

January 2005
Vol. 55

Combat & Healing

Lead Story
Tai Chi Classics

Qigong

Out On Their Own

Searching For The Internal

The Beginner's Mind

The Master Class

Macular Degeneration

PLUS

WTBA NEWS



Ben & Eli Montaigne training Large San-Sau (See Article This Issue)

Combat & Healing

Editor in Chief

Erle Montaigue

Executive Editor

Sandra Montaigue

Managing Editors

Ben Montaigue
Eli Montaigue

Senior Writers

Michael Babin
Erle Montaigue

Senior Copy Editor

Kathleen Montaigue

Copy Editor

Bonnie Montaigue

Research Editor

Bluc Montaigue

Research Associates

Shula, Fula, Rula, and Koola.

Art Director

Goanna Blursnog

Senior Copy Editor

Jack Black

Copy Editor

Sputz Narget

Research Editor

LINDA Garnish

Research Associates

Splitz, Splotz & Splatz

Research Associates

Curley, Moe, Shemp

All of the articles published in this magazine are protected by International Copyright laws. Please contact the publisher for permissions.

We take no responsibility for articles written by other people and published in this magazine.

Moontagu Books
PO Box 35
Gwynfe, Llangadog SA19 9WR
Wales UK
<http://www.taijiworld.com>

CONTENTS

Page 1.....Tai Chi Classics
Paul Brecher

Page 2.....Qigong to Speed Up Progress.
Sherif Abdelbnaser

Page 5..Ben & Eli Montaigue, Out On Their Own.
Sandra Montaigue

Page 6.....Searching For The Inernal.
Michael Babin

Page 8.....The Beginner's Mind
Steve Cooling

Page 9.....The Master Classes
Erle Montaigue

Page 11.....Macular Degeneration:
Erle Montaigue

Page 12Insights Into The Taiji Classics
John Scott petty

Page 16.....The Mind And The Martial Arts V. 6
Anthony Court.

Page 20 .The Hidden Qigong methods from Bagua
Erle Montaigue

Page 25.....Get Connected
Anthony Court

Page B..WTBA Stuff, instructor List Etc.

The World Taiji Boxing Association

Instructor's Worldwide list.

Since settling in the UK, I have decided to make a concerted effort to finally produce a list of all of our WTBA instructors world-wide and publish it on our web site.

However, in order to do this I will need your help. Due to our moving 14,000 mile to the UK and having to upgrade our computers etc., I have lost much of our database and only have those instructors who are in my mind because they have frequent contact with me. Those who do not, I will be able to remember.

So I need your help in compiling this list. If you are a WTBA instructor and have a signed certificate from myself (Erle Montaigne), or from one of our main Country Representatives, please be in touch with your details of name, contact phone, email and area in the world and if you do teach, when and where.

If you are a student of a WTBA instructor you should let he or she know about this and to contact us immediately, as the list is now being compiled.

There are two reasons for this. The main one is so that students can simply look up our web site and see if we have an instructor nearby and secondly so that we can prevent the hundreds of bogus instructors from using the WTBA name. It has come to my attention over the years that there are many out there who study by video

and think that they are entitled then to teach under the WTBA banner. This is running rampant and I hear from students all the time that their instructor is a WTBA instructor level 591.5! However, whenever I go to his area to teach, he never appears of course.

Hence this request form all of our legitimate WTBA instructors to be in touch.

Combat & healing has been off the air since September 2003. However, now that we are settled in the UK, it will be back, bigger and better than ever. However, I need your help as we need articles from you, no matter what. I cannot write all of the content myself, nor can Michael Babin or Anthony Court, so take up pen and get something over to me so that I can make you famous! At last count the last issue of C&H had 12,500 downloads! And that it only counting those that go out from our web site and not the other web sites who also make it available. Nor is it counting those copies that people make for others etc.

We now have good WTBA representation in many countries, including India, Sri-Lanka, France, Italy, Norway, Sweden, South Africa, Cuba, USA, UK, Wales, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Malta, Belgium, Spain, Croatia, Slovenia, Argentina, Venezuela, Cuba, Canada, Egypt, Singapore. And let me know if I have left any country out as I am relying upon my memory.

I will publish an issue of C&H when I gather enough articles to fill it.

Erle Montaigne

An Article About The Taiji Classics

By Paul Brecher

The Taiji (Tai Chi) Classics are the historical writings of the old masters. They are the technical manuals which let us know what we should have within our art so that we can practice it correctly.

What the classics say about Qi Gong (Chi Kung):

The elixir of life lies in the body, regulate the Qi and the body will be well. Develop the body and mind, cultivate ones essence, Qi and spirit. Train the martial and the spiritual, for self cultivation in Taiji balance yin and yang to rejuvenate. The whole body is filled with Qi, the changes of yin and yang move the Qi. The Qi spirals in the body like the coils of a snake. The hips, waist and belly are like a dragon twisting its body. Be like a swimming dragon. Inhale the Qi to the dan dien, exhale to fa jing.

What the classics say about sensitivity training:

Remain internally reserved, contain hardness without expressing it, meet the opponent with softness causing him to know nothing of you. With the opponent rise and drop, speed up and slow down, evade and return, provoke and cease. Use adhering, connecting and following to attain this skill. Learn to interpret Qi, use the eyes correctly, listen with the skin

and remain balanced at all times. Increase your Qi and keep your mind strong, drain the opponents Qi and drain his strength. We are victorious, the opponent fails. You must understand the life and death hand techniques, you must understand the life and death acupuncture points. Attack the points so life is no more.

What the classics say about fighting:

Stick, connect and adhere to the opponent, draw the opponent in, attack with great force. Use spiral movements attack the opponents neck. Always maintain close contact but never grapple, use fa jing.

Be like a speeding horse destroying all in its path. Attack the opponents acupuncture points with the hand techniques of break, bend, beat and pound, press down, rub, push and grab, open and close, rise and fall. Applications for palm are strike down and forwards, applications for fingers are seek and stab the acupuncture points, applications for whole hand are break and drain opponents Qi, applications for fist is to punch. Among punches there are, down and parry punch, below elbow punch, turn the body punch, upside down punch, open mountain punch, under leaf punch, reverse punch, power portion punch and rolling break punch. Remember the footwork follows the body. Every move is an attack, destroy all in your path. Use elbow to take his life. Leave your opponent no room to escape, strike without mercy. The hand like a swift sword, slicing across the forehead

or throat, send the opponent straight to hell. Use an attack no opponent can withstand making sure not to give the opponent an opportunity. Like a tiger pouncing on sheep, like a speeding horse destroying all in its path.

What the classics say about moving with the opponent:

Strike the opponent when his attack is imminent but has not yet issued forth. The whole body must fa jing when attacked, this is an internal skill. To defeat the opponent one must be able to interpret his Qi. Relate to the opponent with turn and exchange, advance and retreat. Know his hands forwards and backwards intention by gaze left but look right. Attacking the opponents blood vessels and acupuncture points and he will faint, forceful attacks on the death points terminate the opponents life.

What the classics say about ones own body movement:

Spine straight and vertical, sink the Qi to the dan dien. Raise ones spirit and turn the waist/hips/belly continuously. Be like a swimming dragon twisting its body be flexible and soft, the body follows the Qi, the Qi follows the spirit.

Paul Brecher is the Senior London Instructor for The World Tai Chi Boxing Association.

Qi gong, a way to speed up your progress

8074 or visit www.taiji.net

Sherif Abdelnaser: Egypt

We all here about jing and inner power but not much people really talk about it as in how to direct it and stuff. Not much say exactly what to do. However thanks to a lot of research and help from Allah, I was able to lay my hand on something that worked and is ideal for internal martial artists as well as external, without having to practice your form for years. Of course practicing your form and REAL Qi gong for some time is better than what's here, because for one thing, after doing that your internal energy will work for you sub-consciously without even thinking about it. But not all of us have the time for that so this is like a small helper until you can find, GOOD Taichi and Qi gong training, for example don't attempt to think that a book written by "____" will actually get you some where. I tried it all but in the end the only thing that proved excellent and really THE real thing is found in the Montaigne system. It just proved to be a VERY practical system from a man willing to teach, and not just claim to be Chang San Feng's son!

But any way I hope any one reading this will find it easy to follow and serving the purpose.

A simple qigong course

Every one possesses Qi since he or she began to live, all we do in qigong is try to strengthen that flow and clear any possible blockages in its flow, so we can have better health and in this article

we'll also cover how to turn that into martial power "jing".

First method

First thing a man must do is to re-discover his one Qi and start to feel it and therefore exercise it to enhance its flow before even thinking about the martial arts uses, so, we start with a simple meditation.

"Before starting you must know some simple basic rules"

1. The neck and head and spine must be straight and relaxed and leveled meaning that if some one ran his hand from head to tail bone he must find the way down smooth and straight.

After some time you will start to feel something building up in the dantien point, that's the Qi

2. The whole back must be smooth, and to do that you must slightly round the shoulders and the sides of your back so you feel your back like relaxed and leveled and smooth.

In this you'll find that the chest will naturally be dropped and it will be easier to breathe from the Dantian area which is the lower stomach area starting from the naval down

3. The breathing must be in the dantian area and not the chest.

4. You must be tranquil and like you're in your own world with no problems and no worries

5. Only focus on the total relaxation of your mind and body and your breath, the deeper the breath the better.

6. The tongue must stick like your saying the letter "L"

The first method:

1. Take a sitting or standing or lying position but any way, if you going to stand keep your knees bent and there must be a fist distance between the arms and the body.

2. Relax the body and mind totally

3. Calm your whole system and concentrate on your body and self listening and sensing its breath and sensing its pulse and so on until you get a hold of your body's natural rhythm

4. Bring your spirit up by pushing up the crown point and at the same time start breathing directly into the dantian point "in the middle of your body from the inside, in the middle of the area between the naval and the sex organ" concentrating the breath in that point more and more on each inhale

After some time you will start to feel something building up in the dantien point, that's the Qi

You must know that the Qi and its flow follows the feeling

of breath “think of the Qi as concentrated air built up in the dantian” so that’s what we will cultivate in the previous method which is to train the Qi to follow the breath and this is the most important method that will always stay with you.

And the better you get at this the more effective the rest of the methods will be.

Second method: building up your awareness

in this section all we want to do is to build up our awareness and our concentration so all you have to do here is to do the first method until you feel the Qi and do the following, all you do is think of that feeling and train your self to send it along certain paths to increase your ability to use it.

each of these are separate exercises but you can however, when you advance and control it well, combine these and do them together randomly and at different speeds until you can completely control that feeling, that Qi.

1. On the inhale it’s like your absorbing it from out side all the way to the dantien and on exhale like your taking it from the dantien and out the nose.

2. on the inhale its like your taking it from out side to your dantien and on your exhale its like your taking it from your dantien, up your spine thru your spine, up your head, down your forehead and it comes at the third eye” a point between your eye’s” and splits to two one going down on the right side and one going on the left side avoiding your nose, into your mouth and at the point were your

tongue is touching. Now, from here on it’s from that point on inhale to the dantian and on the exhale it goes from the dantien and thru the same way as explained to the point in the mouth.

3. Now this one is to train expanding your Qi to fill an area, inhale and think of the Qi filling the whole area from the naval under of Qi in like a ball shape in all directions and exhale and think that it’s shrinking back to the dantien point.

4. Now this is to train sending the Qi to your arms, on the inhale think of the Qi forming that ball again from no.3, then on the exhale think of all of that Qi entering the spine and at the point between the shoulder blades it splits to two and fills your arms. bring the Qi back to the dantien by inhaling and drawing the Qi from the arms to the spine and down to the dantien, and exhale to send the Qi back to the arms as described above.” you might sense tingling, that's ok"

5. Now this is to train sending the Qi to the legs, on the inhale think of the Qi forming the ball again from no.3, on the exhale think of it going up thru the tongue, thru the point the tongue touches, thru the two routs to going at the third eye position, up the head, thru the crown point, until it enters the spine, thru the spine, and to the legs to fill them to the soles. Now on inhale think of the Qi going form the legs, to the spine, up the head, thru the third eye, thru the two routs, thru the point were the tongue touches, thru the tongue, all the way down to the dantien. Then exhale and repeat the process.

6. Now this to train complete circulation, inhale thinking the dantien forming the ball like no.3.

Exhale and think of the Qi going to the upward route from no.5, and the down ward rout from no.4, filling the spine from the two directions and not completing those circulations to the arms and legs. Now inhale and send the Qi thru the both routs at the same time, but complete them to the arms and legs. Now exhale and reverse those flows all the way back to the dantien point.

These last exercises were made to help one to increase his Qi awareness and his control over it completely, as I said before you just don’t start your meditation and do all of the 6 methods! But progress slowly and completely, the better you are at the first the better you will be at the last. So just progress on each step until perfection then do the next when you completely prefect the first.

As a simple suggestion here’s the stances for the last methods:

1. for the forth exercise, stand feet parallel and shoulder width, a fist distance between the arm sockets and the body, palms facing in front of you with the backs of the palms facing you with the fingers pointing to each other, the elbows must be bent like slightly more than 90 degrees, chin pulled in, the head pulled up, back straight, buttocks pulled in.

2. For the fifth and sixth exercise the only difference here is that the arms are down palms facing the floor, fingers pointing in front, knees slightly bent. Other than those you can do any posture in the rest of the

exercises, but you must have the basic principles.

Ok, this is the last Phase, in which we gain the fruit. Now its time to develop your internal power. These next exercises are called condensing breathing techniques. they depend on your progress in the basic exercises, so in order to get real results you must develop your Qi greatly and a lot from the very first exercise, an also develop your control over it from the previous exercises.

Internal power "jing" feels like strong pulsing waves of electricity coming from inside the bones, eventually getting stronger, so don't expect to break bones in a day! It comes step by step ok.

The basic exercise:

In these exercises your stance is shoulder width apart, feet parallel, back as explained in the basic principles, fist distance under the shoulders, arms are held at a 30 degree angle from the body, very loose, palms face backwards, chin pulled in, you breath a reverse breath in these meaning that win you inhale its like your emptying the Dan tien point and when you exhale its like your filling it," by the way its like your concentrating all that air into that point".

1. meditate a little to start to feel the qi, then concentrate on your arms, like its only the skeleton there, forget all the surrounding muscles around it, imagine that the Qi just forces the bone to condense right to the bone marrow every time you inhale.

This is the basic principle of condensing breathing, you must forget the muscles around the bone you're going to work on, and then

imagine that on the inhale the Qi like squeezes the bone from all around it toward the bone marrow. Do this to both sides at once meaning that you for instance were working on the right forearm then you should also at the same time be doing the left?

You can apply this exercise to any bone in your body, in fact you should apply it to all the bones to store in them jing, even the rib cage for instance, this exercise also strengthens the bone physically.

Note:" DO THE SPINE ALSO, they say it's the source of your jing and it's your center, and it's truly like a freaking battery!

The advanced exercise:

Same stance as above, start by inhaling and doing the condensing breathing to your whole body and at the same time squeeze the muscles around it to even squeeze the Qi and the bone more in toward the very center of the bone marrow. Exhale and relax. The breathing in this exercise is also reverse breathing. NEVER forget the basic principle of not really having your mind on other than the dantian breathing your using, only like 40% is on the actual exercise. NEVER to this until you start going out of breath, hey take it easy, it's like weaving silk out of cocoon!

You'll feel waves of current like electricity coming from inside the bone, this is jing. It will get stronger every time you practice so have fun.

How to express jing?

Truly there are many ways; the first is to let it lead your body

from legs to waist to spine thru hands to opponent! Another way is that the jing will start to be very sensitive as Qi goes into the bone so you can send the Qi from the dantian thru the legs to form your root then send it up your leg bones up-setting the jing in that way, then direct that with the waist thru the spine and to the arm bones thru them and into the opponent. So the rule is when you progress to the advanced level the Qi will flow inside the bone as jing in the direction you want it to go. So just send the Qi to support your will but send it thru the bone so it can be jing.

Well the bottom line is that all of these an new methods not exactly your three circle qigong types, so this means its not exactly the kind that will advance your Taichi training naturally but it will enable you to do what you need to do to develop awesome power for your punches and kicks. No matter what style of Taichi you do you will develop jing thru practice so you don't even have to do all this but it's just a means of speeding up stuff.

NOTE: this will not in any way enable you to strike dimmak points, you have to train in the old yang style to do that, and my recommendation is this site:

TAJIWORLD.COM. This guy is the only one you can get the good oil from, trust me I have read almost every book and style out there". Internal power for pushing is cool, but dimmak rule"

Ok I hope this one helps.

OUT ON THEIR OWN

Ben and Eli Montaigne have been studying in the traditional way, Taijiquan, Bagua, Qigong and Dim-mak since they were 5 years old with their Dad, Erle Montaigne. At first it was just that everything that surrounded the children was linked to Taijiquan and the self defence/healing arts. All of our friends who came to our various houses as the children grew up were in some way touched by the arts. So it was just a natural part of their lives and not something that had to be learnt. They would play as Taijiquan was being performed or taught to the students who would come to the house and it would all go in as a part of their natural learning.

Then came the day when Ben (the eldest) wanted to learn more so he came to Erle and asked to be taught formally. In addition he would go into his caravan on the farm and put Erle's videos on to supplement his learning. Without asking, Ben would rise early in order to practice his form and Qigong. Then came Eli's turn as he turned 9 years of age and he too asked to be taught formally and would also put on the videos (which both still do).

The children's learning process was never forced, it just happened as a natural part of their lives and of course being home schooled had a large part of this progression.

Now that Ben is 21 and Eli is 18, both have begun teaching all by themselves after many years as apprentice to their Father. Thrown in at the deep end so to speak, they began a small class at their local village, teaching a group with an average age of 55. I say thrown in at the deep end as this is proba-

bly the most difficult of all classes to teach; people who have never had any type of movement training and who aren't 'new dogs' anymore. Erle would go along once in a while to see how it was all going and to help out so that the boys could listen and learn the finer details of teaching from scratch.

The boys learnt that they had to really break each tiny movement down into its smaller parts so that people could learn and they learnt that in order to help people to learn correctly, they had to make use of anecdotes and anything else that would help. Over the 30 years that Erle Montaigne has been teaching, he has learnt all of the tricks of the trade and has passed these on to the boys (and hopefully Kathleen as she gets older).

Fa-jing is one of the most difficult things to learn and although Erle has developed way to teach this important area, it still takes some time with only the few ever really getting it. However, although Erle has never actually taught the boys fa-jing, only talked about it and performed it many times with them, this too has been a natural learning and one day both boys simply had it.

Erle has always stressed that the world does not go around on Taijiquan alone however, so all of his children have many other interests, like their music with all being accomplished musicians. This is important as so many martial artists rely solely upon their martial arts to get them through life.

This is not good as it all becomes too serious with bowing and wearing the suit etc. If you have something else to fall back on and to occupy your mind, you will always remain happy and not take on the 'genre' of the martial arts as so many do, trying to be Chinese and pretending that they are living in 17th Century China or Japan!

Recently, Eli Montaigne visited the USA for 3 weeks and while there took a small class in Michigan and from the replies we have received, it was received very well with everyone who attended taking in more than they could ever have hoped to have learnt. Eli covered Yang Lu-ch'an corrections as well as the Phoenix Bagua Animal Qi Awakening form and some self defence stuff.

Erle Said: "It's a sad state when children no longer respect nor wish to take after their parents. This has mainly to do with the way schools are run nowadays, taking that responsibility away from the parents and giving it to strangers at such a young age. This is why ours have never been to school. They have been educated very well but not at school. Those who are home-schooled take after what their parents really are and not what they, either knowingly or sub-consciously, pretend to be. So am I am really happy that my children have an interest in both martial arts, healing and music."

Searching for the “Internal” in the Internal Arts

by Michael A. Babin, copyright © 2004

Those few modern experts that you meet who actually have some legitimate claim to practising their martial art in an internal manner (as opposed to the many who go through the motions of doing a taiji slow form or walking woodenly around a bagua circle) will tell you that their doing so is the product of long years of difficult training. The better ones rarely make fun of their external arts peers or think that what they are practising and/or teaching is innately superior.

Better teachers than I have written about this subject, but you can say that the styles commonly referred to as internal (Taiji, Bagua, Hsing-i, Liu He Ba Fa and the Wu-dang arts) are based primarily on understanding the principles of not applying force directly against force as well as using the power of the body as a co-ordinated whole to exploit the weaknesses of an opponent's technique and/or posture. By contrast, the External styles will often rely on over conditioning parts of the body and will base their defence on their technical ability to attack regardless of the punishment that they absorb while doing so.

A popular source of discussion on the various internal and external martial arts boards is whether or not such a distinction is too artificial. I think that there is some truth to this contention as it is important to remember that prior to the 20th Century all systems, when written about, were referred

to simply as martial or fighting arts. The stylistic distinction between internal and external was popularized by a few martial artists/writers, notably Sun Lu-tang, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for a variety of ideological and social reasons; i.e. , wanting to differentiate between arts that were native to China (Taoist) from those that were foreign (Buddhist) in origin.

There is also another way to approach being “internal” which crosses into more subjective areas. I tell those who ask me that learning a martial art in this way is like approaching any discipline that has both a mental and a physical aspect (for example, making music, dancing, sports, woodworking, painting, pottery or any hands-on trade).

There is also another way to approach being “internal” which crosses into more subjective areas

In the beginning you crudely copy the movements of whoever you are learning from to the best of your ability; after a few years, if you have any ability, you stop copying your mentor to the same extent and start to put yourself, both mind and body, into whatever you are doing.

With good instruction, time and patience, the particular theories and practices that you study become ingrained to the point that such a master crafts person does his or her “thing” so well that a

casual observer is fooled into believing that the activity is as easy as he or she makes it look. Until the observer takes their first lesson

The difference between the master and the apprentice also lies in the time spent at the activity in question; the quality of the effort and the innate ability (or relative lack of such ability) of each. The same applies to the study of an internal martial art. If I can continue the artistic metaphor: anyone can learn to paint or draw to a certain extent but few will ever go on to produce a masterpiece. It is also true that there are comparatively few good painters around who offer lessons.

Using this kind of definition really does make the division of individual skill and understanding on an internal or external basis as rather meaningless. Of course, for many modern practitioners, being “internal” is more of an intellectual label that they wrap around their pretentiousness, and not a particular set of physical abilities that can be applied both in solo practise and with others. In addition, each stylistic variation of the internal arts will identify those physical abilities in slightly or greatly different ways.

One way to develop internal martial skill is to cross train in a variety of systems that compliment each other. However, cross training is a funny thing

— it's essential for the serious long-term, martial artist and it can also be counter-productive in that many such students become dabblers at the various arts; never really understanding even one system to any depth.

In this regards, it is essential to remember that there is little potential benefit from simply learning one form from one style and then thinking that you have somehow understood the entire system of which that form may only be a very small part! Learning the basics of a system is not as good as learning and practising an entire system; but, is always preferable to learning any individual form superficially!

if you spend a year in one system and move on to another or try to learn several systems at the same time, or dabble in workshops with an endless list of instructors, you can gain a superficial veneer of skill but may never actually have learned anything in depth.

If you study one art deeply you will learn a great deal but you also limit your potential for growth by not studying how other systems do the same thing slightly (or greatly differently); conversely, if you spend a year in one system and move on to another or try to learn several systems at the same time, or dabble in workshops with an endless list of instructors, you can gain a superficial veneer of skill but may never actually have learned anything in depth.

After many years of training, I now have some understanding of

the words of one of my former teachers. He had said that you had to learn everything you could get your hands on to be an expert practitioner and then, at some point, let most of it go to focus on one approach if you wanted to become a master practitioner. True experiential learning of any mind/body discipline is first a process of accumulation and then a process of de-cluttering and simplification.

In the end; learning the true meaning of being “internal” is up to you and I recommend the words (taken from *The ABC of Reading*) of the late Ezra Pound who wrote: “Real education must ultimately be limited to men who insist on knowing: the rest is mere sheep-herding.”

The Beginner's Mind

Steve Cooling

I was once told to 'keep the beginners mind' (or words to that effect). At that time I just thought it meant that there was more to learn than just remembering a set of moves, which of course there is. Over the last couple of years this has taken on more meaning. Not only should I approach each days training to see what I can learn from it, rather than doing it the same way year after year because I know it, I should also see other instructors and learn of them.

When I started teaching (1 ½ years ago) I realized how I could get drawn down a road of believing some of the praise you get from some of the people attending classes. I have always had instructors who are of a high standard and therefore feel I have a strong grip on the reality of where I'm at (more muppet than master).

To keep me progressing I attend classes and workshops here in the U.K. These are a great way to meet other practitioners and teachers. On this point I know Pete Smith has spoke about getting a camp together where there are a few different instructors teaching different aspects. I would love for this to happen but there needs to be more interest before Pete can take things further so if interested contact Pete 01303 278188 (daytime) or Christina christinalyth@aol.com.

Meanwhile, and this is the basis for me writing this waffle, if you want to learn and progress you have to find someone who is better than you to give a bit of guidance. This is where

that old yin-yang theory pops up because as much as there is a danger of living in a bubble thinking we are as amazing as our students tell us, there is also the flip side of training with high level instructors and thinking we are crap.

This is at least my experience. I started teaching and felt really happy about it, starting attending courses by different people and this caused me to question whether I should be teaching at all. Having spent some time thinking about this and meeting different people from other systems and styles I have come full circle. The shake to my confidence changed something I only thought to something I now know.

I started teaching and felt really happy about it, starting attending courses by different people and this caused me to question whether I should be teaching at all.

'I'm just a person who loves what they do and wants to show others how to do it, there are people who understand more about this than I do and if you want to come with me we'll learn of them together'.

This challenge has made me realize the important thing is not whether we are worse or better (and that's another issue) than somebody else but concentrate on our selves and be happy with where we are and where we're going.

For me this is the beginner's mind - always learning, always open.

I have run the basis of this article past a few people who (I was surprised) said they have felt the same. I had even made one person feel like that!! This really got me thinking and it reminded me of a theory I have about progression. When we start taiji we learn some of the form and think we understand it. As we progress we realize what the movement is supposed to feel like, however, we can't actually do it.

The hard thing is to make a positive out of a negative, so if we are trying to advance in our Taiji practice we will always see room for improvement. This would also seem to apply to those who teach, it is worth remembering where you have come from as well as focusing on the road ahead.

The Master Classes:

By Erle Montaigne

It's not enough to know the movements of Taijiquan and then go out and begin teaching. Knowing the set of movements does not mean that you can actually move!

A ballet dancer for instance cannot simply learn Swan Lake and then say that they can move or claim to be a ballerina. They must first spend many hours doing exercises to turn themselves into a ballerina who can move.

And it's exactly the same with Taijiquan where so many students simply learn the postures of Tai Chi and then practise the whole set thinking that they can then move. It takes a special set of exercises to learn how to move correctly for the self defence art of Taijiquan.

Many students tell me that they do not need to learn how to move in this manner as they only wish to teach it for health etc. How wrong they are as you cannot even begin to teach Taijiquan until you have learnt the martial side of it as both are inextricably linked to form a well balanced set of movements which when combined are excellent for health. Even if one only ever wishes to teach a lunch time class for the local CWA where the average might be 60 and blue rinses abound, it is important to be able to show them the martial applications.

As an instructor you have to be able to impress students and even old ladies and old men are impressed with the martial knowledge that you should possess. And it is very important to be able to show the applications and more importantly be able to use them in a realistic situation, as this gives all students a much better understanding of what they are trying to achieve. You must however be able to explain exactly why you are showing the applications, in that the Qi is activated along certain meridians when these are known etc.,

Knowing the set of movements does not mean that you can actually move!

So when I teach one of my 'Master Teaching Classes', I always begin with movement and almost always even seasoned Taijiquan practitioners have difficulty with even the simplest of the Wudang Movement Exercises. Basically, these exercises embody the very essence of Taijiquan but in a much simpler way. They will teach you how to activate 'Spine Force', that great power that comes directly from the accumulative additive effect of each vertebra being joined in power to release when necessary. They will also give you great calmness and stillness in all situations, physical or mental.

When someone first begins to learn these exercises, they often think that they are too easy, however, when they are corrected, they soon realize that they are not as

easy as they seem and indeed they find that it is very difficult to even take one step in the Taijiquan martial manner. It's all the internal stuff that makes it difficult, however, once achieved; one wonders how it was so difficult.

You can do these Wudang stepping exercises at any time of the day in any situation, even so that people looking on cannot notice that you are doing something weird, as they are just moving steps.

A huge amount of energy is generated while performing the steps in the way and a great calmness comes over the body so they are excellent for any stressful situation. And more importantly, they teach you how to move the body and always maintain balance and to gain great power, always maintaining the upper hand in any situation.

It is very important for the prospective teacher to know how to move as it is impossible to teach others correctly without knowing it yourself. Like a guitar teacher who cannot play the guitar, you cannot teach Taijiquan without knowing the very basics of movement.

The next thing that I teach in my Master Classes is not the form and how to teach it but rather how to punch! This may sound strange, however, if you cannot punch, then you cannot teach Taijiquan because although you may never in your

life need to punch, knowing exactly how to punch with great power from a very short distance, teaches us how to use the Qi and how to move the body to gain the greatest healing effect or self defence. Without fa-jing, you know nothing. That is a saying told to me by Chang Yiu-chun and he always taught fa-jing even before he taught form.

The mechanics of correct punching or striking with any portion of the body is so complex but at the same time simple that not many have ever achieved true fa-jing. And whether you like it or not, you must seem as if you know what you are talking about when teaching and you have to impress the students. Fa-jing punching is a way of not only getting their attention, but also to keep their attention up and giving them something to strive for. And this is why I teach these areas first up in my Master Teacher's Classes. It not only gives the new or old teacher ammunition, it also shows them that perhaps they did not know it all after all.

The Black Stuff:

By Erle Montaigne

Many years ago, I published a little book called "Food For Spirit". It is now available free to download from our web site. In that book I said that all margarine was not good and even went so far as to say that if you **MUST** put something on your bread, or if you must eat bread at all, use butter. If you ever saw what margarine looked like after it has been hydrogenated, you would never eat it again as it looks just like axle grease! It is black.

Now, in the 21st century we have information about this 'axle grease' which is coloured and added to to make it look like butter, from an unlikely source. Colleen McCulloch, the famous Aussie Author (*Thorn Birds*), is going blind. She has macular degeneration and many scientists now say outright that it is caused not only by genetics but also through eating hydrogenated vegetable oils; in other words, margarine.

Many people who first got onto margarine in the 50's and 60's in order cut down on animal fat also have this condition which eventually leads to blindness. I can remember when margarine first came onto the market as the new health aid which was going to make us all healthy and my parents bought copious amounts of it in preference to butter.

An article on Colleen in the *Australian Women's Weekly* tells of her struggle to get as many books written before she goes blind and

her crusade to help others to not fall into the same health trap. It reads:

Macular Degeneration is thought to be caused by a combination of generic and environmental factors. Early detection is important in avoiding blindness later, with special zinc and anti-oxidant supplements, eliminating **vegetable oils** and **margarine** from the diet, increasing the intake of fish and nuts, maintaining a good exercise regime and a healthy weight and stopping smoking all being vital steps in halting the progress of the illness.

Colleen, a heavy smoker all her life, has cut back on cigarettes (Why the hell doesn't she give them up altogether? ... Editor). In addition, she has agreed to be a patron of - and spokesperson for - The Macular Degeneration Foundation of Australia.

Dr. Paul Beaumont, the foundations's chair, says Colleen's courage is inspiring. "Colleen is sitting on the edge of losing her sight just when she is in her most productive years". He says.

"It's a terrible thing, a modern epidemic. We are seeing a five-fold increase in patients and I think that the main culprit has to be vegetable oil".

The problem is that the processing of vegetable oils produces trans fatty acids and these hydrogenated fats tend to raise total blood cholesterol levels and "bad" cholesterol and lower "good" cholesterol, when used.

They are deposited in those parts of the cell membranes that are supposed to have either saturated fatty acids or unsaturated fatty acids and essentially foul up the retinal pigment cell's machinery.

Professor Kerryn Phelps says that "on epidemiological grounds, the case against vegetable oils is proven".

For those of you who are vegetarians, you should take flax seed crushed each morning as you cannot eat fish of course. And for anti-oxidants, I do not believe in taking any supplements at all nowadays but prefer to get them from natural sources such as green leafy vegetables and fruit such as in "Erle's Power Breakfast".

Good Health does require some changes to life-style and a little will power! Much bad health and disease is often caused by an imbalance of acid and alkaline in your body, (yin and yang). This can be reversed by following a strict regime as follows. Begin by hydrating the body with alkaline substance. Each morning and late afternoon, drink at least one pint of 'green drink'. You juice the leaves of any green vegetables such as lettuce, celery and cucumber (the whole vegetable in this case) and if you can grow some wheat grass, even better. To grow wheat grass just get some organic wheat or spelt grain and put it in a tray on top of some organic potting mixture and water it every day. one week and you can begin to harvest and juice it. Give up all coffee and tea, give up all meat products and dairy, give up all salt and sugar. Do not eat anything else other than cold climate fruit until at least lunch time. Give up ALL fermented products such as wine all spirits and vinegar etc. And all yeast products such as bread, give up all gluten products, those that contain wheat, rye, barley and oats. If you follow this your problem will not have an environment which to live.

Insights into 'The Tai Chi Chuan Classics'

John Scott Petty

“Exercise internal power- like refining metal into purest steel”

-Master Wu Yu-Hsiang circa 1800s-

“Steel wrapped in Cotton”
{abbreviated}

Master Yang Cheng Fu -1930s-

Interpretation.

‘Steel’ read-‘condensed, strong but pliable, density but alive, building layer upon layer from gross substance to finer and purer, malleable to the minds forge, etc’.

‘Cotton’ read- ‘soft, encapsulating, expansive, permeating, light, virtually transparent, etc’

As with all the contents of the available literature of the Internal Arts, these principles manifest on a overt and covert level.

‘Refining metal into purest steel’.

In the Internal Arts the ideas of ‘refining’, ‘smelting’ ‘forging’ and even ‘folding’ {the frequent ‘folding’ many hundreds of times of steel while making a sword} and more terms of an alchemic nature are often used. The process of forging is lengthy and hard, so is training.

Liken it to training once a week only, while your instructor is ‘bearing down on you bellows in hand’, its frankly a waste of time and resources if you don’t work at the ‘smithy’ day and night. If you cant motivate yourself to train, ‘forging’ alone, the frustration will be counterproductive and you might as well leave the work to others.

The ore will never be separated, the steel will never be forged, the sword never made. Too many students I ve seen complain about ‘difficulty’ but do little or nothing about ‘persisting’. I was lazy as a teenage novice and I was not a ‘natural’, so I had to train harder than the others. I too was often put off. We all have good excuses, some brilliant and justifiable. With hundreds of children dying a day from thirst, starvation and disease, without a choice of a different life, yet we can change ours. What’s your excuse? If you have enough to eat and drink, and a roof over your head that’s enough. Its all you need to train.

Creation

We are life forms with sensation. We can by measure and with time and effort create and /or notice different latent degrees of feelings and abilities using our minds and bodies. Much like layers revealed one after another. To describe them is often most difficult. Language is limited. One word in Chinese, especially in the Energetic Doctrines may contain a whole repertoire of understanding. It can denote a whole distinct and total method of cultivation. It may only reveal itself or be reserved for the initiated or long term student. REGULAR TRAINING AND ENTERING INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SELF AND YOUR FEELINGS IS THE FIRST KEY TO UNDERSTANDING AND GAINING MASTERY. Success is even possible without a regular Teacher with REGULAR effort. This supreme effort in seeking the fruits of training is likened to the ‘mind set’ of ‘Steel in Cotton’. ‘Cotton in Cotton’ is too soft and indicates laziness and physical flaccidity and is as useless as ‘steel in steel’ which is too hard, indicating a bound inflexibility body and bull headedness.’ Steel in Cotton’ is the right combination of hard and soft. Yin and Yang.

What to do

Consider your physical and energetic, emotional ‘substance’ while performing the forms, both hand and weapon. What different feelings manifest with different postures and actions? Even Times of day? Seasons? When do you become calmer or

more energised while practicing. Moving postures and still postures. What do you feel?

Always consider your internal energy { its lack or abundance} and its abilities. If you cant ‘feel’, it doesn’t mean something doesn’t exist or could in time exist. Train the right way until you can. I will write about different possible sensations to watch out for in future articles.

Even easier is to consider your physical and energetic, emotional ‘substance’ while performing daily tasks. Training never ceases once you learn the knack. Sweeping the floor I use ‘snake creeps down’ and ‘needle at sea bottom’. Washing up I use ‘Golden Rooster Stands on one leg’. Cleaning my teeth I do ‘Boneless Arts’ such as the Kidney Stretch. Be creative. Be imaginative. ‘Listen’ to your body and mind

‘Pay attention and wake up’ is a good ‘mantra’ for all Internal Arts students. I have purposely written it back to front.

What is the energetic difference between feeling well and vibrant, and sick and listless? Tired and refreshed? Angry or happy? Sober and Drunk, and then hung over? Bored or motivated? These predominantly gross manifestations of Chi or Life force are available to most of us on a regular basis until we have a SOUGHT AND TRAINED in a viable alternative. Often people find they can not even remember what it is to feel well when even a little sick, happy when angry or sad. Why?

So consider, ponder, experiment. Ask ‘why’ and ‘how’ of all your processes. Look for your energy.

Meditate on the above principles ceaselessly in every waking moment.

Look to eliminate anything that obstructs these principles from occurring.

All my Masters have manifested this ability of 'Steel wrapped in Cotton' to less or greater degrees. In its most obvious exhibition it manifests during push hands as very soft skin with underlying flesh that can change from soft to hard without muscle tension. In their manner in performing skills or engaged in sparring, one moment quiet and demure the next they can energise appearing even terrifying in their intensity and power. They can seamlessly move from hard to soft and back again.

In time the 'cotton body' hides, nurtures and secures the 'Steel Body' physically and energetically. Without one to balance the other the practitioner has only limited expertise and may suffer from the consequences of energetic imbalance.

It has to be pointed out that all this information I'm sharing here will be nothing at best but a carrot on a stick, or a pipe dream, without regular systematic training in the basic to advanced 'formulas' as taught by Mantak Chia and/or Bruce Frantzis, and Erle Montaiges Methods.

This briefly put requires that there is a conscious and scientific approach in the generation of 'Jing' leading to a surplus to requirements. Then its daily conversion and refinement into viable and useable 'Chi'.

The energy and vitality of youth is retainable. Ageing can be slowed.

Please see the Masters mentioned in this news letter, and Dr Yang Jwing Mings publications for further information on Jing{ching} Chi and Shen.

copyright J. Petty -August 2003

'Sacrifice'

Soul { Spirit} prosperity or material prosperity.

What do we most value?

Ask yourselves. What is truly of value to our continuing existence. Are we participating in life to increase our understanding of ourselves and our evolution within the world? A first hand experience of the Life process? Or simply seeking distraction, isolation from ourselves and everything

around us? Does our present life style exist as mere distancing from the possibilities of a genuinely more rewarding life?"

Are we 'watchers' or 'doers.' The 'Audience' or the 'Show.' Do we need to leave that theatre?

I invite you to consider sacrifice in terms of the time and effort we need to put in to our cultivation practices. The life that we are leading here and now. How did we get to this point, where will it lead? What should we change, what should we sacrifice. Where do we want to be.

This has many implications.

Lets consider that ULTIMATELY we all create the possibility or not of receiving and instigating life changing situations with our present mind set.

A student can choose whether to regularly come to a class, to pay attention and listen, follow directives, they chose whether to train seriously when alone. They choose whether to sacrifice time, energy, and even comfort for the learning process. They create the lasting results of 'instruction'; hard-wired into their bodies and in their minds from the elements or parts of instruction imparted, and their own efforts. This is a form of sacrifice. Giving yourself up to the learning process.

I was a Personal Fitness Trainer in the late 80's and I once had a client who was genuinely surprised that he was required to do physical work and change His Diet, to change his body. Many people hope some form of osmosis will happen, as if by magic fitness or competence will materialise simply by being with an instructor or at a class and/or by paying for that service. At worst these people if students can often become virtual leeches and make time and energetic demands on everyone around them while they take no responsibility for their own health.

In some traditions information is imparted by a form of 'osmosis'- this is called often called a 'Transmission.' This does not occur though with a novice Chi kung practitioner who moans and complains and doesn't train alone, or even someone trying to build up their muscles unable to even put up with doing a few press ups!

We can directly choose to participate or not, to attempt to fathom or not. To experience or not, follow or not. The directives of a teacher can only do so much without 'sacrifice'.

By natural extension it can be said students individually or on mass 'create' the teacher and the teaching environment, for ill or for good. The compound ramifications of receiving and giving tuition are suspended or negated if this creation is incomplete or constantly undermined, even damaged by the students conduct. Poor students reflect badly in more ways than one upon a teacher. Genuine honourable and courteous behaviour is virtually dead in our society. Self respect and dignity through effort, slowly eroding in the same direction. Intent is the great key. We can not do a thing, even lifting a finger, without intent.

A Teacher - Student relationship shrivels without the growth of students, their balance of sacrifice of their time, money and efforts to the Instructors sacrifice of time and energy. This is why it is traditionally expected in all great Arts that there is a 100% commitment, with all the rules of etiquette and behaviour, to a Teacher. Correctly performed it serves to keep the teacher and relationship between the student/s 'alive' so that the teacher can fully serve the student/s by 'imparting' all that he knows. I have experienced this and I find it more liberating and productive than the laissez faire attitude that prevails in many classes and many minds. This can often be no more than

'Im your pal lets be lazy together- Im too insecure to have you as a student/teacher demanding a mature Teacher/ student'

or

'Ill pamper you because that's what you want but not what you need. To give you what you need would be too much of an effort'

Many people are justifiably seeking comfort or social contact through classes because of a great lack, a need to find from external sources personal strength, self worth and will. Work and all the ramifications of modern life have left many people 'blunted', feel-

ing isolated and exhausted. Many are 'addicted' to more than the obvious drugs and alcohol ride, but food and TV, even 'consuming' murder and rape as entertainment not just the empty fix of a game show! Virtually unable to perform more than basic daily tasks life becomes a slow unpleasant slide into oblivion. Sickness in middle or old age is now a virtual guarantee. Real good health is more than most people can even begin to understand.

The sacrifice of training in the Internal Arts can in time give more pleasure and meaning to life than the best Drug or 'Murder Mystery' show. It is not distraction but complete involvement in one's life. As the Taoists say 'Once what was real becomes false, what was false becomes real' Drawing energy from the earth, its natural environments, and even the stars, to increase one's vitality for one's tasks, is greater than that exclusive designer bangle, new sports car, face lift or the chance of an Oscar { I once regularly counseled an Oscar nominee friend, who was also a serious Food Addict. }.

'Comfort' and whatever that may mean to an individual is only part of the reason one should seek a life time training in the mysteries of these Arts..

Who is able to Sacrifice?

In Indian yogic terms the word 'adhikara' denotes 'qualification'. The student's 'qualification' to receive direct transmission of spiritual knowledge and power or the training to accomplish the means. The unqualified person was/is excluded as it would not only damage him or her but also the teacher. The karmic consequences or giving up your training, Guru or worse were and are not to be taken lightly.

Traditionally the 'qualifications' were stated as a number of requirements. Simple accounts of these, which also have strong similarities with the oriental martial and spiritual conditions are; a positive frame of mind; faithful application; veneration of the teacher; impartiality { whether you are approved of or not, your training is hard or not, successful or not- you carry on. In Chinese circles this is the ability to 'eat bitter' }; sense restraint; moderate diet

There are also attributes of the student and their suitable types of training that are listed, from the fickle, rude and unenergetic student to the exceptional and extraordinary.

I like many teachers have broken with many Initiation practices, and teach openly with all that this demands. I personally prefer the 'Self Initiation' process as practiced by my Yoga Teachers and Gurus.

I also have experimented with going even further, even teaching for free and imparting knowledge and skills in the most unsuitable environment. Now I'm more cautious.

Even Master Rupert Shonaike my teacher and mentor of 10 years { I became his only Student Instructor in the UK in the 90's, out of 25 teacher trainers, and ran his class for nearly a decade in his absence. } who was fairly open with me, held back for years to test my sincerity. His and my first teacher Lineage Master Chu repeatedly emphasised not teaching, or cloaking, certain aspects. Chu was notorious for leading unworthy students away from the material he seemed to reserve for his best.

Shiv Charan Singh my Yoga Instructor, mentor { I became his first Student Instructor in the 90's and ran his class in his absence before he handed it over to me with his blessing. } and guru since the late 80's wouldn't even touch any one until he was certain of their commitment and character, from a very real and justified fear of spiritual contamination. From a simple hand shake after a couple of years with him { which filled me with joy } to a hug 8 years later, meant more than words.

In pre-communist China with in the Chinese Opera, parents had to consent to the fact that instruction might kill their child if he or she entered into training with the opera troupe. This could be from the training itself or severe beatings if the child did not follow instruction to the letter. Living with the troupe a bed perhaps be at first no more than a small box or a floor space. Training was incessant. Terrible, but the end results were and still are amazing. It is said that this 'consent' is still understood today if not officially stated.

In India you might be expected to give all your worldly possessions for instruction while prostrated at the feet of the guru any

number of years without any guarantee of success.

I'm obviously not suggesting contracts of death, nor that any one should give all one's worldly goods to a teacher however good. Many have taken advantage of these sacrifices. I only suggest that students seek to follow directives, respect themselves and their Teacher for their efforts, while determined to carry on whatever the situation. Paying a proportionate fee to the value of the information taught is necessary because no one can live in this society without money. Also it is the way our society and ourselves afford value. Many things we pay dearly for are clearly not even worth the price tag. Consider cigarettes- the oddest self sacrifice going. As even my { expensive but excellent } dentist says 'you get what you pay for'. That says more than it seems.

I am fortunate to practice arts, now more widely available and accessible in the last decade, that even in the 1980s would cost a student in Hong Kong \$10,000 for 14 hours instruction and an oath of secrecy. I gained them by grace, commitment, sacrifice and pure hard devotion, sweat and slog.

What else have I sacrificed you should ask?

Beyond the physical and psychological pain, frustration, hunger, sleep deprivation, loneliness, loss of friends, status and position?

We could calculate the time I spent training alone and in classes and gyms against the successful careers and intoxicating social life I gave up. In turn as my training intensified; first my Art College studies suffered but I eventually passed by a whisker. Then later I gave up careers as an International Model/ Actor, then a photographic Assistant, then Jewellery Designer with contracts with department stores. Instead, because of the wages I sacrificed, instruction and books were paid for by taking menial and low paid, low skilled and often demeaning and dangerous work. All this because it would allow me the time and mental space to

train. At 36 I was lifting fire places of up to a 1/4 of a ton between two of us, and inhaling all manner of poisonous fumes and dusts renovating other fire places. More the job of an unskilled 18 old, and my work mate was even younger. Tai Chi and Chi Kung mended my back on more than one occasion and saved my knees and lungs. There where fireplaces accidentally dropped on my knees, fire bricks too{ 25 kg+ } I would train before and after work to compensate for the demands on my body. Ive trained in toilet cubicles at office jobs, even grave yards and car parks. All this to pay for more books, instruction, and of course food and necessities. I didn't buy my first CD until the mid 90's. I haven't owned a car since the 80's. I've driven jags, ridden in Lamborghinis. I've been chauffeured in Mercedes. All sacrificed. If I couldn't pay for a class Id practice what Id learnt the week before at home over and over. That way Id progress. As a student sometimes I'd walk 20 miles home because I had no money. You really get to see London and its characters that way. With not enough money to even get a bus years later to teach at Charlton, Id walk, earning enough to get home, have the first meal of the day and just about pay rent. I refused to go on the dole as a teacher. I lost a lot of weight when there wasn't enough food.

Looking at my peers { one of which owns the fire place business} who followed exotic and 'glamorous' careers you'd arrive at a sobering equation.

If only the money is considered, 20 years of a even basic wage lost of say £10,000 per annum is a hefty sum. If you then consider that a number of my peers are now millionaires, or all at least own thriving businesses, their own homes, cars, and have families, savings and regular holidays etc, the sum becomes staggering. I own virtually nothing, beyond clothes, a few bits and pieces. My prize possessions are my books, my mind and the abilities of my body.

Yet the value and 'life style' of what I have received from my life endeavour is priceless. What I and my teachers have to offer is ultimately incalculable. So at this juncture even though Im receiving a un-proportionate fee for the instruction I can offer, I still Teach.

My life has had, like everyone's, its ups and downs, what many would consider making an exciting read, good fiction, a film even. Romantic and titillating for joe pub-

lic perhaps, but 'Living it' though has not always been as entertaining nor as pleasant. From dyslexic, hearing impaired, short sighted, asthmatic bullied child Art Prodigy, to failed School boy, druggie Punk Art Student, and unemployed lay about. Then from Gym bore to Fashion Model, Photographer, Jewellery Designer, to Van Driver 'delivery boy' and skivvy. Now Artist, Film Maker, Recluse and Instructor, and a student through it all. At school I only ever won one athletic event. The egg and spoon race. I say If I can do all this and survive with the cards I was dealt, anyone can.

I must say I periodically became a recluse, even since I was 17 when I first studied Zen- earning the nickname the Urban Monk in the 90's. I don't know if its possible to really cultivate successfully without a similar sacrifice.

I was once a fashion model, an ideal to sell a product. I ve appeared in my Teachers and my Videos doing Tai Chi, a new kind of product -as a sickly child this would have seemed unimaginable. After being a model I vowed to never step back in front of a camera. Now I've come full circle. Now it could be said I try to model/ mould students, lifting and hopefully inspiring them towards their ideals, at least to their potentials. My motivation is to inspire. To open a students eyes fully to what is of real value. Perhaps Im still a model of a kind. Sacrificing much, striving to be an ideal. That is no easy responsibility for any body.

So I ask-

What is instruction and training worth to you? What will you sacrifice? What will you do? How far will you take it?

copyright J. Petty -August 2003

Mind in the Martial Arts

Part Six-The Relationship of The Internal Arts to the Tao Te Ching.

By Anthony Court

It is almost impossible to read a book about the “internal arts” without coming across quote after quote from Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching, for example I have lost count how many times we have been advised especially regarding Taiji, that “the journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step” So is there anything for the martial artist to be gained from the study of this well known and enigmatic book called the Tao Te Ching or the Lao Tzu.

deed whether Lao Tzu ever existed) and many similar versions over the centuries, there is no denying the profound influence that this enigmatic work has had on Chinese thought and philosophy. The Tao Te Ching also became the corner stone of a more formally structured Taoism, which up until then was more an infinite number

study the work become realized spiritual practitioners.

Today things are more confusing, we have all sorts of New Age, Therapy and Business Orientated versions and interpretations. So to look at chapters of the Tao Te Ching as they may or may not relate to

the “Internal Arts” is not to regard this work as specifically having connections, but to examine the background and culture from which both developed, and to try and relate more to the principles held within the structure of the Lao Tzu and the “Internal Systems”.



Photo By Anthony Court

The Tao Te Ching (The Classic of the Way and It’s Power) was supposedly written down by Lao Tzu, who held a minor post as a government official, an archivist for the State of Zhou (Chou). At some point Lao Tzu decided to leave China due to growing disillusionment with the decline of the society. According to legend he travelled westward, where on reaching the border, a guard refused to let him pass until he had committed his wisdom to writing. Within a short time Lao Tzu handed over his text of the Tao Te Ching, eighty-one short chapters of less than 5,000 Chinese characters. And although scholars have questioned this account, (and in-

of strands of thought and practice based loosely on the observation of nature that had developed from the Wayfarers, Sages and Shamans of ancient China. It is said that the Tao Te Ching has been translated more times than any other book except the Bible, not only “translated” but also “interpreted”. For example the Chi Ko Hsüan Lao Tzu Chieh Chieh, an edited text of Ko Hsüan’s commentary of the Lao Tzu interpret it as a manual filled with allusions to Qigong (breathing exercises), Tao-yin (Chinese Yoga) Alchemy (Nei Dan), visualizations and meditative practices, so that those who

In this examination of the Tao Te Ching we cannot ignore the opening statement by

Lao Tzu and race on to later chapters that may seem more obviously to have some “Internal Practice” references, rather it is this very opening statement that may hold the key to whole of our understanding and possible benefit (if any).

The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.

The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth.
The named is the mother of ten thousand things.

Ever desire less, one can see the mystery.
Ever desiring one can see the manifestations.
These two spring from the same source but differ in name; these appear as darkness.
Darkness within darkness.
The gate to all mystery.

Translation Gia-Fu and Jane English (Vintage Books-Random House)

Here Lao Tzu makes one on the most lucid and amazing statements ever to appear in the world of spiritual, philosophical and scientific literature, and in some respects renders the rest of his work irrelevant.

The first line “The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao” This statement points directly to the beginning of all confusion, suffering and the loss of our natural inheritance into the chaos of the “told” or the “named” It points out that the whole, the one, the natural and the interconnected, cannot be made into a concept. He says that the Tao is beyond all name and form, beyond all knowing, YET IT IS the ineffable, unknowable, indefinable ground of all being, that which gives birth to all things, but which itself is beyond birth and death. “The name that can be named is not the eternal name” Lao Tzu says directly, if your mind tries to conceptualise it, you will lose it, in fact he says that it cannot be grasped. This is the ultimate understanding of all schools of Buddhist and Taoist thought.

However without using words, how can this ultimate view of Lao Tzu be discussed? The short answer is of course it can't

be. According to these traditions, the *ultimate* is beyond all form, beyond the thinking, and therefore beyond the intellect, it can only be grasped (if at all possible) by non-thought or a *state* of realization where there is no subject and object, this *state* is normally the goal of meditation found in the many Buddhist and Taoist Schools such as Zen, Chan, Dzogchen, Hua-Yen and the Vajrayana in fact any spiritual system that does not “name” as Lao Tzu puts it. In other words *it* (The Tao) can only be pointed out, or introduced to a seeker, the realization of which, has to come from the seeker them selves. Monotheistic religions of course “name” or “conceptualise” a creator or godhead, and as soon as this is in place, there is separation...duality, which is inevitably followed by conflict. World history, and the present world crisis are witness to the confusion caused by dualistic thinking.

Taoist always talk of returning to the *ONE*, the original, primordial state of being, Dzogchen masters (considered by many to be the highest vehicle of realization in the Tibetan Buddhist and Ancient Bön Tradition) speak of the “Nature of Mind” the original, unfabricated, essential, essence of everything, which has no form, centre, or circumference, it is no “thing” and has no substance, but like empty space, pervades the whole of existence. And although empty, has the quality of awareness or natural wisdom, but this wisdom and emptiness are not two things. The Chinese called it the Tao. This view brings us close to the current understanding of quantum physics. The “Heart Sutra” for examples points out this

out with the well known statement “Form is Emptiness, Emptiness is Form”

In the Tao of Physics, Frithjof Capra says:

The phenomenal manifestations of the mystical Void (emptiness), like the subatomic particles, are not static and permanent, but dynamic and transitory, coming into being vanishing in one ceaseless dance of movement and energy. Like the subatomic world of the physicist, the phenomenal world of the Eastern mystic is a world of *samsara*...of continuous birth and death. Being transient manifestations of the Void, the things in this world do not have any fundamental identity. This is especially emphasized in Buddhist philosophy which denies the existence of any material substance and also holds that the idea of a constant “self” undergoing successive experiences is an illusion.

So it is this phenomenal world, the “named” as Lao Tzu calls it, is what we take for the real, denying the underlying non-phenomenal essential nature of all things, the Tao. Or as he puts it: “The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth” Sages and mystic throughout the centuries have tried to point this dynamic process out to us. As soon as we no longer see ourselves as part of the natural world, then disaster and suffering soon appear. Through thousands of

years of condition existence, which has separated us from our natural being, our minds have become confused, bewildered and unconnected with our original nature. So Dzochon states that our “original mind” is already enlightened, there is no enlightened state to find, reach or achieve. They say that our original enlightened mind is like the sun, always shining, but our conditioned mind (ego/thinking mind) are like the clouds they cover the sun, and obscure our natural enlightened state.



Photo: Anthony Court

Lao Tzu then goes on to say “The named is the mother of ten thousand things” In Eastern Literature “ten thousand things” are symbolic of every manifestation. The conditioned mind has “named” and produced what the Buddhist call the “Three Poisons” which are Attachment, Aversion and Indifference, (sometimes called “ignorance” this refers to spiritual “ignorance” or the spiritual implication). We either want something, we do not want something, or we are totally uninterested. So if we do not get that which we desire-we suffer. If we get that which we do not want-we suffer, and if we are indifferent to the underlying nature of our situation, this can also lead to suffering. This myriad of possibilities for endless difficulties, stem from losing our original connection with the Tao, because we no longer feel any sense of relationship with the world. We have now become the “named” our conditioned mind

has fixated us into being something.

A colour, a race, a nationality, a tribe, a religion, an idealism, a philosophy, whatever the list is endless, and so are the conflicts. The very “seeing” of this will set you free to stop looking for answers “out there” as the great Dzogchen Yogi

Longchenpa said:

Don't analyse! Don't analyse!

Don't analyse your mind!
 Don't grasp! Don't grasp!
 Don't grasp your mind!
 Don't correct! Don't correct!

Trying to correct or modify just makes your mind contrived. The fabricating mind obscures your essential nature.

The founder of the Complete Reality School of Taoism, Lü Tung-pin says “Once fundamental reality is lost sight of, then emo-

tions run wild”. People are naturally connected with the Tao, (our original nature), but are mostly unaware of it. He goes on to say that, although there is the primordial, there is also that which is acquired, and since there is that which is acquired, there are six organs of sense. These sense organs produce the six consciousness. What are

the six organs? One is the eye; this eye organ looks at colour and form and leads us away from the Tao. Another is the ear; this organ listens to sounds, which in turn produces various states of distraction. Next is the mouth, which expounds judgements and theories, which obscures the primordial. Similarly the nose smells odours and produces various states of confusion. The tongue, tastes flavours and produces various states of mind that obscure the primordial. Lastly the body, this experiences situations and produces various states of mind that obscure the Tao. In Taoism and Buddhism these six organs are called the six robbers or thieves. So it is advised, that if you wish to study The Great Perfection, Great Completion or Lao Tzu's Great Way, first see how these various states of perceived reality begin to separate subject and object, bringing confusion and unawareness. Lü Tung-pi went on to say that by the very observing of this process, one can see how the three poisons of

attachment; aversion and indifference come into being. For example if we look at a beautiful sunset, for a moment there is no separation between subject and object. The eye conciseness now becomes the seed of emotion (a emotional reaction) so attachment begins. The conditioned mind now say "I wish I had a camera" or "I must ring my friends to tell them about it" or "When can I repeat this pleasant experience"? The very moment that this occurs our original non-separated, whole, natural experience is lost. So both the schools of Buddhism and Taoism say: "If you do not crave anything, you do not want anything; if you do not want anything, how can you be attracted to anything?"

If you are not attracted to anything, you are not repulsed by anything; if you have neither attraction nor repulsion, what anger can there be? When there is no anger, fear does not occur; without fear sadness disappears.

If we remain in touch with our natural, primordial mind, we will recognise that the root of undesirable emotional and mental states can be instantly cut through. Interestingly the iconography of Eastern *Wisdom* Deities are often depicted holding a sword. Lü Tung-pin also carries a sword on his back, to cut through the negativity of conditioned existence.

Before continuing it may be worth asking if any of this is has any relevance to the Internal Martial Arts. That depends entirely on the ones outlook, interest and understanding. Lao Tzu is pointing directly to the separation of the individual and his or her natural primordial state, we could also say to a higher

way of being, more refined, natural and developed. We could also say that this way of *seeing* can mirror our internal practice. Rather than remaining at the purely physical (denser) level, we could by refining our breath, energy circulation, vitality, intelligence and sensitivity, move into a sphere of a higher quality of personal power. Remember the Chinese adage "Physical strength is limited, energy is infinite" Wang Cheng-nan a 16th century martial arts master said "Nowadays people feel that the internal arts lack dazzle (his words not mine), and so they adulterate it with the external. For this reason the art is doomed to decline" Refinement of the internal arts is not limited to just the physical plane. The reading of Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* contains many valuable pointers for the intelligent and progressive martial artist. (To be continued next issue)

Bibliography:

Tao Te Ching translated by Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English published by Random House

The Tao of Physics by Fritjof Capra published by Flamingo Books

The Spirit of Tao translated and edited by Thomas Cleary published by Shambhala

Tai Chi Ancestors by Douglas Wile published by Sweet Ch'i Press

The Hidden Healing Qigong Methods From the Baguazhang Postures

By Erle Montaigue

Baguazhang is truly an amazing art once you get past the basics. It, like Tai Chi, was invented by people of genius to incorporate healing as well as deadly self defence methods.

Each of the major postures from Bagua have a hidden meaning, either for the healing benefits or for gaining of power for the fa-jing and fighting system. And the hidden meanings are hidden in the very names of each posture. This information was only ever given out to very advanced students after they became proficient in the fighting side of the art as when once was proficient in self defence, one could then understand about the healing and Qigong side.

By knowing the names of each posture, we are able to find the hidden way to perform each posture as well as to find the hidden healing meaning or Qigong to gain power etc. For instance, the posture called '*Leaning On the Horse & Ask The Way*' works upon the energy system of the body which is stored in the backbone. When we '*Lean On The Horse*', we lean on his backbone, and as the backbone is so easily seen in a horse, this gives us a hidden meaning of this posture. The way to real power in Baguazhang is to access the combined power of each vertebra when it is connected to all of the other vertebra. Each separate vertebra is like a small capacitor which stores electricity (Qi). If we know how to set the

backbone up correctly, and then drop each vertebra on top of each other, we are able to not only store Qi in the backbone, but also to issue it when needed. So when we hold this posture as a standing Qigong method, we learn how to gain access to our hidden reservoir of energy.

1st Palm Change:

SINGLE PALM CHANGE

1/. *Flower Hides Under Leaf* represents the Qigong that is responsible for taking that power that we develop through the backbone and issuing it to the forearms.

The *Flower* represents the roots, (Earth Qi) while the *Leaf* represents the forearms. So we can again take this posture and use it as a static Qigong method to gain great power in the forearms and palms and of course this is necessary for Bagua.

2/. *Flock Of Wild Geese Flies (Bursts) Out*, represents the Qi when it is issued forth. so we take this posture and use it not only as a static Qigong method but also as a moving Qigong. The action of the waist opposing the hips causes the Qi to be sort of squeezed out like stomping on a tube of toothpaste. In doing this we also heal ourselves by this action of the Qi being sent out through our own body thus healing our internal organs and re-balancing internally. This also works upon the Lungs.

3/. *Purple Lady Throws Fan*: This represents the waist (the fan) and the way that the waist controls the action of the Qi. It also works upon the colon. The fa-jing of this movement is generated as always by the waist, so when we get this posture correct, we learn to use the waist in the most powerful manner. We can also use it as a static Qigong method to heal the colon.

4/. *Close The Door & Push The Moon*: This refers to the Moon as the heart and the the door as the lock on that organ. We learn to lock out own Qi so that it will not float around aimlessly, we learn to control our emotions and Qi.

2nd Palm Change: DOUBLE PALM CHANGE:

1/. *Fierce Tiger Jumps Out*: This refers to tiger bones. We use this posture to send the Qi into the marrow of the bones in order to generate very powerful and strong bones (like a tiger).

2/. *Colourful Rooster Stretches Wings*: This posture is used as a Qigong method for the lungs. 'Wings' are always associated with the air and wind, hence the air we breathe into the lungs.

3/. *Pierce The Armour*: This posture means that we learn how to send the Qi from the Tiantien to all parts of the body and into the attacker to dam-

age him. We 'pierce' not only HIS armour but our own blockages.

4/. *Take Flower Connect to Wood:* This represents transplanting a different plant into another. Here we take the ROOTS of the flower and connect them to the WOOD, (Legs), so that we have a balanced flow of Qi. It also loosens up the ground Qi through the legs to give an over-all quality flow of Qi. Makes for a very stable stance.

5/. *Take His Head and Put It On Your Own:* This refers not only to the fact that the martial application does this, but also we learn how to take someone's else's energy (the head) and use it for our own gain and against the attacker. We use this as a moving as well as static Qigong method.

6/. *Hold The Moon In Your Breast:* The 'Moon' is often representative of the 'Heart', so we take the radiance of the moon into our heart to heal deep emotional scars and to get rid of unwanted deep emotions etc. We hold this posture as a static Qigong method.

3rd Palm Change: STRAIGHT PALM CHANGE

1/. *White Snake Coils Around:* The snake represents the inner spirit but it still has a purely physical attachment. So when we are attacked, it is the tantien that first subconsciously reacts. SO this posture allows us to use it as a qigong to get the inner and outer connected so that WE reacts physically as soon as the tantien reacts. It also works upon the kidneys and Gall Bladder.

2/. *Pigeon Flies To Heaven:* Represents the ability to get in touch with the Spirit as all birds have that connection with the 'sky' or spirit. So holding this posture allows us to get in touch with our inner spirit. It also works upon the lungs.

3/. *Nun Offers Food:* This represents the Nun being shy so she is on her back leg, it tell sus how to do the posture in other words. it also represents the Spleen as it is the nourished of the body, hence 'offers food'.

4/. *Walk To The Mountain:* This represents a connection between earth and heaven. We walk on the earth but climb the mountain to be closer to God. There is a slight break in the movement here as it is like a relaxed walk, slow and easy. It works upon the brain and the stomach.

5/. *Black Bear Looks Back:* Represents Earth and the stomach. the way we do it is written in the name, very strong and stable with a look of no fear. Rooted into the ground. It is also good for the Lungs and things like TB.

6/. *Hawk Swoops On Fowl:* This is done very swiftly and without breaks as a hawk would do this. Works upon the heart.

7/. *Monkey Takes the Fruit:* This indicates how the monkey takes his food just in case there is any danger around. his other hand will wave as he takes the fruit. The taking hand is smooth and cautious. Works upon the Small Intestine and Spleen.

8/. *Monkey Eats the Fruit:* Ever watchful and crouched down so as

not to be seen. Works upon he body's energy system and boosts the way the body uses energy.

9/. *Monkey Spits (vomits) the Fruit:* This indicates a sub-conscious reaction to something that has happened. It is done with fa-jing and a leap upward. It works upon the elimination organs, Colon and Lungs.

10/. *Duck Lands On Water:* This posture indicates coming back to earth, coming home. In other words, it is a way of bringing the body into a state of balance as far as Heaven and Earth are concerned. if we are too 'heaven' then we are always up in the air so to speak and cannot do the normal things that humans of the earth have to. If we are too 'earth', we are too much like the animals with no heaven. This posture works upon the life force meridians of kidneys, spleen, liver and indeed all meridians.

4th Palm Change: BACK FACING PALM CHANGE

1/. *Part The Clouds To See The Way:* This posture represents what its name is. We are clouded by extraneous thought (the clouds) which is stopping us from relaxing and from listening to our spirit guide. So we use this for parting that extraneous thought and seeing right through it. It works upon the brain to calm it.

2/. *DRAGON TWISTS WAIST:* This posture used as Qigong will help you to

change the Qi into Jing. The waist is a very important part of one's health training and is therefore also good for keeping a youthful appearance and for boosting the Kidney Qi. It is also good for the lungs. This one will also help in the internal understanding of fa-jing in that it teaches how the body releases and re-loads instantly.

3/. *Grab Opponent From Horse:* This posture is good for getting rid of invading pathogens such as virus and bacteria. A horse was always considered to be a part of the owner's body, they were one. So taking an attacker from the horse is self explanatory. It tones up the immune system. However, it is my belief that this should also be used in conjunction with a total change of diet and life-style!

4/. *Lifting The Clothes To Walk:* Indicates the old style 'dress' that the Chinese used to wear. They had to lift it in order to move! Works upon the colon. The colon must be clear and working correctly in order to move correctly. It helps to take the shit out of the body, both physical and emotional.

5/. *Push Mountain Into Sea:* This is a carry on from the previous posture and is often used with it. The mountain refers to the mountain of shit that most people carry around inside of us, both emotional and physical. So this posture will help also to 'push' that mountain into the sea. However, it comes with a warning. The 'sea' is the kidneys and so all of the poisons that are built up in the body will be forced out through the kidneys! So if you are not very clean internally through eating rubbish

for years, then it is advisable not to perform this Qigong! You should do a couple of short fasts prior and only eat apples for a couple of days. Then go onto a green drink made from all green leaves, such as spinach, lettuce, celery, kale etc. Then perhaps try this qigong after the previous one for only a few minutes at a time until you do not feel any sickness!

6/. *Bat Drops To Earth:* This one is also not recommended for normal western people who perhaps eat junk food etc., as it works upon the kidneys and liver and cleanses them both. It will also help to cleanse the blood. The Bat falling to earth is all of the junk that is within falling from the body and out. It is also not good for sick or older people to try as it is quite strenuous when done for anything more than a couple of minutes.

5th Palm Change: Reversing Palm.

1/. *Monkey Builds Nest:* This posture used as Qigong represents the body and how it relates to sleep. During sleep, all of your experiences are backed up and on a physical level, your body is repaired by the production of HGH and others. So this posture will help your body to heal itself during sleep. It gets your 'bed' ready for sleep in other words.

2/. *Monkey Offers Food:* Represents the 'Monkey' something that is inside of us always active, telling us what to do. When the Monkey offers the food, it is helping us to digest our food correctly. So this posture works upon the stomach, small and large intestine.

3/. *Phoenix Spreads Wings:* This posture works upon the lungs. Held as a Qigong it will help to give the body more internal power.

4/. *Embrace The Universe:* This posture used as Qigong works upon the Heart and Lung meridians. It also helps communication with the Shen or Spirit.

5/. *Follow The Motion of One's Clothes:* Meaning that if we are to turn suddenly, the line that our clothing makes (Chinese Dress) dictates the physical movement that we make. A sort of counter clockwise circle like and omega sign. This Qigong method is a balancing Qigong. It helps to give us more Yin Qi if we are Yin deficient. In other words if we are to Yang.

6/. *Sweep the Thousand Enemy:* This works upon the Gall Bladder, Liver, Kidneys Lungs and Spleen when held as Qigong.

7/. *Pigeon Rights Itself:* Tells us how the hands and arms work, like a pigeon rolling over in the air to evade attack from above. This Qigong involves doing the whole thing and then holding the last posture. It helps us to get back on track after we have fallen off the path so-to-speak. Also works upon the Triple Heater Meridian.

8/. *Cockerel Fighting:* This set of postures when done and held at the end posture of *Hold The Moon In Your Breast*, works upon the fighting spirit. The rooster is selfless and has no fear, he will fight to the end. It

will work on one's self esteem and help with depression.

6th PALM CHANGE: Scraping Palm.

1/. Rhinoceros Looks At The

Moon: The moon represents the heart. When holding this posture as a static qigong method, you will be taking a look at your heart and fixing any minor problems that are beginning to arise. In the self defense area we are striking just under the nose (the horn) and also to the heart, (the moon).

2/. Tin Wong Holds The Statue:

This one is a little more difficult as we in the West have usually no idea what 'Tim-Wong' is. This posture is good when held as a static Qigong method, for lifting things up in the same way that the Spleen meridian is also. So it works upon the Spleen as well as when we have problems with prolapsed anything. It is also good for lifting the Qi when we are feeling a little drained or down etc.

3/. Snake Spits the Venom: Represents that we are getting rid of our own poisons when held as a qigong method. So this one is good for when we are perhaps on a cleansing diet or a 'liver' diet etc. It also tells us how we must perform this posture in the application sense. Firstly we break his elbow using both hands indicating that the right hand (or left) will come in an arc close to the left and then 'spit' outward for the final strike to the lower rib area.

4/. Hawk Posture: This posture is wonderful as it represents the eyes and the reflexes when held as a static Qigong. It is also good for

regaining one's natural balance and for re-balancing left and right sides of the brain.

7th PALM CHANGE: Thrice Penetrating Palm.

1/. Lion Embraces The Ball: The Lion is the most violent of all the Bagua animals. He is solemn, explosive and aggressive. His power is awesome and his organ is the head/mind. He represents 'Heaven'. His family member is the 'Father'. So this posture works upon the head/mind. 'Embraces the ball' means that you accept the Qi that is generated from this posture for the fighting art. It is useful just before an exam for instance, or when going for a job interview. It creates Yang Qi, so is not one to do if you are very angry, red in the face etc.

2/. Lion Rolls The Ball: The Previous posture creates Yang Qi while this one creates Yin Qi. So it is good to do them one after the other to get a balance. This group of two postures works upon the lower abdomen area. It teaches us to make good use of the Qi generated in the previous posture, (rolling the ball).

3/. Lion Pounces on Ball: This posture is used to store or 'pack' the gathered Qi from the two previous postures. We use it to store the excess Qi from the previous two postures. It is also good for the digestion in that it helps to get the nutrients to where they should be,

4/. Lion Opens Mouth: This posture takes any bad Qi or hidden sub-conscious emotional stuff, out of the body. It is good to use

when fasting or if you just need to get rid of emotional junk from years ago. Take it easy with this one though as it can cause some mental pain! if it is just too much and you notice that you are crying all the time etc., then do the above posture of Lion Embraces The Ball.

5/. Lion Rolls Over To Get Up: This is used as a moving Qigong method, so you must perform the whole set of postures and only hold the final posture. Very good for the central nervous system. It is also good for balancing the right and left parts of the brain. It is good to do just after waking up in the morning as it gives a lift to begin the day.

8th PALM CHANGE: Turn The Body Around.

1/. Shoot Bow From Horseback: The backbone must be linear not bent. The body must look like an arrow with the positioning of the hands to the body. You must perform the "Nun Throws Fan" posture before doing this Qigong. Works upon the Colon, Spleen, Liver and Kidneys. It is used as a general tonic for the whole body. 'Shoot Bow' not only indicates the physical shape of the posture, but also that the Monks would ride a horse in the night by the moonlight to shoot an arrow with a red tie on the end, into the earth just near a ready Ginseng plant. In the morning they would come back to pick it. Indicating that this posture is a Yang Tonic and usually used by males.

However, I have found nothing wrong with women doing it also as it gives them a bit more Yang Qi.

2/. *Golden Serpent Twists Around Willow Tree:* This indicates that the body is twisted. It works upon the whole body especially the waist/hip area. It also indicates that if we become too 'heavenly' or spiritual and are unable to perform our daily mundane physical tasks, we are able to use this qigong to get some grounding (willow tree). The snake (spirit) is would up on the tree so cannot float away. The willow tree is also a healing tree as it is from where aspirin comes, (salicylic acid). So it is a general body healing posture.

3/. *Acting Like A Wild Horse:* The backbone must be vertical. The Qi is stored in the backbone ready for use. Each vertebra link to each other adding their individual power together. This posture will give great Yang Qi, however, it must be contained for fear of it exploding. so this posture not only creates this energy but also contains it and allows the body to use it when necessary.

4/. *Fish Splashing in the Water:* Here we have both and animal of the water and water together. Indicating that this posture is great for the kidneys and bladder. However, if one has for instance kidney stones, they could be passed! And that is not pleasant especially if they are large! It is good for taking poisons out of the body as well.

5/. *Wild Horse Kicks:* Indication that arms and legs are thrust outward and upward, like a wild

horse leaping up and then kicking out. You cannot hold this posture, you can however, perform it ten times on both sides to build up 'Spine Force', the power that comes directly from the spine. it is also used for people who are too Yin and perhaps introverted. I have seen some amazing changes in people once they have been doing this Qigong morning and evening for two weeks only.

7/. *Serpent Tries to Coil Up:* Is used for when someone is too much of the 'earth' and not enough 'Shen' or spirit. Problem is that someone who is, would know know it anyway. Stomach problems, elimination problems are all helped by this Qigong.

I have completed the definitive series on the above on DVD in Four Volumes.

Get Connected

by Anthony Court

The following practice is useful for introducing newcomers to the “Internal Arts” to the idea of brining the mind, body and energy into harmony.

Connecting Practice One- The Steel Ring

1. Join the index finger and thumb together creating a circular ring shape.
2. Try to stop partner pulling the finger and thumb apart by resisting using physical strength
3. It should be *relatively* easy to pull both finger and thumb apart
4. At this stage the person holding the finger and thumb together imagines that it is a steel ring that has no break in it, then they try to feel or imagine their energy circling around the ring. Once this is set up mentally and energetically, it should be impossible to pull the finger and thumb

apart. Your partner should try and feel the different quality that appears in the hand.



One



Three



Two



Four

The Importance of Pauchui

By Erle Montaigue

Pauchui and Large San-Sau are probably the most important part of one's Taiji martial training. However, of these, it is the solo Pauchui or 'canon fist' form that is the most important.

Many like to hurry their training along going straight into the two person training even though they have not trained in the solo form for long enough to have it go 'internal'. This is a mistake as you must build the solid foundation before laying the rest of the building on top.

And it is the same with the solo form itself; one must not go on to the more advanced method of practice unless the basic form has been mastered to its 'fa-jing' level.

The reason that the solo form is so important is that we could never do the two person sets at full fa-jing power because our partner would never be able to stop the attacks as they are just too explosive and each would be damaged during practice.

So in the solo form, we learn about fa-jing in all situations, moving from each corner to attack from any direction using fa-jing.

This must of course be taken slowly by building up the speed very slowly and always being hard on yourself, making sure that every posture and application is per-

fect and not out of balance. It is often easy to rush through the form, thinking that we are doing each movement, when we are really only half doing them and not balanced. If for instance you are to have someone say 'STOP' at any time during the solo form, you should be able to stop dead without swaying or falling over or continuing with the movement etc.

Each movement of the solo form teaches us about body movement for self defence. How to hold the body, how to gain the best position, how to gain power from all directions and from any distance and how to continue with the attacks until the opponent is done. It teaches us about balance and timing and how to release explosive Qi into the opponent, then re-gather that Qi for a re-attack and so on.

We cannot get these things in the two person sets as it is impossible to train with a partner without hurting each other.

So it is important to take the two person sets also slowly and only go at a pace that is suitable to both partner's level of expertise and training.

My teacher used to always tell me when I was practicing the two person sets with him. "Feel it", meaning that I often would simply do the applications automatically when I should have been feeling what the opponent was doing with each touch. Know where the weight is coming from and how to move your body in

order to take care of that weight on your own body.

In two person sets we learn to turn our body in exactly the correct manner in order to gain the most power and correct direction. I remember spending hours and hours on the first movement of the two person set (san-sau) and my teacher would just keep going over and over it until I was exasperated and asked him why we were doing this. He simply said "keep doing"! Until I discovered that my head was moving back and forth! Once I learnt to pull my chin in slightly thus stopping this head movement, we immediately went on to the next movement. He said "See" and I nodded "Yes". And it went on like that throughout the whole form.

Nowadays, I do not need pauchui form, however, I still love to train in it as it is a total release of energy and is a great way to relax at the end of a hard day.

The mind of a true fighter: to be or no to be

Gunther Vanwesmael

Struggling again. This time, I'm predestined to lose. Movement in rehearsal, only thoughts, now words to be read. No teachings, only acceptance. My weakness, your strength. The path, a glance at what is behind. But, what is *next*? What is *behind*? What is the next step? To be or not to be...

One question? One answer? The other day, I was wondering about the mind of a fighter, say a *true* fighter. His or her mind is all about live or die, as in surviving. In fact, the mind of a true fighter is no mind at all. No losing, no winning.

Off course, I'm no true fighter. I wander. That, I do realise and unfortunately I am always thinking about winning. Even life is about winning. Being healthy seems to be - simply - conquering illness. I like people to see me as a "winning" man, healthy, wise, and successful.

But then again, I'm only bluffing (and let's face it: aren't we all?). Always pretending to be what we are not. Isn't that (often, if not always) the source of aggression? Society only demands for perfect people, perfect manufactures, etc. We just can't cope with it and we become frustrated,... True, "thousands of repetitions and out of one's true self perfection emerges". Yes, everybody loves Raymond and yes I'm always calm

(except for my wife and she knows...). And yes, I do meditate, I do practise Yoga and Taiji. That's why the saying stands on the makiwara! That's why you practise! But it is not, it can not be: true fighting, because there is mind involved.

Free from indulges in pretending. As long as there is intention in the mind – which has nothing to do with cause and motive – true fighting does not and can not exist.

Free from indulges in pretending. As long as there is intention in the mind – which has nothing to do with cause and motive – true fighting does not and can not exist. Having a choice implicates action with an intent: to do x or not to do x with a conscious mind. Hence, there are two types of mind: conscious and unconscious (let's forget Freud and subconsciousness). This supposes the no mind as an unconscious mind. So fighting is not about winning a competition and breaking bones on a tatami.

It is not about having a choice or being free, which arises and perishes (partial momentariness), fighting is about being alive and staying alive: survival, healthy and happily: in an unconscious state. Simply there in every fibre, every sinew: to be is the answer (total momentariness). "I do not know the way to defeat others, but the way to defeat myself". *Id est* the Buddhist rejection of the self.

How it can be *achieved* (!)? Never without form and underlying principles. Beware of obsessively sticking to the form and neglecting the other part, eating habits and moving habits in general!

Nowadays, everybody seems to be concerned about his or her health, especially the external part: the looks (you know: to pretend...). The better you look, the slimmer for females, the most muscular for men, the better your health will be. All conscious acts. The criterion for health – good health – seems to be how one looks. Or that's what they (the media and other firms, pharmaceutical industries as well, willing to gain as much money as they can – economical benefits instead of health benefits) want us to believe. Hence, swallow a few pills, shake some proteins, run like hell and join the local fitness club and you'll get what you want (i.e. what they want). Individualism at its best.

Everybody and everything is concerned about and cries for the mind (read the outer looks). If something is wrong, check your head. Fighting is done by using the head too often (figuratively speaking!). The treatment for this disease, and a disease it is indeed (consider the amount of health problems), is to get rid of the *homunculus*, that little 12 inches tall big-headed (liter-

ally) creature inside all of us. The homunculus symbolizes the dualism of western thinking: mind and body. "I think therefore I am."

It makes us believe that the conscious mind dictates everything which evokes an unnatural way of living. We must learn (again) how to eat, how to walk, how to live an everyday life.

So, "you have to learn how to push the rock where it wants to go". In other words, you have to have *sung* (naturally relaxed) or *mushin* (empty minded). Then, you definitely are a true fighter.

On a walking path, before is the mind and next the no mind. You need the mind, the consciousness, the self to *achieve (!)* the no mind. However, the no mind is not a goal, it may not be an intention. It may never be individual, but always universal and still total momentariness. One question: what is behind or what is next? One answer: be!

Street self-defence: The paradigms of coping with street encounters

If one day you will be confronted with an aggressive situation or a person who creates an aggressive situation, you should always remember in street self-defence, or street fighting if you like, there is no such thing as a free lunch. You have only one chance, so never ever be indecisive or hesitate. In order to gain that preoccupation, use whatever you consider useful to knock out your opponent. Thus, in street fighting there are no rules at all.

Psychologically, in the street animal behaviourism reigns, people prefer to behave using certain (animal) rituals, for it is much more convenient (in society for normal people or in a peer group for criminals). Hence, understanding the fundamentals of human behaviour you are entering the world of dealing more easily with street encounters. Moreover, you will survive!

Most important, as animals, people do not like to be hurt. The aggressor, acting alone or in a group, will not immediately attack, but will use his perception of the person, i.e. a potential victim; the aggressor is looking for signals of weakness.

Most important, as animals, people do not like to be hurt. The aggressor, acting alone or in a group, will not immediately attack, but will use his perception of the person, i.e. a potential victim; the aggressor is looking for signals of weakness. Even a fight in the café does not occur without an incident, a causal reaction which can start with eyeballing: ritual behaviour.

Additionally, your behaviour and his behaviour or reaction upon a situation is function of the person and the environment. In other words, if you act or even look like a (potential) victim you yourself are creating an opportunity for mobsters to take (rob) you as a victim. For instance, if you like to drink, never walk down the street being drunk: that is creating an opportunity – you're easy prey.

As a matter of fact, street encounters are quite uncomplicated; they are mainly based upon stimulus and response. And they should be simple, for humans behave and think simple as well, it's much easier.

I would like to consider three paradigms which ought to allow you for not becoming prey or a victim. Consideration at any time doesn't mean declining personal happiness. In fact, it increases the well-being and safety of your life.

The first paradigm when you get out "minding your own business" is to be **aware**, especially of the environment (which includes persons). Look around you and ask yourself what do I see – look for potential danger. Seeing is knowing: if you see a group of youngsters in a dark alley and you feel a little awkward then leave. Don't hesitate and wonder about how beautiful and peaceful life is. Reality is that death might watch you. Read the newspapers and don't go walking in dangerous areas. You can have all the training you want, you never match a bullet flying towards you. Maybe you can fight similar to John L. Sullivan or Jack Dempsey, but you'd better not try your luck in the street, where there are no rules at all and no referee ringing a bell. Being aware complements with knowing yourself: your limitations and your strength. No need for telling you to train the mind as well as the body. The goal of your training must always be **balance** in mind and

body. Remind the old yin and yang principle in taiji.

When the (your) surroundings have been determined and you are now at least prepared, the next reflection is to have an intention. This intention is the **willingness** to kill, i.e. to defend your life and the life of your beloved ones. Willingness signifies controlling the situation. In other words, it is a coping strategy and amplifies a positive outcome. This willingness reflects not only a mental or internal state of the person (a mental set); it also appears in the physical appearance. And, I don't mean to build muscles (as in pumping iron); I mean to look confident and to let the eyes speak.

Obviously, the aggressor also has an intention: to rob you or even worse. That's why you don't want to give him an opportunity.

If you did foresee the aggressive act and you still couldn't prevent it from happening, you only have one option left: to strike, without hesitation. You need to be ready in a split second and strike as hard as you can (be efficient) and strike continuous until the aggressor is out of action (be effective). Efficient striking depicts moving the entire body – not just striking with the hand, use your full body. Effective striking illustrates the goal of finishing the aggressor.

In his mind (or mind-set), the aggressor does not anticipate that you re-act physically (striking). He expects you to freeze (physically **and** emotionally). Nonethe-

less, you will be stressed, as adrenaline will occur and you must deal with it. You must understand the ramifications of adrenaline and its reactions on the body: if you react too slowly, you **will** freeze. Therefore: don't hesitate at all. You might additionally determine the increase of adrenaline as fear (trembling of the legs), which is quite normal (cf. fight or flight response), so, again: no hesitation is allowed. Use your knowledge to your benefit!

Conclusion: in daily life all you ever need is awareness, willingness and readiness. These paradigms are interdependent and cause you to have the power and the knowledge to make things happen or not instead of letting things happen to you.

*Vanwesemael Gunther
Law Enforcement Officer
Anti-Aggression Team
Brussels Police Force - Belgium*