn controlled by the sub-conscious mind. Once you have this happening, it is time to link the Qi directly to the hands and in so doing, cause your hands to move purely by the action of your Qi upon them.

How will you know? You will know because it is a very nice feeling when you start to feel the empty spaces between yin and yang. And do not make the mistake that many do in trying to feel these spaces by putting your mind onto the hands as this is again physical conscious tension and you will fail. So many people make the mistake of taking the old classics literally when for instance it says to place the mind on the tantien, people try to 'think' upon the tantien which is only a physical conscious thinking and nothing will happen.

Upper and Lower Combine

In order to place the sub-conscious mind upon the hands we must place the sub-conscious activation upon the upper tantien and the lower tantien. The both tantiens are linked internally. But this is, again not a physical thinking upon these points. And we have a tremendous tool to help us to place the

sub-conscious mind upon these centers. He movements of the Taijiquan form take our conscious mind off this thinking sufficiently to allow us to really have the mind upon these points. When we have the sub-conscious upon the two tantiens, you will then feel the spaces of emptiness in your palms and it is indeed a beautiful thing!

Once the sub-conscious mind is placed upon the two (or three even) tantiens and you are feeling the empty spaces, your physical movement will change dramatically to finally emulate exactly what the internal Qi is doing. All three tantiens will activate and it will be like you never want to stop! Your palms will be buzzing with Qi and moving as they have never moved before, totally 'sung' and flowing like air. In this state, you can only perform the movements as they were meant to be and you will feel for the first time that connection with the Universe as a simple cog in the wheel; you will be floating.

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