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# Combat & Healing

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# Combat & Healing

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# The Pre History of Bagwa

By Paul Brecher

The practice of circle walking in Bagwa/bagwa comes from Taoist/Daoism chi kung/qigong circle walking which can trace its roots back to the circle walking shamanic traditions of the Mongolian-Siberian shamans.

All shamans had round drums and spun around and around in their healing rituals. The relevance of the round drum and the spinning around whilst walking around a circle is all to do with the circular nature of life and death and re-birth, the changing of the seasons in nature and the changing of the seasons in man from the first footsteps of the spring of our youth through the blossoming summer of our lives and into the autumn years of our old age we are walking around the round earth that is spinning around the round sun.

Eventually in the winter of our dying days our sun sets and the energy stops circulating around in the microcosmic orbits of the governing and conception meridians of our physical bodies and our journey continues on in our spirit bodies to another land. A far away place that the circle walking shamans used to visit.

When the tribe was all sitting together in the dark night, deep in the northern forests of Siberia the

light of the fire gave them warmth and a point of communal focus. The fire was symbolic of the sun at the centre which we revolve around and also of the fire of the life force in the centre of our bellies. The shaman would dance the dance of life and death around the fire and on a full moon the whole tribe would dance with him.

We can see in the names of the eight different palm shapes in bagwa its ancient origins from a time when man was part of nature.

Heaven Palm  
Earth Palm  
Fire Palm  
Thunder Palm  
Wind Palm  
Water Palm  
Mountain Palm  
Cloud Palm

The Taoists/daoists were the inheritors of this system and they also circle walked for all these reasons and also because they were interested in its chi kung/qigong benefits as well.

The history of the shamans goes back to the stone age and even before that into prehistory, today there are very few true shamans left, I was fortunate to see a Tibetan shaman spinning in the Himalayas in 1989.

In ancient times hunters would dance with the shaman around the fire and he would invoke the spirit of the animal they were going to hunt and the hunters would follow him in his animal dance and tune in to the spirit of their prey.

The shamans went traveling in their spirit bodies in the spirit world and also moved in such a way that their spirits became one with spirits of the animals whose movements they imitated.

Warriors before a battle would join the shaman in his dance around the fire hoping some of his spiritual power would be transferred to them or that they would enter into the same altered state as him and so gain some of his spiritual power.

Warriors would also have a similar attitude to the hunters, before a battle, they were getting ready for a hunt of sorts but they were of course hunting people not animals. Whether it was the hunter or the warrior they would have brought their hunting tools or fighting weapons with them into the circle dance around the fire and made the movements of the chase and the kill, the spear and knife, spinning, cutting and stabbing.

The taoists/daoists were the inheritors of this system and they also circle walked for all these reasons and also because they were interested in its chi kung/qigong benefits as well.

The taoists were interested in chi for health, long life and spiritual immortality. The martial artists were interested in chi for health but also for increasing their martial arts internal power.

So today we have the martial art of bagwa which has eight martial forms which are based on eight animal forms because of this wonderful prehistory and early history of bagwa, a practitioner can practice the art to achieve any one or combination of these possibilities:

Spiritual development  
Self development  
Meditation  
Chi Kung/ Qi gong development  
Martial arts techniques development  
Internal Power development  
Way of Moving development  
Understanding the spirit of the Animals and the Way of Nature  
Understanding the Spirit of Nature and our own True Nature

There was one man in particular who understood all these different strands and formalized them into a system that we now call bagwa, his name was Tung Hai Chuan/Dong Hai Chuan (1797-1882). Almost every branch of bagwa that we have today can be traced back to him.

The way that we move in bagwa reflects both its pre history and its martial art efficiency. It has explosive strikes with the whole body (fa jin) and strikes to the acupuncture points (dim mak).

When we practice bagwa we have the earthy loose heavy weight of a Bear as it fights to protect its young, our palms like massive paws. The cunning, speed and awareness of a Monkey as it steals

the peach of immortality from the tree of heaven, like him we are sprightly and quick.

Our arms should be like the great wings of a Phoenix making thunder in the sky, breaking the arms and neck of the opponent. And our bodies like a Snake rotating and twisting, coiling and uncoiling, we cannot be held and our strike is as deadly as its fangs.

We stamp our feet on the enemy like the hooves of a Unicorn and our opponent is impaled on our fingers as if stabbed by its horn. We impact with the opponent like a Hawk at the end of its power dive our finger tips like talons. We hunt and leap on our prey like a Lion, our hands like claws.

And finally we are a Dragon, the force of nature, unstoppable and unpredictable, adaptable and skilful, we transform and change shape. The opponent looks for us in front but we are behind, he goes high and low but cannot touch us, we disappear and reappear, we descend from the clouds and strike him down like lightning.

Our spirit is like a Dragon we breath fire, fly in the sky and live under water. We rise and descend, undulate and twist, penetrate rocks and mountains, leap in the clouds and travel with the rain, know the past and present, exists in every place, enter water without drowning, enter fire without burning, large as the universe, small as a hairtip, imperceptible, ungraspable, inexplicable, indescribable.

As a spiritual Dragon we skillfully change in accordance with the times, share the qualities of heaven and earth, share the light

of the sun and moon, share the order of the seasons, understand the spirit within and without, the link between Heaven and Earth between this world and the next.

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*Paul Brecher is the Senior London Instructor for The World Tai Chi Boxing Association. If you would like more information please call Paul on 020 8264 8074 or visit [www.taiji.net](http://www.taiji.net)*

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While video and dvd self-instruction can be very useful in the absence of regular personal instruction; it is always best to attend classes with an instructor when trying to learn an internal martial art or qigong and use audiovisual resources as a supplement to your long-term training.

Having found an instructor, some people will choose private instruction because they cannot find group classes that meet their needs in terms of day-to-day scheduling and family or work responsibilities. Similarly, some students might prefer private instruction but simply not have the financial freedom to pursue these as opposed to the normally cheaper option of group classes.

However, there are other issues to be considered when deciding whether group or private instruction is best for your training needs

### Group Instruction

Except for that small minority of people who can only tolerate their own company, human beings are very much social animals. So, it shouldn't be a surprise that group practice is the most common vehicle for studying gongxi and the internal martial arts.

Each learning environment brings its own unique challenges and joys. Some people hate practising with others or being watched while they learn new things; others love "showing off". Some find it distracting to have people moving around them while others need to be able to follow their neighbour's movements to easily remember the movements of a form and have trouble practising on their own.

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*It is an interesting phenomena that many students with months, sometimes years, of experience are able to do a taiji or bagua form semi-competently while in a group; but cannot do so when training on their own.*

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It is an interesting phenomena that many students with months, sometimes years, of experience are able to do a taiji or bagua form semi-competently while in a group; but cannot do so when training on their own.

Another benefit of group practice in relation to form work in particular is that it usually ensures that those moving too quickly must slow their pace; while those who are slow by reason of pausing awkwardly are encouraged to accelerate their movements as appropriate in order to keep pace.

Much in the same way that clock pendulums in one room will even-

tually move in a synchronised manner, even if initially swinging at different tempos; humans tend to both consciously and subconsciously do the same. This phenomena — particularly in qigong and slow form training — can also create a cumulative energetic benefit for the individuals who make up the group practising together. This is known as "jenqi" to the Chinese and is said to be the energy of a group of people acting harmoniously together. A Westerner might think of it in terms of a 'positive vibe' being created by and for the group.

Of course, it's difficult to analyse where the psychology of group dynamics begin and where jenqi leaves off; however, it remains true that a group of committed practitioners can generate an atmosphere conducive to smiles all around, if nothing else, while practising together. Good instructors encourage this to assist in the healing aspects the training.

Unfortunately, unscrupulous instructors can also use it as a forum for autosuggestion to influence their students to do things that they might not otherwise want to do when on their own. On more mundane level, some salesmen can abuse this same principle when they have you in their office and are using subtle means to induce

you to sign a contract or buy their product.

Another downside of group classes is that some people focus on the social aspects of the class and spend too much time having tea or talking with each other or trying to find their next sexual partner. Pleasant though such activities may be for some people, it tends to waste the precious class time that could be devoted to learning new skills.

### Private Instruction

Private instruction certainly is preferable in many ways simply because the student has all of the attention of the teacher and can benefit from that in the sense of getting constant feedback on what is being learned or practised.

Of course, this one-on-one relationship can be counterproductive if the instructor is unscrupulous and tries to dominate the student emotionally to abuse them either financially or sexually. It is a sad aspect of modern martial arts training that more than one high-profile instructor has been charged by the police for interfering sexually with their students during such private sessions.

Even more have not crossed the lines on a legal level but have used such private classes as a recruiting ground for one sexual/romantic partner after another. Even when the students seem willing enough,

it is an abuse of authority to seduce a student who may have an unhealthy adulation of his or her teacher.

It is also true that some teachers will be at risk of having their innocent intentions misread during a private session and of being accused of things that have never even entered their minds. It is perhaps an indication of the complexity of the politically correct times that we live in that a male instructor may wish to consider not doing private classes with female students for fear of being falsely accused of sexual harassment but then get harassed and accused of sexist attitudes because he refuses to teach women that way!

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*On a more positive note, private instruction in martial techniques and skills is extremely useful for experienced students as this kind of coaching from someone who has “the touch” and does not rely on crude force for martial purposes can really bring new insights to the student.*

On a more positive note, private instruction in martial techniques and skills is extremely useful for experienced students as this kind of coaching from someone who has “the touch” and does not rely on crude force for martial purposes can really bring new insights to the student.

Particularly when the student is experienced, motivated and has some aptitude, private classes can bring progress that might otherwise take much longer in a group training format.

On the other hand, private martial instruction for beginners is less useful in that such will not yet have the basic skills or experience to appreciate the subtle differences between what the teacher and they can do.

### Conclusion

The decision to embrace or avoid group classes is often driven more by the personality of the would-be student than by any other factor related to getting the best possible instruction. In my experience as a teacher, I have found that a significant proportion of those seeking private instruction do so for the wrong reasons; ie., they are afraid of looking awkward or foolish in front of other students or they want the instructor all to themselves as those who can afford regular private instruction often imply or demand that each session should be taught according to the wishes of the paying customer and not according to the conscience of the teacher!

None of these are not necessarily fatal to a student’s progress — though they certainly can try the patience of an instructor — if the student can out-

grow such attitudes as they progress in their studies. Sadly, many do not.

Particularly in reference to martial instruction, the more experienced student can only benefit from training with a variety of body types and skill levels and not just one person — even if that one person is the instructor. Real martial skill can only come through practise with a variety of partners of all skill levels. Group classes become essential for those wanting to build real combative skills.

Perhaps in the end the ideal for both teacher and student alike lies in small group classes so that a sense of family can develop and so that a variety of training partners are available without sacrificing the benefits of having detailed feedback and instruction.

Of course, this kind of class precludes the teacher being able to afford a large commercial school setting which requires a large number of students to pay the bills much less make a profit. In the end, the search for quality instruction always seems to take us back to the time-honoured tradition in the Chinese internal martial arts of teaching out of one's home or in a public park if the weather permits such activities all year around.

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*The author has been studying the Chinese martial arts and Yang-style taijiquan since 1975 and has been a member of the WTBA since its foundation. He considers Erle Montaigue to be one of the main influences on his practise and understanding of both taiji and bagua. Michael is the author of two books on taiji as well as one on bagua and has had over 150 articles printed in various martial arts and taiji magazines in the last two decades. His website can be reached at <http://www.angelfire.com/mb/taiji>*

# Links Between “Magical Passes” and Internal Martial Arts

*Bairbre Flood (in Ireland)*

The “Magical Passes” are a series of moves handed down by the sorcerers of ancient Mexico and recorded by Carlos Castaneda after more than twenty years of practice. They are at least 10,000 years old according to their descendants. Castaneda explains these moves with detailed step-by-step photos in “Magical Passes - The Practical Wisdom of the Shamans of Ancient Mexico”, (Harper Collins, 1998) in one of last books he wrote before he died.

The similarities of these magical passes to the internal martial arts are striking, not so much in the particular moves, but in the philosophy they embody and the results they give. For those of you who practice internal martial arts, you’ll see the links between your art and the following aspects of the passes:

- \* Importance of the ‘intent’.
- \* Sinking consciousness to the point below the navel.
- \* Focusing the mind.
- \* Concentrating fully, in the here and now.
- \* Moving the body in a graceful, powerful manner.
- \* Belief in ‘tendon’ energy which courses through the body through channels.
- \* Can ‘grab’ energy from around us to strengthen us.

\* Feet shoulder width apart, back slightly rounded (the classic ‘c’ spine).

\* “Turning on” the body - (akin to accessing what Erle Montaigne calls ‘the reptile brain’).

\* Energizes the body - improved fitness and health.

\* Effects not just physical - fine tunes the whole body/mind/spirit.

\* Redeploys energy so we can access other worlds/ways of being.

\* Moves the ‘assemblage point’ (the point through which we organise our perceptions of the world).

\* Stops the ‘internal dialogue’.

\* Importance of self-discipline.

\* Training the mind to be strong and instinctive.

\* Particular body movements produce specific effects eg. certain moves improve concentration, other ones gather energy up to the liver, etc.

\* Learning from other animals how to get in touch with our primal instincts.

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*Through the worries of mundane life we push our energy away from centres of vitality in our body, but we can gather that energy back in (redeployment) by saturating our mind and body with the movements.*

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Through the worries of mundane life we push our energy away from centres of vitality in our body, but we can gather that energy back in (redeployment) by saturating our mind and body with the movements. Don Juan explains to

Castaneda, “I am following the traditional sorcerer’s’ device of clouding your linear view. By saturating your kinesthetic memory, I am creating a pathway for you to inner silence.” (pg 23) And the reason why anyone would want to do this? “Because you are a creature of awareness, a perceiver, like the rest of us. Human beings are on a journey of awareness, which has been momentarily interrupted by extraneous forces. Believe me, we are magical creatures of awareness. If we don’t have this conviction, we have nothing.” (pg 27)

If what the sorcerers say is true and these magical passes are older than 10,000 years, then these moves could be coming direct from our hunter-gatherer ancestors. They could have been the parts we kept when we started becoming civilised. They could be a direct link with our animist, hunter-gatherer, wild past.

The Chinese stuff doesn’t claim to be that old, but much of their philosophy and practice seems animist in spirit to me. Maybe they were forced to adapt their arts to martial ones because China was such a violent place to live in. Hunter-gatherers don’t engage in warfare and have no possessions/territory so they didn’t need to learn how to defend themselves and their things. They could focus on using



their arts to develop themselves in other ways - ie redeploying energy for expanding awareness and accessing other worlds, other ways of being. Hunter-gatherers needed to be flexible, strong and alert to gather food and avoid predators, but their society wasn't based on possessions, money or land ownership, so there was no need to learn war-skills.

Chinese society became more and more violent as they became more civilised and so their teachings had to be practical and useful for the times they lived in. If they wanted to teach youngsters they had to give them an incentive, they had to trick them into learning. So they used their arts for fighting and developed along those lines.

For us today, we live in an incredibly violent society and need to know how to defend ourselves from personal attacks. So I believe the Chinese arts to be very useful and practical. Learning to cope with violence is necessary both to defend ourselves and to redeploy the violence created in our own natures by being brought up as civilised beings.

The repressed violence of the average civilised person explodes now and again in uncontrolled bursts and is very damaging for all concerned.

There is no point denying the anger inside us all which has to a large extent been fostered by incorrect birthing procedures, forced schooling, lack of community, stresses of machine life (cars, telephones and other non-tactile forms of communication) and lack of love, joy, happiness and wonder. Living as civilised people requires an awful lot of repression of

our anger, sexuality, fear, etc. We don't learn to love ourselves because we have no good role models. Our elders have no idea how to foster young children's imagination and self-discipline and are content to farm us off to television/creche/school for indoctrination rather than exploration.

The over-socialisation that is a product of living in towns and going to school causes us to rely on others more than ourselves, with a resultant lack of self-discipline. The Chinese martial arts can help to rectify that situation to some extent. As an old master once said, "I'm fighting myself when doing the form".

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The martial arts can get us to start thinking about taking responsibility for our own health too, with regular practice keeping illness at bay.

So on no account think I'm knocking the martial intention of Chinese internal martial arts. It has to be difficult in order to force your mind to shut up for a while and let your body talk. What is the point of just waving your arms around with no regard to weight distribution, proper alignments, etc? What is the point of indulging your ego even more by only doing something that is easy? By doing internal martial arts in the way they're supposed to be done (ie martially!) you are making it

difficult for yourself, you are left with no choice but to concentrate fully on the task in hand. Internal martial arts force us to discipline our unruly minds and that is one of the main reasons they are incredibly beneficial.

People who have practiced internal martial arts for many years remark on the sense of freedom they begin to feel. It's not freedom to shag as many people as you can, getting drunk, doing drugs, driving fast, buying whatever you feel like. These are not freedoms. It's not freedom for me as a woman to get a job. This is not freedom for me. Freedom for me is not about acting the same as a man and living in the world that has become overly masculine. If I say you can do a or b, is that a choice?

What about c, d, e and f? Or off the alphabet altogether? That is a real choice, what I mean by freedom.

The wild ones of central America through the sorcerers of Don Juan's lineage tried to preserve some of the practices which can give us a sense of that. While it's hard for us to imagine what it would be like to live as wild beings (as humans did live for thousands of thousands of years before civilization), we can, through vigorous training, at least try to catch a glimpse of it. This aspect of the magical passes finds echos in the internal martial arts.

Regular practice of taichi can open up the body to all sorts of possibilities. Chang Yiu-chun

when interviewed by Erle Montague said, "Our mind becomes like certain animals and we begin to regain certain animal instincts, those which we have lost over many centuries. Because our mind is now reunited with our bodies because of our tai chi ch'uan training, so too our body becomes more with animal instinct." (pg 186 of "Dim-Mak, Death-Point Striking, Paladin Press, 1993)

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*Of course the academic establishment, in particular the anthropology elitists disliked what Castaneda was doing. He took the piss out of their obsession with note-taking, objective provings and linear conception of time.*

Later in the interview, Chang makes fun of Erle and his note-taking, something Don Juan also did to Castaneda to try to get him to give up explaining everything through language and to admit that the truly important things in life just cannot be written about.

Of course the academic establishment, in particular the anthropology elitists disliked what Castaneda was doing. He took the piss out of their obsession with note-taking, objective provings and linear conception of time. He also found little favour with the hippies who he slagged off for their navel gazing. It's not surprising he made a lot of enemies! If you have heard negative comments about Castaneda's books, I'd recommend actually reading them and finding out for yourself, as you just can't trust the experts on important matters like this. If

you were to listen to some of the taichi experts, for instance, you'd be convinced taichi isn't even a martial art - a completely ludicrous suggestion, but one which is repeated by many people practicing taichi.

If you want to find out something, find it out for yourself, not through a self-appointed expert who has vested interests or lack of imagination.

(Just about most experts!). And if you discover anything of interest, please let me know!

Basha@iol.ie

# IS THE GRASS GREENER ?

*Steve Morris*

I am sure I am not the only one who has asked the question “ is there anything better”.

That elusive martial art that will turn me into superman , make me unbeatable , allow me to live until 120 years old. This is slightly exaggerating however as one researches the arts , the origins and the masters , a lot becomes clearer while more is discovered.

Erle once told me that in his young and gullible days, he was taught the Tung fast form of Taijiquan. His teacher told him that the form would turn him into Superman.

How many have experienced something similar ?

I first become entrapped by Taijiquan while at a weekly Aikido class. This little Chinese man entered the class, stood on one leg while the Aikido Dan grades failed to move him and then proceeded to tell me that if I trained with him for three years no one would be able to touch me. Like Erle I fell hook , line and sinker. I stayed with my teacher for two years and never reached the heights he mentioned. Maybe the third year was the crucial one !!

I have trained with one of the leaders of the British Council of Chinese Martial Arts.

This teacher is a worldwide wushu judge and a well-respected figure within the Chinese martial arts community. What he teaches is simplified and standardised Taijiquan. The first form taught to all students regardless of experience is the Yang eight form. What a laugh. Where did this come from ? There is the Yang twenty-four step , the Combined forty-two step , the Yang forty-eight form and we wonder why Taijiquan is ridiculed by most of the martial arts community.

Recently while visiting relatives , I witnessed a six-year-old cousin at his Karate class.

I sat with my six-year-old son and observed the class. The class was made up of adults and juniors and due to the teacher arriving late, the warm ups were taken by the senior grade in the class. This senior grade was no older than nine years old yet he was instructing full grown adults in press ups , sit ups , squats etc.

Later in class the instructor was teaching a kata where he shot the hand down low and then raised it above the head. My son asked what was the meaning of this move. I waited a moment before answering because I believed it to be a grab of the testicles and then a ripping motion. For obvious reasons I was not sure if I should have explained this to him. The

teacher however explained to the class the low movement was a punch to an opponents shin to block a kick and when the hand came up to the head , this was to block a downward strike to the head. I was tempted to ask the teacher if he would try the block on a world class Thai boxer !!

I have viewed countless video and DVD footage from some of the greatest Taijiquan masters alive today. I have read many books and articles from a number of leading names and I can confidently say – nothing compares to what we are taught within the WTBA. For those of us who are students of WTBA instructors , let me say you are lucky people who have found the right path to achieving what we all seek. For those of us who are WTBA instructors , we are even luckier as we found the path sooner.

If you are thinking of attending one of Erle’s workshops I can categorically say you will learn a great deal, meet some great people and feel better for the experience.

In closing I would like to relate a conversation I had in May this year with Paul Brecher one of the WTBA leading instructors. Paul has travelled intensively throughout China and beyond in search of the martial arts dream. To gain an insight

in to Paul's experiences I would thoroughly recommend reading the story of his journey.

He has published these on his website. This experience should not be underestimated.

He has walked the walk.

On leaving the London workshop I thanked Paul for hosting the event and also commented on my enjoyment in reading about his travels. Paul told me that despite all his travelling and training with some exceptional teachers , nothing compares to what we are taught by Erle Montaigne.

# The Importance and Hidden Meaning of Large San-Sau in Taijiquan

Erle Montaigue

16/05/2005

Many Tai Chi practitioners only see the Large San-sau as a training method to gain the fighting applications of Tai Chi. However, it goes much deeper than that. There are actually three reasons that we must practice Large San-sau.

The first reason is the obvious one of purely physical contact and learning about how to use the postures from the Tai Chi form. It is said that during San-sau, we practice every known kind of attack and defence, even those ones that aren't actually physically included in the sets. By this I mean that we learn sub-consciously to move the body in such a manner as to teach it to react automatically to any kind of attack, not only those that we are performing. We learn to 'see without seeing' in that our sub-conscious brain will learn how to read an attacker's movement and body shape, how his is placed for power and whether it is even worth reacting to. In the beginning, students will always 'look' at their partner/opponent, not wishing to miss an attack etc. However, as one progresses, we learn that we actually see more without seeing! Our sub-conscious brain picks up on movement that our eyes do not focus upon and then our body reacts instantly to that unseen movement.

The second important reason is that we learn how to transmit Qi either for the self defence art or the healing art. All great internal systems have this aspect somewhere in their sets. If we do not release the stored Qi, no more can be gained and we will sort of explode like a pressure cooker! We must release the built up Qi to stop stagnant Qi building up in our body thus causing disease. We gather the Qi using the Qigong and the Tai Chi form, then we store it using the fast movement and release it using the fa-jing movements of the Pauchui/Large San-Sau forms and two person sets. This is why we must learn to perform the San-Sau at a very explosive pace never allowing any blow to make contact with us, we have it covered the instant that it is released upon us. Many make the big mistake in the beginning of waiting for each attack to be made before reacting to it! In a realistic situation, the attack would never come too close as you would have it covered and would have instantly reacted with a re-attack.

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*When I was with Chang, I would always ask him the meaning of things which would often annoy him I am sure as he would only hit me to demonstrate.*

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Many find that the movements are too close and awkward, however, this is only because they aren't reacting soon enough and allowing the attacker's attacks to get to you before you are attacking/defensive movements yourself. So the whole

thing will become very fast and furious and this is when the whole two person set becomes a joy to perform and only then do we begin to get the real benefits of the next section.

When two partners have been practicing the large San-Sau for some time, become as one unit, the whole Qi systems of each player unites as one flowing river and this practice actually becomes a little addictive, leaving each player on a high for hours after their practice. You should never however, only practice once! You should always practice three times or more with both players practicing on the both sides more than 3 times. So that amounts to 6 times at least each day. It only takes a few minutes going at a cracking pace though.

This brings me to the last section and really is the most important and hidden or secret meaning of Large San-Sau. When I was with Chang, I would always ask him the meaning of things which would often annoy him I am sure as he would only hit me to demonstrate. On one such occasion, I asked him about the true meaning of Large San-Sau to which he answered with a whack on my arm leaving a huge bruise! However, his attack was not that hard and I wondered what the meaning of all this was. I thought in the beginning that he was trying to tell me that the real meaning was to build up resistance to hard attacks

and that my arms would become impervious to attacks in the future with practice. However, as my own training advanced and he did more and more of this, I realised that he was not trying to tell me this at all but rather that when we did the san-sau, it was the banging of the arms and feet that was the most important aspect! This kicking of the important dim-mak points leads to a series of points being activated that would eventually allow one to build up great powerful attacks without using much energy. And I have always noticed that after such practice, I am able to beat the crap out of any kick bag or punching mitt without seeming to use much energy at all in just the same way that Chang would bang onto my arms and leave bruising with out seeming to use much force at all himself.

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*In the very first movement of Large San-Sau for instance, we activate Triple heater 8 and CO 10 points which in tandem, will activate the whole power system of the body.*

In the very first movement of Large San-Sau for instance, we activate Triple heater 8 and CO 10 points which in tandem, will activate the whole power system of the body. And with each movement when we make contact, other such series of points are also activated to enhance this effect. So that when we finish, the reason that we seem to be on a high, is because we have gained so much Qi and power that the excess is used by the body to heal itself! So the activation of the points using large San-Sau is a tremendous healing tool as well. Not only

that, when one places hands on someone who is perhaps ill, they immediately feel a healing energy as that excess energy gained by the form is then grounded through that person's body thus searching and destroying illness!

If you are one of those who have perhaps practiced Large San-Sau over the but have either given up or have thought that you knew it all and so lessen your practice, think again, get back into it and you will certainly only reap the great benefits.

# CHINA TRIP

Steve McDonald

I'm not long back from my trip to China with Dave & Narelle Leffman and Paul Brecher, and I thought I'd drop you a line with some news. It was a brilliant trip, thanks to Dave's 20 odd years of China experience, and some good company.

We all met in Hong Kong mid March and caught the train over to Guangzhou where we connected up with CS Tang, a student of Ho Ho Choi. Dave has been training with CS on and off and we were well received. CS has a day job as a restaurant manager so he invited us for lunch and then he put on a Bagua demo for us on the rooftop with one of his senior students. We went out to dinner that night with them and a local Chen Taiji instructor, and had a ball. I started to realise how much like Australians the Chinese are - they like a drink and a laugh. While in Guangzhou we also went to visit a Wing Chun school.

From there we flew way up north to visit Yang Lu Chan's house. CS Tang made a phone call, and through a friend of a friend he managed to get us in with the Taiji hierarchy in Yongnian town. We were met on arrival by (funnily enough) a Mr Yang, who is the editor of the local Taiji magazine. He was very generous and virtually took two days off work to show us around. We were introduced to the senior Taiji coach in Yongnian (Mr Ping) and we spent a day training with him and about 10 of his senior students. They were a tough but very friendly bunch and they were happy to share their skills openly. They were doing Cheng Fu's form

of course, along with various weapons forms (stick, spear, broadsword). We did see an interesting 'Yang Style Snake Form' that was extremely low to the ground and quite athletic, including a judo style fall-on-your-back move. Their Taiji was generally very sticky and pushy, with no Fa-Jing. Mr Ping gave a very good demo of shifting his centre and taking hits, and he invited me to punch him a few times to show his skill, which I did. In summary he and his students were very friendly and generous, with no ego stuff at all. One day they took us to lunch and got extremely pissed playing drinking games.

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*While in Yongnian we drove out to visit Lu Chan's house at the village of Guang Fu, and met the caretaker there, an 80 year old man called Teacher Han.*

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While in Yongnian we drove out to visit Lu Chan's house at the village of Guang Fu, and met the caretaker there, an 80 year old man called Teacher Han. He was also doing the Cheng Fu, but he did say that he had seen a student of Yang Ban Hou (Li Wan Chang?) doing Fa-jing in the old days. While we were there we went to the Yang family graveyard and saw the tombs of most of the family including Lu Chan and Cheng Fu. After that Mr Yang (the magazine editor) took us to the city of Handan, and we went to visit Yang Zhen Guo, the son of Yang Cheng Fu. This was rather unexpected and blew us away to some extent. The chap must have been about 80 I guess, and he invited us into his ground floor apartment for a cup of tea. On the side board he had the family photos, and there was Cheng Fu

and family, Shou Hou etc. Zhen Guo told us a Yang family secret - that the image of Yang Lu Chan that you see everywhere is not actually him at all. He said they never had any photos or drawings of Lu Chan, so they got one of Shou Hou, put a hat on him and changed it slightly and called it Lu Chan! Zhen Guo studied his father's form and on request he gave us a short demo which was, well, disappointing - rather 'dead'.

After that we went and had a meal in a local restaurant and bumped into a fellow called Wang Chang Xing, who we were told is the most famous practitioner of Yang Ban Hou's style. He gave us a demo but it looked more like Cheng Fu, with no Fa-jing. Dave and I pushed hands with one of his students who demonstrated impressive grounding. Seems like everyone is doing versions of Cheng Fu's form!

From there we went down to Wudang Shan and spent a couple of days looking around the temples etc. Amazing place. We walked up to the summit and just as we got there it snowed, which was quite spectacular. The only martial arts we saw were at the Purple Cloud Palace, but it was nothing really impressive.

From Wudang Shan we went to Chengdu and did some touristy stuff. We went out to Emei Shan for an overnight trip and while there we organised a demo at the Emei kung fu school, run by a Mr Shen. They have their own style that seems to be a blend of Shaolin and Wudang styles. The students busted some bricks and planks and did some athletic Wushu. Mr Shen was a tough character who did an impres-

sive animal form. Paul Brecher showed him some of the disruptives, and although he hadn't seen the forms before he recognised the style as Wudang. He apparently studied at Wudang Shan for a while.

We flew from Chengdu down to Guilin then bussed to Yangshuo, where Mr Gao and his sons have their school. I believe you've met the Gaos as they have a school in Brisbane. Dave has been training with Mr Gao on and off for years, so we were well received again. Mr Gao is amazing for his age and put on a good weapons demo for us. His son George is one of the fittest bastards I've ever met - he reminded me of Bruce Lee.

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*I came away thinking that what I'm already doing (Lu Chan's form) is damned good, and to be honest I didn't learn much by watching or training with the various people we met.*

Overall we spent about 15 days on the mainland and a couple of days either side in Hong Kong. It was a marvellous trip and we did some great sightseeing and cultural stuff as well as checking out various martial arts schools. I came away thinking that what I'm already doing (Lu Chan's form) is damned good, and to be honest I didn't learn much by watching or training with the various people we met. We did do an interesting variation on sticky hands with a Mr Kong in Hong Kong, which was good value. But most of the Taiji we saw was simplified stuff and pretty tame.

I was very impressed with China, it's much more civilised than I expected and from what Dave says it is moving ahead in leaps and bounds.

Cheers,  
Steve



# WTBA ANNUAL SUMMER CAMP 2005

By Adrian Jones:

The WT.A.B. (Wales) annual Summer camp, run by Peter Jones was held on July 9th and 10th at the Silver Cross (West) Scouts camp in Penlleger.

As always it attracted visitors from far afield and it was great to see old friends who have attended camp on many occasions, as well as making new friends with those who were attending for the first time. Over the years, the camp has been a great success and judging by the enthusiasm and tributes that followed the two days of training, this was no exception. Peter was in top form and ably assisted by Keith Jones, the quality of tuition and the overall standard of the camp was 'up there' with the very best.

This year, the training covered Qigong, Yang Cheng-fu Form, Da-Lu, Push Hands, a short basic stick form, the first Bagwa circular palm change and Erle Montaigne's Fighting System.

Peter has always emphasized learning the basics well in order to build a strong foundation in one's Tai Chi and he **never mixes his teaching with the elements of other martial arts!** What he teaches is 100% unadulterated WTBA/Erle Montaigne System as he feels this encompasses everything one would need if they practiced and researched these methods diligently enough.

The fact that those who traveled from afar to attend the camp have now signed up to attend Erle's 'Back TO Basics' course in Ammanford in September 2005 (two more in 2006; see Erle's web

that it rained was last year when Erle was teaching us the Unicorn Qi Awakening form! (Sorry Erle), but then Erle does love the rain, which is one of the reason he came to



site for these) speaks for itself.

Ivan yet again did us proud with the food as he is a qualified chef and the meals were terrific. Thank you Ivan for your efforts. After Sunday's evening meal, those that were staying overnight had a chance to relax and swap anecdotes and training experiences. They were practicing the Yang Cheng-fu form at 10.30pm.

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*Peter has always emphasized learning the basics well in order to build a strong foundation in one's Tai Chi and he never mixes his teaching with the elements of other martial arts!*

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The weather was superb and this is something which we have been very fortunate with over the years. In fact, the only time in 10 years

Wales!

ON a slightly negative note, it is a fact that this year's attendance was down on previous years and it is a shame that more support could not have been shown by local Tai Chi clubs in the WTBA. However, the emphasis is upon quality not quantity.

Thanks to all those who attended, with a special mention to Kristian Melgaard, Faith Crompton and Christian Lopez and thanks also to Peter and Keith for their expert teaching and guidance.

# Erle Montaigue's Summer Camp Germany May 2006

## May 26th to 29th 2006: Erle Montaigue's Spring/Summer Camp On The Baltic Sea.

This workshop over 4 days is for anyone wishing to increase their knowledge and practice of the Internal Fighting/Healing arts.

However, it is of particular importance for the **WTBA members and Erle Montaigue's instructors**, those who currently make a living or just make extra money from teaching under the banner of the WTBA and Erle Montaigue. Erle has never charged (as others do like wounded bulls) for the privilege of belonging to the WTBA and being allowed to teach using the WTBA logo or Erle Montaigue's name.

So this is an excellent opportunity for those instructors worldwide to not only gain much needed corrections and revisions, but to also put something back and to support Erle Montaigue.

It is very important for WTBA instructors and those who teach under Erle Montaigue's name to have at least some contact with 'Head Office' so to speak each year as this forms a bond and comradeship with the others in the organization. So please try to come to this once a year camp in Germany.

We have not made it compulsory as other organizations do, nor do we charge exorbitant amounts for training, as others do as that is not the way of the WTBA. We need your support and you need the contact and updates and corrections! So it is a two way thing as always.

Erle will be holding less overseas workshops in 2006. However, his Summer Camp near Rostock NE Germany on the beautiful Baltic Sea will be something not to be missed. A chance for 4 days (5 hours per day or more) of training in *Bagua Animal Forms, Yang Lu-ch'an form corrections, Basic and advanced push hands, da-lu, chee sau, fighting methods, qigong.*

And anything else that pops up during the camp. You should arrive on the 25th and leave on the 29th or 30th.

Free time for **sail-boarding, swimming volley ball etc.** Accommodation is **FULL BOARD including meals!** (Vegetarians are catered for) and will be in **COVERED WAGONS** (a-la the Wild West) with 4 in each wagon.

If you would prefer to be in a cabin (perhaps you are bringing your family or spouse) that can be arranged. OR you can tent it as the weather is usually pretty good in Rostock at that time of year.

There are only 13 wagons so please book early!! The Total Cost for the **accommodation and food** will be **EURO: €20.50 per night.**

**NB://** Erle's son Eli, will be available for private lessons when normal classes are not being held at this camp.  
[eli@qigong.org.uk](mailto:eli@qigong.org.uk)

## **CUT OFF DATE FOR REGISTRATIONS:**

We require a definite answer before **December the 20th 2005** with a **€50.00 (Euro)** deposit paid to secure your place. Numbers will be limited. Accommodation cost listed here soon, or

contact **Ron Beier**, Erle's German representative. The workshop training cost will be **EURO: €280.00**

Please contact Ron Beier at [Sprachdienste@t-online.de](mailto:Sprachdienste@t-online.de) or Phone: +49 (0)38202 30720 and let him know what day you will be arriving and leaving as your accommodation has to be booked.

To see some **photos** of the Venue for the Summer Camp and for more information in both English and German please go to:

[www.sprachdienste.homepage.t-online.de/taiji/schnattermann/schnatter\\_uk.htm](http://www.sprachdienste.homepage.t-online.de/taiji/schnattermann/schnatter_uk.htm)

# TAIJI FOR THE STREET

By Steve Morris

Pick up any martial arts magazine these days and you can guarantee a dedicated column inside which is dedicated to “street combat”, “realistic self defence” or

“real confrontation training”.

The authors of such works are predominantly ex traditionalists who have reached a conclusion somewhere along the line that their chosen art is flawed for modern street survival. The reasons for the lack of confidence in one’s chosen path are varied but could range from a real life failure where they applied the art but were found wanting, poor instruction of the kata or form applications, not spending enough time studying a system or a lack of fighting instinct. The list is endless.

I am a believer in natural fighting instinct or heart for want of a better word. Some people are natural fighters. This could be the single mother who is battling daily to feed and clothe her family, the retired accountant who is struggling to overcome cancer or the world heavyweight boxing champion. Some people are born in to fighting families, some live in deprived areas where fighting daily is a common occurrence and others I’m afraid just love to fight....

To teach street self defence an instructor must have some experience of a real confrontation. All the training drills, forms, qigong and application work in the world cannot compare to that moment when it is you and an opponent for real on the pavement. The feelings felt within cannot be transmitted from teacher to student.

It must be experienced for yourself.

Some years ago I was unfortunate enough to suffer a street attack. Some would say it was my own fault as I was looking for my attacker at the time anyway.

My father who is registered disabled and who walks with the aid of a stick due to an accident at work was taking a walk to his local convenience store when he was attacked for no reason by a well known thug in the area. My father was put in hospital for his troubles and the first I heard was a few hours later when I received a tearful phone call from my distraught mother. With this I drove to my parents home to calm my Mother and then proceeded to drive to the hospital to collect my Father.

As I drove through the streets near my parents home I spotted the thug who had so blatantly attacked my Father walking without a care in the world.

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*He looked up and without showing any emotion proceeded to move in to me throwing a punch with his right hand. I was stunned at how the situation had escalated in seconds but now I was fighting for real.*

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My heart began to speed up and the inside of my mouth turned dry in seconds. The weakness washed over me that seems to turn your legs to useless jelly pieces once the adrenalin and the realisation of the situation kicks in. I stopped my vehicle and walked towards him without a word.

He looked up and without showing any emotion proceeded to move in to me throwing a punch

with his right hand. I was stunned at how the situation had escalated in seconds but now I was fighting for real. We clinched and I was able to wrestle him down on to the floor where I held his head in to the concrete. As I recall neither of us spoke. It was not like the movies where I should have said “this is for my Father you scumbag” it was an eerie sound of grunting and scuffling. He was now kneeling in a prayer type position and I held him down as I struggled to my feet. As he knelt before me I drove a kick in to his ribcage like a football player scoring a goal. He screamed as I did it again this time causing him to roll in agony on the floor.

A shout from across the road brought me to my senses and a woman was standing there screaming towards me “leave him alone I’ve called the police”. With this I got back in to my car and drove to the hospital to collect my Father. The whole episode was concluded in approximately thirty seconds.

The police later visited my parents and no charges were made as my Father’s attacker dropped any against me providing my Father dropped any against him.

An uneasy truce was called. Since that day I have come face to face with my assailant on two separate occasions and nothing has happened other than making eye contact and giving each other a knowing look.

The day after the fight I lay in bed nursing a bruised body analyzing my mistakes in the previous nights confrontation. Initially I was disappointed with my “performance”. I did

not use Peng or Single Whip or  
Step Up Parry and Punch  
to defeat my opponent. Why ?

Maybe I had not practised the  
form enough for these postures to  
sink in to the subconscious ?  
Maybe Taiji was no good for street  
defence ? Should I search  
elsewhere for an alternative system  
? These and other similar ques-  
tions bounced around in my head  
for days and even weeks after.

Only now I can look back and see  
why I survived this vicious assault  
and it was due to my training in  
Taiji pure and simple. I won the  
fight because my chosen  
art had given me timing , coordi-  
nation , speed and power which  
on this occasion was enough to  
see me through. Even now I ques-  
tion the usefulness of certain  
postures within the system and  
the practicality of such movements  
but I really feel the art as a whole  
is what protects us. It is not one  
movement , it is not one theory it  
is all of the art combined together.  
Oh and a little bit of heart.....

# Sometimes life is hard.

*Klaus Baltzer: Germany:*

Since I knew that my wife will die; I fled with her and my son into the mountains. I live in a beautiful natural environment. I worked at my home office, did supporting my wife, an enjoying the days.

And for each day 1-2 hours of playing Bagwa. At all weather, snow, ice, wind etc . My thoughts always focusing on the beauty of the techniques, trying to get better, knew and noticed the positive effects of BaGuaZhang on my physical condition.

My wife died February 2002, I was very very sad. However after 2-3 weeks I started trying to live as normal as possible again. Even after 4 weeks of her death, when driving my car saw her sitting on my right side.

I trained now always in a way or mind-set that I tell myself; if thoughts arise in myself, they flow away like the clouds in the wind.

This spring I built my Wooden Bagwa-Circle and practiced, 3-6 hours each day. At the end I concentrated more on the names of the postures and the translation in my language.

I watched regularly (1CD each day) Erle's BAGWA TO MAX VCDs (Circle-form) and the BAGWA Essentials 1 and 2 again and again.

I recognised your saying "A snake never poison it self" somewhere in your videos, I understood that rationally however nothing happened.

Last week I watched a Bagwa video, some one walking the circle, with Nr.3 Palm "The Dragon Wandering around", I thought rationally the name fits, not anything else.

Last Friday Morning -sitting in my bed. Suddenly with a feeling of the warmth and coldness both at the same time, and an enormous joy and a lot of tears I recognised that I'm the wandering Dragon.

**The rain (tears) washed (my)the wounds of the dragon, he stands up stretches its legs and wings (Bagwa-playing) and dances (being happy).**

And the second picture:  
**Dragon(snake) does not poison itself** (the bad thoughts are gone - I know this is from your video somewhere). It's also a feeling , that something Power inside me wanting to break out.

At the same Friday there was a last rear up of the winter, having stormy weather all day long , even snow and a temperature of about 0 C (= -32 F). Next day the real summer was here having sun and temperature of about 16 C.

From where is this picture? It changed my life completely (always when I remember this the same experience!).

I swim with my car in the Motor traffic, get not exited - not wanting to race (like I did before). I smile to people I met and understand them deeper as never before. I made some days off, visiting people and sharing my joy (but did not telling them what happened to me - however telling them the story of the dragon if I meant this could help them) I never had such a deep experience (opposite of the feelings when my wife died? BaGua the Art of Change or opposites?) , lasting for such a long time, hope it never stops.

Thank you very much for producing your Videos and sharing your knowledge with it, and please keep on doing. This fantastic powerful art should never disappear.

This is my real story and I'm very happy about the Change. Dragons are very seldom. If you have a similar story like this - let us collect it somewhere.

The wandering Dragon leaves his cave and flies away :-)

yours

[Klaus.Baltzer@Bagwa.de](mailto:Klaus.Baltzer@Bagwa.de)

# No More Mirror

*Paul Dadswell: London.*

And I finally managed to eliminate the need to check my stance in a mirror with its help. I came up with this little exercise:

1) Stand with the feet aligned and distanced as per your instructions with hands by the sides. Concentrate on the point just forward of the heel (i.e. directly under the middle of the tibia/talus joint - this must be the point that activates Kidney 1, right?) and relax the body as much as possible.

2) Relax the back of the neck. This will cause the chin to drop with the weight of the head, and the upper body should sway backwards slightly if you are relaxed.

3) Let the head/neck joint stay loose so the head and body continue to oscillate gently forwards and backwards through a couple of inches (NB we're not talking the front row of a Sabbath gig here! More like a willow in the breeze.) Be very conscious of any muscles which tense as you sway, and try to let them go as soon as you can.

4) Learn to feel the point where the head passes over the tibia/talus joints. It gets more obvious with practice, as when the head is over the right part of the foot, the spine will want to extend, waving

and unrolling gently like a charmed snake! This is the upright reflex kicking in properly, which also allows you to relax shoulders, back etc. much more easily (as per the article).

5) Once you have felt and internalised this point, you can gently lead your head to rest over it. The spine should now be straighter, achieved in a pleasant way without counterproductive "military" straightening - and if your head is above the right spots, a slight sense of toes "gripping" the floor without actually gripping may appear as if by magic (more likely for beginners if you've had a foot massage recently!)

6) Just concentrate on keeping your neck free and your weight over the right spots, let your knees collapse slightly forward as you sink into stance. (Imagine how a marionette's knees fold as the puppeteer lowers it towards the ground). Hey presto! You have now developed the facility to find your three-circle posture without having to carry a full-length mirror everywhere! Just a little something for beginners to play with...

I realise that to some people, this is like teaching your granny to suck eggs.

And to some, it's a physical discovery that is stumbled on through physical hobbies such as taiji. But I know all too well from personal experience, some people have no idea what a straight, re-

laxed posture feels like, but merely assume that they have one because they don't know better!

In fact, I think these are the ones that will suck up taiji like sponges (if their frustration with basics doesn't send them running) as they will feel the biggest changes! If they can find and transfer this level of relaxation to the form, they'll be soft fa-jing like a crash-test dummy in slow motion before you know it!

# Mind in the Martial Arts

## Part Seven (Final Part)

### Non-Duality

By Anthony Court

All the great spiritual literature of the ancient world, especially the East has all way pointed towards just one understanding, one wisdom, and one ultimate view, *that of non-duality*.

Whether it is the Dzgochen Teachings of Tibet, the Advita Vedanta of India, The Tao of the Chinese Schools, or The emptiness of the Buddhist Tradition. The idea that from emptiness (the void: vast unmanifest possibilities) and that all matter is energy, and that one day all things will return to emptiness (void) is what today is being discovered by quantum physics.

We live (or truer to say) being lived by the intelligent wisdom of the universe, and where upon investigation we can find no independent self. The whole of life is interdependent, what causes suffering, is that we *think* that we are both somehow permanent and separate. This delusion of a separate self comes from conditioning (we are conditioned by our parents, society, education, culture, environment, language and experiences etc.) The separate self (sometimes call ego) is also born from fear; this particular point is often overlooked, as it is an uncomfortable fact to acknowledge, but never the less, we are born into a world, which appears alien

and unconnected from who we think we are. In Martial Arts realising that there is no real self to defend, or protect, frees us from the anxiety of being attacked, threatened, or challenged, as the mind, body and energy can remain in a relaxed and natural state. This understanding allows the martial practitioner be able to deal with whatever occurs, I have seen enough over the years to know that even the most seasoned martial artist can “lose it” in seconds, and years of training just disappear.

The famous Buddhist teaching, The Heart Sutra, or the Prajna Paramita (Sanskrit) is simply the message that one has no permanent, enduring or solid self, the body itself can continually be broken down from solid the appearance, to the cells, to the atoms, to the particles, to empty space until there is no longer anything but emptiness. The Buddha explained this to his disciple Sharipurta, and this teaching has become one of the most quoted in the Eastern spiritual traditions. Below is a condensed version of this statement of non-duality.

#### **The Heart Sutra: The Prajna Paramita,**

Translated Text  
The Bodhisattva Avalokita (The Buddha of Compassion) while moving in the deep course of Perfect Understanding shed light on the five skandhas (basic elements that constitute the body) and found them equally empty. After

this penetration, he overcame all pain.

**‘Listen, Shariputra, form is emptiness, emptiness is form, form does not differ from emptiness, emptiness does not differ from form. The same is true of feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness.**

**“Hear, Shariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness; they are neither produced nor destroyed neither defiled nor immaculate, neither increasing nor decreasing. Therefore, in emptiness there is neither form, nor feeling, nor perception, nor mental formations, nor consciousness; no eye, nor ear, or nose, or tongue, or body, or mind no form, no sound no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind; no realms of elements (from eyes to mind-consciousness); no interdependent origins and no extinction of them (from ignorance to old age and death); no suffering, no origination of suffering no extinction of suffering, no path; no understanding, no attainment.**

**“Because there is no attainment, the Bodhisattvas, supported by the Perfection of Understanding, find no obstacles for their minds. Having no obstacles, they overcome fear, liberating themselves forever from illusion and realizing perfect**

Nirvana. All Buddha's in the past, present, and future, thanks to this Perfect Understanding, arrive at full right and Universal Enlightenment.

“Therefore, one should know that Perfect Understanding is a great mantra, is the highest mantra, is the unequalled mantra, the destroyer of all suffering, the incorruptible truth. A mantra of Prajna Paramita should therefore be proclaimed. This is the mantra: ”Ga-te, ga-te, pa-ra-ga-te, pa-ra-sam-ga-te, bodhi, svaha. “

Gate, Gate, (Gone, gone).  
Paragate gate, (Gone beyond).  
Paragate bohdi (Gone, completed, beyond). Svaha (Awakened).

*General Commentary.* Quantum physics has provided evidence that all matter is made up of atoms and are, in their core, essentially empty. Sub-atomic particles are, by nature, light manifested either as particles or waves. The basis of all matter is therefore energy. All matter exists as it is. There is no “why?” The “why” is irrelevant. Matter has a definite lifespan and will return to the energy state. That is the law of impermanence. (Translation and commentary from Energy Medicine by Yap Soon-Yeong & Chok C. Hiew Ph.D.)

Quantum physics today would generally be in agreement with the Heart Sutra, in fact as Ramana Maharshi states; “Relative knowledge pertains to the mind and not to the Self. It is therefore illusory and not per-

manent”. Take a scientist, for instance. He formulates a theory that the Earth is round and goes on to prove it on an incontrovertible basis. When he falls asleep the whole idea vanishes; his mind is left a blank. What does it matter whether the world remains round or flat when he is asleep? So you see the futility of all such relative knowledge. One should go beyond relative knowledge and abide in the Self. Real knowledge is such experience, and not apprehension by the mind”.

Non-dual teaching as such is problematic to explain. In particular, like so much else in the teaching, it can fall prey to what is called the prescriptive/descriptive fallacy. The Understanding, Truth, what is apperceived, cannot be expressed. ‘The Tao that can be spoken is not the Tao.’ What is expressed is conceptual only, a translation into terms available in the dream; the reflection of the moon in a puddle of water, not the moon itself. And between the moon and its reflection, between Truth and its translation into dream concepts and terms, lies a conceptual chasm crossable only by the occurrence of the Understanding itself. Many are interested in crossing the chasm; they are the spiritual seekers, and they are hungry, insatiably so, for any shred of evidence, or guidance, or advice, or indication of what that chasm, and its crossing, and the other side, are like.

Essentially, the truth is that the other side is not like anything, and you can't get there from

here. Rather, this already is the other side; all is ‘here,’ there is no ‘there.’ End of story. This is the true nature of things, always everywhere right before your eyes. But who can see it? Once seen, it is obvious that ‘beyond’ is this, here. But say that to an ardent seeker and you're likely to get a groan of frustration.

There is a recurring archetypal image that appears often in dreams and myths, in fantasy and science fiction stories. A traveller arrives at a great wall. After much searching he finds a door, a gate in the wall. When he opens the gate and steps through, he finds himself in a world, a universe, which is different from the one he came from but somehow familiar; the same universe, but somehow very different. When he turns around to look back through the gate at the place he came from, he sees that not only is there no gate, there is no wall. Not only is there no going back, but also he has not come from anywhere. Thus it is with awakening: there is no wall, no separation between a ‘here’ and a ‘there.’ In a sense there has been a going beyond, yet that beyond is not other than here already. This is ‘the gateless gate,’ and ‘I’ has always been here. Where else?

Nevertheless, seekers are a persistent lot, driven or drawn by a force they do not understand; and those who



they know, or believe, or at least suspect to have 'gone, completed, beyond' are watched, and examined, and plied with questions, and even imitated, in the hope that some of what they seek might wear off. But despite long tradition, the Understanding is not a contact high, nor is it known to be contagious.

Whatever can be learned by observation of or contact with a known sage, or from direct answers to questions posed, is descriptive only; an attempt, however apparently feeble or skilful, to translate the inexpressible into terms available in the dream.

The story, the description, of how the Understanding occurred in a certain body/mind organism, and descriptions of the ongoing experiencing in that body/mind organism are only that, descriptions, and cannot be taken as prescriptions of how another body / mind organism might 'get there from here.' But of course, they usually are taken as prescriptive: that's how you get religion out of spiritual experience, how you get teaching about various practices, various paths, yoga's, mantras, diets; advice on ways of thinking, ways of acting: the four applications, the five precepts, the six powers, the seven virtues, the eight impediments, the nine stages... the ten commandments etc; etc.

One in whom awakening has occurred is observed to have no attachment to the outcome of actions, so this is taught as a prescription; you must work hard to somehow no longer be attached to outcome! One in

whom the Understanding has happened is seen to sit quietly in deep stillness and silence for periods of time, and when asked what he is thinking, replies that there is no thought: so it is taught that you should try to sit quietly and have no thoughts! The teacher lives a celibate life, alone; so the students become renunciates. The teacher is married, so the disciples go out and get married. The teacher eats meat, or does not eat meat, and the devotees follow suit. Nisargadatta Maharaj (a teacher of non duality and a disciple of Ramana Maharshi) smoked cigarettes, and a startling number of his followers took up smoking.

But what is happening in the awakened is happening spontaneously, without trying: either as a consequence of the natural programming and conditioning of that body/mind, in which case it has nothing whatever to do awakening; or as a spontaneous outcome, a natural side effect of awakening in that particular body /mind organism. There is no one to try. This is what I mean by saying it comes naturally 'from the other side' and cannot in any way be achieved by working at it 'from this side.' This is another miserable metaphor and of course there is no this side, and other side, but can you see what is trying to be said? If awakening, the Understanding is to happen, it will happen, but I absolutely assure you it will not happen as a 'result' of a dream character performing some practice. A practice may happen. Awakening may happen. But there is

not a linear causal relationship between the two. Put another way. When you are asleep and dreaming, what does a character in your dream 'do' to cause that character to wake up? It is the dreamer, not the character, who 'wakes up,' and waking up happens when it happens, for reasons well and thoroughly outside the control of any of the characters in the dream, including the character, which in the dream you think is you.

A Zen saying, illustrates this point:

Once a master has used a ladder to climb to the top of the wall, that ladder is thrown away forever and never used again. Find your own damn ladder. Better yet, know that it will find you; that it already has, that your feet are already on the rungs!

This is why the Teaching has traditionally been called "a finger pointing toward the moon." Take your dog outside some evening. Say, "Hey, look!" and point dramatically at the moon. Your dog will most likely stare expectantly at your finger. It shows great devotion and is quite endearing, but demonstrates a basic lack of understanding, of any ability to see beyond. Fixating on the story, or elements of the Teaching, or practices, or a guru or teacher, or

spiritual experiences, is staring at the finger, unable to realize that these are only pointers. None of these things have any importance in themselves. Look past these, beyond them to what is being pointed toward.

Once this is understood, descriptions and stories can perhaps be useful or at least interesting *as pointers*. There have always been texts, *sutras*, stories of the ancient masters and how it was that the Understanding occurred in the case of the Buddha, or Hui-Neng, or Shankara, or Ramana Maharshi.

Yet ultimately, in Ramana Maharshi's summation, "There is neither creation nor destruction, neither destiny nor free will, neither path nor achievement. This is the final truth."

There really are no stories, as there is nothing happening here. The stories are only what the dream characters tell to themselves and to each other over and over, and in so doing keep the dream going.

The story telling is the dreaming, and the dreaming is desire -the desire to be. And more than that: the desire to be some *one*; someone separate, someone special; someone with his or her own story. The dream character is completely caught in this spinning of a personal web, building and maintaining the personal story, driven by that unknown, unexamined wanting to assert and continually reconfirm the individual *self*

Awakening does not occur while pursuing a story, desire fuelling desire, need fuelling want, all of it constantly strengthening the sense of a separate self that does not exist. Awakening occurs when this desiring is irrevocably seen to be misguided, seen to be futile. Then the story telling stops. Then the story stops. That is the going beyond.

Some of the above is to be found in David Carse's book: Perfect Brilliant Stillness, it is non-copy write material, which I have edited (details at the end of this article)

So the whole of this series points to just one thing no-self. This is it! If still in doubt, try using a method taught by physiologist Stephen Wolinski.

Without using your thoughts, emotions, memory, perceptions or associations are you male or female?

Without using your thoughts, emotions, memory, perceptions or associations are you worthy or unworthy?

Without using your thoughts, emotions, memory, perceptions or associations are you weak or powerful?

Without using your thoughts, emotions, memory, perceptions or associations are you .....well you get the idea, without thought, how do you define yourself?

Be guided by nature, everything flows effortless between opposites (yin & yang). The tide co-

mes in, the tide goes out, no conflict, there is never I wish the tide was when it was out or vice versa. Conflict appears with the identification of the mind with the self/I/ego, ask yourself without thought, what is wrong with the present moment? When a non-dual view is reached, who is doing Taiji? Sure you have to learn the movements with the working mind, the so-called rational mind, but once learnt, it has to be let go of, and all that is then left is Taiji.

So that's it, we have looked at Eastern philosophies, systems, ideas teachers and many varied views, but it is impossible to go beyond the non-dual view that all is consciousness.

The final word of this series I will leave with Ramana Maharshi:

'You impose limits on your true nature of infinite being. Then you get displeased to be only a limited creature.

Then you begin spiritual practice to transcend these non-existent limits.

But if your practice itself implies the existence of these limits,

how could they then allow you to transcend them?'

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Amit Goswami Ph.D**

Should you have any questions  
arising from the series I would  
be happy to try and answer  
them, my email number is on  
Erle's Website under U.K. In-  
structors.

**Anthony Court**

# Tai Chi Anarchy

*Don Morgan:*

It all started when I was complaining that I had a bad back and someone said 'Try Tai Chi. That should help.'

I have been doing Tai Chi for just over 4 years now. I don't practice. Right or wrong I just do it to the best of my ability and enjoy it.

This is how I like to do it: Well the sun has just come up so I get out of bed and go into the garden and start with a bit of Chi Gong, (usually lift chi up pour chi down). Where I stand is in the shade of a tree. Then I do the form; I don't try to get it exactly right. What I do is enjoy being a little monkey outside, living in the present, and doing the craziest of movements. Sometimes I close my eyes to do the form and enjoy the feeling (which has limited martial value), but it is interesting to see where I am and which direction I am facing at the finish. Trying to get it right is reserved for going to classes. Then I do some standing Chi Gong usually in Wu Ji, it's really strange how much scope there is to improve this stance. By now the sun has risen from behind the tree and I have a warm back and a long shadow.

Regarding classes, after two years I had a year off Tai Chi classes so that I could practice on my own, read a few books internalise the whole thing. I took some Healing Chi Gong classes during that period. Now I am back going to classes with my original teacher and enjoying them more. I had drifted off with many details of the form, which had to be corrected. I like to think some of it was developing my own style. What I found interesting was I could see the improvement in my teacher after his year off from teaching me!

I tried a weekend workshop with my teacher's teacher and found out that I was still a little monkey scratching the surface of Tai Chi. A bit depressing at first but I suppose he had been doing it for about 30 years. He went to learn it in London at the same time as a young chap called Montague.

What are the effects. Well my back is a lot better. It does not take as long to stop hurting after I have done something that I shouldn't have done.

Other strange things that happened:

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*If my wife throws something at me; my hand goes up to catch it all on it's own. That never used to happen, she used to hit me.*

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Other strange things that happened:

If my wife throws something at me; my hand goes up to catch it all on it's own. That never used to happen, she used to hit me.

The most interesting occurrences are with animals:

When I first started Tai Chi our collie dog got very cross, he would bark and jump up at me. Did he see my movements as threatening? Now our terrier comes and sits at my feet, which is OK for Chi Gong but I have to step over him for Tai Chi. Is he bathing in the field of chi round me?

My daughter's pony seems to understand. I walked up to him when he was lying down one day and thought 'I'll squat down and see if he will stay down on the ground' so I bent my knees dropped my shoulders, rotated my hips, (Wu Ji). Well he panicked jumped up and ran away.

Another day he was out pulling the cart when he got a fright. So what did he do? Arched his back dropped his bum stuck his head up and prepared to rear up or buck. Time to get off the cart quickly and try to contain the situation. Is this horse Wu Ji?

The question of how do animals hold up their heads occurs. After all you would think it must be hard for a horse to hold up that big head all day. Do they relax their muscles so that their heads stay up without any effort. Is this what we are all trying to find in our Tai Chi.

Don Morgan

# Erle's Latest DVD Titles

## **A Little Warning:**

Last week I heard from a chap who was most disappointed in the quality of my video titles! He had purchased many DVD titles on Ebay and was asking if I could replace those titles that either didn't work or were such bad quality that they were unwatchable!

We finally worked out that he had purchased them from an illegal pirate on Ebay, hence the bad quality and ones that didn't even work. He thought that he was getting a bargain at first, however, in retrospect, he would have been m

## **MTG292**

*Bagua Lion Boxing: The Full Bagua Animal Forms V. 3 (Read An Article on This)*

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'.

As with all of these animal forms, even in their Qi Awakening state, you must always keep in mind the animal they represent. You cannot simply do these movements as human beings. That is why the movements were formatted the way they are, so as to bring out the animal in us for self defense.

This form above all others will lead one into the contact with their 'Reptile Brain'

Also included on this DVD are some very useful 'Lion' violent fighting methods which are not for the faint at heart!

## **MTG291**

*Erle Montaigne's Master Teaching Classes, Volume 5.*

Continuing the instructor's courses; this volume begins showing exactly how to teach the Yang Cheng-fu form, which is also pertinent to all other forms. Erle shows some of his tricks of the trade so to speak, in trying to get new students to understand how to move correctly. It's not enough to learn a form and then go out and show someone else how to do it; you must also know HOW to teach it. And this is what Erle teaches on this volume. Also covered is the continuing 'bumping arms' practice, taking you more into the advanced methods of this wonderful conditioning exercise which is great for those students beginning their Tai Chi or Bagua training as it shows them that there is another side to the internal arts other than just a dance or health exercise. Also covered is the Tai Chi Chee Sau, or Sticking Hands, adding some foot work to the basic hand movements. If you are interested in becoming an instructor or already are one, then this series is definitely for you.

The form itself is covered in such detail that a ruler is almost required to get the exact positioning of the arms hands and feet. And Erle also gives his acquired anecdotes in order to teach beginners

exactly how, when and where to move their hands and feet.

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## **MTG290**

*Erle Montaigne's Master Teaching Classes, Volume Four.*

Erle Montaigne continues his excellent series on how to teach an internal martial/healing arts class. In the beginning, Erle was only concentrating upon teachers who already had experience in teaching. However, more and more beginners wanted to see what this class was all about and it has been found that they have discovered also, an excellent way to learn the internal from the ground up. In learning what the 'teacher' must know, they also learn a huge amount and gain a great insight into the whole area of learning the Internal Arts. On this volume, Erle takes you through some amazing qigong exercises that are tailored to the beginning class in order to bring the whole class into a learning phase and to concentrate the energy of that class as a whole upon what is being taught. Some excellent fighting methods are also taught as part of this way of bringing the class together.

MTG289

***Bagua Fighting: The Beginning, Volume One.***

Baguazhang is an amazing fighting system for realistic self defence. It teaches us to react at a reflex level instinctively and sub-consciously, using whatever method is suitable for that type of attack upon you. This is where Erle Montaigne learnt how to fight; the exact methods he used to take his internal arts to that higher level. On this first volume, Erle takes you through the theory behind the way we use Bagua for fighting and how we use abstract training methods to gain a superior self defence method. He also covers the first part of 'Bagua Boxing' training with a partner where we walk the circle touching wrists using pressure launching all types of attacks and using all kinds of defensive methods from the Bagua repertoire. If you want to learn how to really fight, then this is one of the best starting places to begin.

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MTG288

**The 10,000 Fighting Techniques of the Old Yang Style: Volume Two.**

Not really 10,000, this is just the way that the Chinese have of describing that there are a lot of them. 10,000 seems to be the number that they use for everything that has to be done a lot. Here, Erle Montaigne carries on with the long awaited series on the main applications from the postures of the Yang Lu-ch'an

form showing not only the basics but also the dim-mak applications following each posture. This is not meant to teach the Old Yang Style as one should already know it, it is just to demonstrate and to teach what each posture is for. On this volume Erle takes you from the end of Volume one up to & including the posture known as High pat on Horse just before the first kicking section.

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MTG287

**Bagua Monkey Boxing (The Full Bagua Animal Form)**

The Monkey is the closest animal to the human being and as such we are able to emulate this wonderful and deadly fighting system easier. The monkey is relentless in his attack using relaxed but deadly palm fighting methods which makes use of his very heavy arms. When you are struck by this method, it feels like a huge piece of wood has struck you. There are 8 separate sections all joined together into one beautifully flowing and powerful form. Each section has one or two 'modules' which have something in common, a way of fighting. When done correctly, this form is able to bring out the 'animal within' or the 'reptile brain' within. Once this aspect is mastered, you will have one of the most formidable fighting systems ever invented. This DVD runs for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

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MTG286

**The Erle Montaigne Fighting System (The Physical Side) Volume One.**

Many people have asked for this series covering purely the physical movements techniques and ideas from what has become to be known as 'The Erle Montaigne Fighting System'. On this volume, Erle gives an introduction to this way of fighting which has been derived from the internal arts of Tai Chi Ch'uan and Baguazhang. He introduces the idea of using longer weapons that the attacker and making the attacker feel like there is no distance between he and you (you have struck him before he has even time to strike you). Erle covers leg attacks using your front foot and how to gain great power off of this foot. He gives some really good fighting methods using the feet. Then he goes on to begin the way of Monkey Boxing and how it really relates to human beings and how to gain the tremendous power that Monkeys have in their arms and hands. He teaches the Monkey on-guard stance as well as the human on-guard stance and how to go into the 'reptile brain' from this stance. In a nutshell, this series teaches you how to fight like a wild animal and not like a human being!

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MTG285

**The Baguazhang Animals Entering & Fighting Techniques Volume Two.**

On this volume Erle Montaigne takes you through the learning of the Phoenix, Monkey and Lion entering and fighting methods. The Monkey and Lion are just so effective as are all of them, but these two are Erle's favourites. Not only the Entering Methods, but also the basic fighting methods of each animal is shown and demonstrated. This is an excellent series for learning how to fight like an animal and getting right away from static stances and 'martial arts' applications etc.

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### MTG284

#### **Erle Montaigne's Master Teaching Series for Instructors Volume 3.**

On this DVD, Erle continues the excellent series for instructors. This time Erle teaches how to use your own qi or energy to hold a class together, how to manage the energy of a class, how to bring it up and how to bring it down again. How to cater to individual needs and thereby catering to the group as a whole. How to balance the energy of the whole group. You must come armed with not only your knowledge and how well you do the things you teach, but also with the ability to manage the energy of a group of 100 people. Also on this volume, Erle completes the Wudang stepping exercises with the last 4 of these excellent training methods for balance internal and external.

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### MTG283

#### **The 8 Bagua Internal Power Sets/Exercises.**

Bagua has an unique way of teaching about internal power and as with all internal systems all one has to do, is to train in a few simple training methods in order to gain great power from within and from without. There are actually 16 training methods crammed into this one volume because each of the 8 sets has an inner part and an outside method. I.E. Fighting and entering methods when you are on the 'inside' of the attacker's arms and those when you are on the outside of his arms.

These methods can also be used as entering methods when an opponent has a strong on guard stance etc. They are done solo as well as with a training partner taking the energy or Qi right up through the ground and out of the palms. These are also excellent for the healing arts such as massage, tui-na, acupuncture etc.

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### MTG282

#### **The 10,000 Fighting Techniques of the Old Yang Style: Volume One.**

Not really 10,000, this is just the way that the Chinese have of describing that there are a lot of them. 10,000 seems to be the number that they use for everything that has to be done a lot. Here, Erle Montaigne begins the long awaited series on the main applications from the postures of the Yang Lu-ch'an form showing not only the basics but also the

dim-mak applications following each posture. This is not meant to teach the Old Yang Style as one should already know it, it is just to demonstrate and to teach what each posture is for. ON this volume Erle takes you from the beginning up to the posture known as Brush Knee and Twist Steps.

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### MTG281

#### **The Secret Houses/Rings of the Yang Family: Volume One: House 3.**

The Secret Houses of Yang are what makes Taijiquan great. This is what distinguishes the 'red herring' Tai Chi from the real thing. What makes a silly, 'you push me, I push you' tai chi into a real fighting self defence system. These 12 houses or rings as they were often called, were what the Masters taught only their most treasured and trusted students and or family members and even went as far as giving us all the wrong information to stop us from getting the 'family jewels' as Yang Sau-chung once told me. Why is it that we are told that Tai Chi ch'uan means 'Supreme Ultimate Fighting' when we are taught this silly thing of Pushing Hands? Why would you want to do that? You do not push each other in real fighting. This way of pushing hands was also a red herring to keep us off the trail of the real thing of 'Joining Hands', which is the way that we are taught how to fight in Tai Chi. Joining Hands is an eye opening experience and

will probably answer many of your questions and fears about learning how to use Tai Chi for fighting.

Erle Montaigne teaches in this volume the third house of Yang, the way of Joining Hands, how to feel the weight and deal with it, how to stop an attack with only two inches of movement, how to really move a force of 4000 lbs with only 4 oz. That is what it tells us in the classics so this is what we should do!

## CONCLUSION

Well, that's it for this month. If you would like to become famous, keep sending in those articles for possible publication in the largest read Internal Arts Magazine in the World!

Last issue of C&H, we had 58,000 downloads! You can possibly double that with people giving copies to their friends etc.

Myself, and my reason for living, my Family, have decided to stay in this part of the world permanently. We took stock of why we came here in the first place and that we had moved Heaven and Earth just to get here and decided that our initial reasons were stable.

I will be slowly moving out of the totally active part of the WTBA in future, leaving things up to my sons, Ben and Eli and hopefully later on, Kathleen. I guess I have come to that part of my life (as all instructors do eventually) where the need to prove one's ability and knowledge no longer exists and that it is now time for my own training. I am enjoying having a few loyal students/instructors around to my own house training up in our large tent from time to time.

I will be holding the occasional UK workshop, (those that I can get to easily) plus the Annual Summer camp in Rostock Germany. So I guess it's time for the students to come to the teacher and not the other way around. I'm old enough, cynical enough and gristly enough to have earned this small luxury of not having to travel overseas to teach all the time. However, having said that, I have done this on a number of occasions, and have ended up teaching more that ever .... So you never know. However, I am at present enjoying doing my other love, music with the children. Now, if I could just start earning a living from it, I would be a very happy man.

I will continue to answer the 100 or so email messages and letters that I receive each day, even the inane questions asking what can be done for a finger that he has banged with a hammer! (Put a band-aid on it!). All you have to do, is to TRAIN! That's the whole secret of the internal arts. Keep at it and it will all simply happen, no sooner or no later than it should. Things that happen each day in my own training are just wonderful and I am continuing to learn each day and will continue to try and relay that information to beginners and advanced students alike. However, if you do not train, then all the talk and book reading in the world will account for naught! And remember, you will gain the teacher you deserve! That is the rule that has never failed.