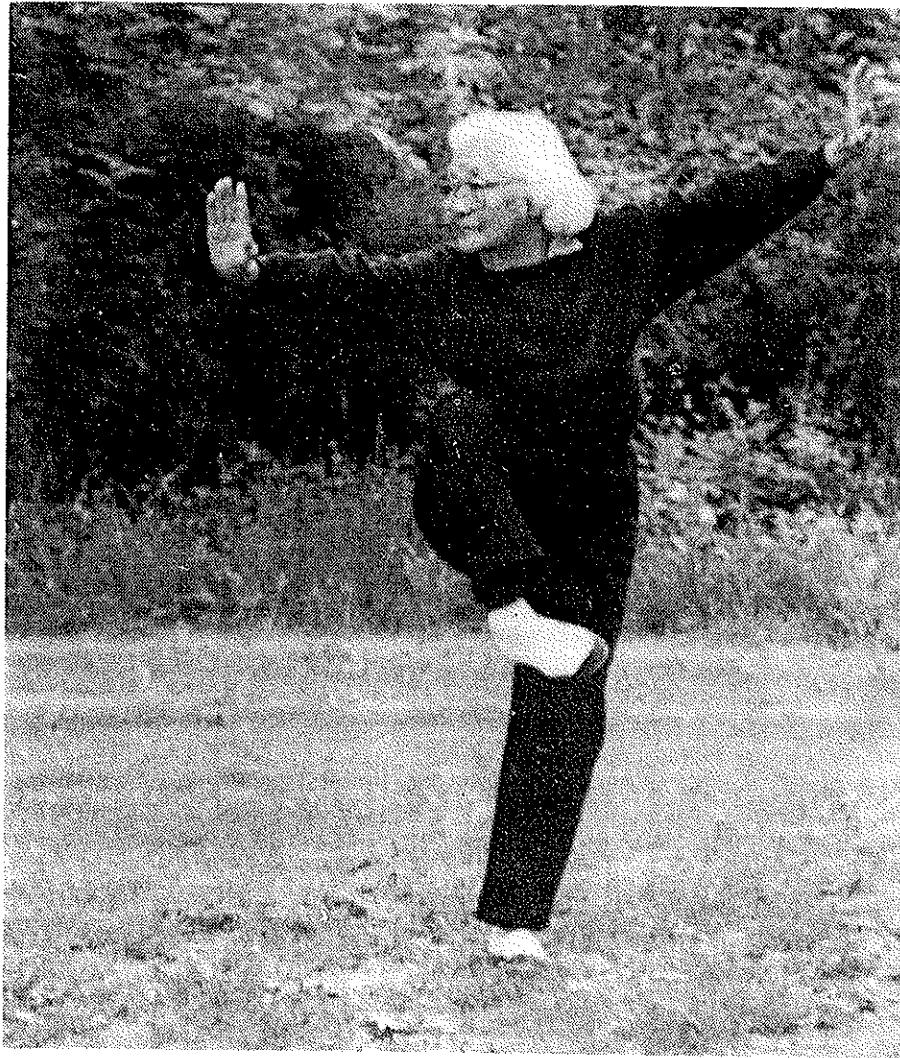


T'ai Chi

COMBAT & HEALING



Taiji, Qigong, Pa-Kua, H'sin-I, Aikido
SEPTEMBER 1991 NUMBER 6

T'AI CHI

COMBAT & HEALING

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POSTAL ADDRESS:

Taiji Publications, P/O Box 792 Murwillumbah NSW
2484 Australia (066)721469.

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Our eternal thanks to Kevin Brennan, Editor supreme of Australasian Fighting Arts Magazine for his valuable help and ideas.



ABOUT THE COVER

Master Fu Shu-yun performed wushu at the 1936 Olympic games. Now well into her 7th decade she is still teaching and practicing. She teaches a dedicated group of people in New Jersey U.S.A.

Her credentials are impeccable having studied with such great masters as Yang Cheng-fu and Sun Luc-tang. She is accomplished in all three "internal systems", Taiji, Bagwa and H'sin-I.

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Ron Barker Interviews Erle Montaigue

Ron Barker is a freelance writer and martial artist from New York and interviewed Erle Montaigue after his workshop tour of the USA, Canada and Europe, April/May 1991.

R. Erle, I have not heard of any other Australians who are asked to travel overseas to give workshops, why you?
E. I believe that I am the first Australian born person to be asked to go to the USA and Europe to give workshops but it's nothing special. We have a lot of very great martial artists in Australia who have a lot to teach the rest of the world. I guess it's just that I am always up front so to speak with my articles and videos etc, people get to hear about me that's all.

R. Are you as popular at home as you are overseas?

E. Let me answer that one with a little about the Australian mentality. In the USA and Europe, the people there tend to like their own and they put them up on pedestals etc. Here in Australia, we tend to like people from overseas rather than our own. So we have many people coming out to the antipodes giving lectures and workshops demanding huge fees. Some of these people like Danny Inosanto etc. are well worth this and deserve the acclaim given to them by Australians, but others are just shonks and are only playing upon that Aussie mentality. Hence, no, I am not as popular in Australia as I am overseas. But many of my detractors would of course say that this is because I am not that good at what I do but that's their opinion, it's a free country.

R. Looking at your schedule Erle, you must not have had time to scratch yourself!

E. Almost. I began in New Jersey on the 18th of April, then travelled to London on that afternoon, arrived in Manchester late the following evening and was into the workshop in Manchester Saturday morning. On

Monday it was Leicester, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday it was Wales, Friday back up to London and a large workshop and talk at the Hampstead Free Hospital, Saturday and Sunday full workshops in London, Monday I travelled to New York arriving there at 11pm. Tuesday it was off to Ottawa in Canada where I gave two workshops that day. Wednesday, and Thursday two workshops each, then back to Denver Colorado on the Friday for full workshops on the Saturday and Sunday.

R. I don't believe you had time to scratch yourself.

E. Well actually, I was lying, I didn't.

R. So you literally had to travel very long flights and be ready to give workshops. I know myself that it's difficult to work after a long flight because of jet lag but it must be almost impossible to give a workshop in the martial arts after such journeys?

E. Yes, and the thing is that one is affected the most by this ailment if one travels to the East which is what I did. However, having done it before I have now worked out schedules to combat jet lag. So by the time I arrived in New Jersey I was only a little tired, which is much better than having jet lag as well. I'm thinking of writing a book for businessmen on how to perform after long flights.

R. I'm interested, please go on.

E. About the jet lag?

R. Yes please.

E. Not to give anything away of course, it involves certain eating habits, fasting, certain qigong and normal exercises down the back of the plane etc. I spoke to one chap who is a marine and he told me that the US military are working on a regime also of fasting and diet etc. so that the military personnel are able to combat jet lag and still fight wars.

R. You went all by yourself this time? As I know that you took Stuart Le-Marseny with you the last time. How did you cope with new meetings,

people and having to begin from the beginning so to speak for these new people?

E. Stuart was unable to come with me this time as he is on an around Australia trip with his family giving workshops to all of our people as he goes. So, yes it was quite lonesome especially in the towns where I was a newcomer. Europe is always great, I love the British, French and German workshops because I'm known there and it is easier because I don't have to continually prove myself, they know what I do and it's more like a meeting with old friends. But the USA and Canada was new territory and quite draining mentally and physically, as the first European workshops were. The next time in October will be different as I will be working with what have now become friends as well as students.

R. What do you mean by prove yourself?

E. Any person who travels around the world giving workshops first of all has to prove themselves to their students. All of the people I taught were lovely people but there is always this time when they are all waiting to see something and that's a strain. But so far, thankfully, after about fifteen minutes that tension has been alleviated and they know that what I am showing them is the real stuff. You know this because of the questions they ask and how they take the workshop. Also the fact that they all have asked me back at the end of this year.

R. Were all of your workshops given to taiji people?

E. No. In London I had to work to around 100 complete strangers barr a few, who had come in off the street, knew nothing about taiji and many of them had no idea of any martial arts even.

R. How did that go?

E. Well, it started out very coldly with even my tried and true gags receiving only mild success. But after about fifteen minutes the whole atmosphere had

changed and it was as if I had walked into a group of old friends.



JIM UGLOW ON LEFT (London)

R. Would you go into a little detail about the people for whom you gave workshops in each place.

E. I began with a taiji group from New Jersey and some of the danny Inosanto people from The Princeton Martial Arts Academy in New Jersey. I had about fifty fifty taiji and Inosanto type people at that one. The head of the school Rick Tucci, as expected, coming from Danny is a really nice chap and was very interested in what I was doing, they took video of the whole workshop.

R. How did the Rich Tucci people take the taiji?

E. I don't know what they were expecting, perhaps because of some other taiji teachers, they were expecting some mystical mumbo jumbo or some slow movements etc. But really, at an advanced stage and even in the early stages, there is a sameness in what I teach and to that which Danny teaches. The differences were interesting to them all and I think everyone came out with a little more information and a better idea of how taiji works for self defence. Alex Krych was the other side of this workshop. He is a New Jersey copper and a right nice chap. He and his group learn taiji from one Mrs. Fu in NJ. This wonderful older woman gave a demonstration of wushu in the 1936 olympics in front of Adolf Hitler! She is still very active and her beautiful forms belie her age. I'll be doing an interview

with her in our next Tai Chi Combat & Healing Magazine in September.

Mrs Fu is not interested in teaching push hands and tells her students to go and learn from others, hence my teaching that school.

R. You've been quite controversial over the years and probably upset a few people. Do you have any people wanting to challenge you etc. I mean you are quite vulnerable in other countries.

E. Most of the people I meet are of the nicer types, tough but good people. These are the only people I'm interested in teaching. I don't have a temper nor do I get angry often but when I do, it's usually for a good reason and someone coming into my school or place of workshop trying to take advantage of the fact that I am away from home in a foreign place and just off the plane after a long trip, would make me angry! Especially when I have never made any ludicrous statements about my own ability, in fact I have a very healthy idea about that ability. So I would probably explode into violence if that were to happen. But thankfully it has not so far. Even in these modern times, most martial artists are of the non-dickhead type who are only wanting to learn, teach or be friendly to foreigners to their shores.

R. What did you show the people in New Jersey, push hands?

E. Well, some of them wanted to do some push hands and I showed them some simple things whereby all could benefit, taiji and non-taiji alike. I spent the most time on training methods to gain what is known as "Eagle Vision" in fighting terms.

R. I'll come back to that area but firstly, having some knowledge of martial arts, one would think that a taiji instructor would want to spend a lot of time on the push hands area.

E. Why push! If we are learning a self defence art, then why push someone? Nowadays, to me, push hands is a total waste of time. I mean, why do it! I teach an advanced type of so called push hands, although I think of it more to chee sau or sticking hands whereby the two practitioners are actually learning valuable fighting skills and not how to push and evade. But this is nothing like the type of push hands that is now being done in both the USA and England by many people who like to think that they are push hands champions etc. and enter into competitions! One example

that brings to mind; One chap at a school in the USA wanted to do push hands with me. I stood in the normal position ready for the push hands movements of peng, lu chee and arn, but this chap grabbed both of my arms. Now, I am about 4 stone heavier than this chap, I am an old pro wrestler and I am much physically stronger than he. So here he is trying to cause me to lose my balance and trying to throw me onto the ground! So I threw him onto the ground and he was most dejected. I asked him what he was doing. He said push hands. I then told him that what he was doing was wrestling and that a larger person will beat him every time if he persisted in that silly practice. This is what they are doing in the USA push hands championships! Also, in the English ones. These competitions have debased the original art of push hands and its meaning and existence to that of sumo wrestling. Push hands used to have some meaning in that it was a good initial training method to gain body contact and to work on one's balance and timing. Now it's just garbage. So I tend not to place too much importance upon it nowadays. In fact, I have begun teaching people this advanced type right from the beginning and it is working. And this is something that the Chinese tell us should never be done. Why not!

R. But surely there is a place for the more normal push hands so that people can learn about important principles such as yielding, sticking etc.

E. What are those words, what do they mean? Try sticking to a 100 MPH punch and see how it works. No way. Try yielding to that same strike. It is now my belief and this is only my opinion that the normal pushing hands was given to us by the older Chinese masters to put us off. To try and stop us from learning about the real stuff. For instance, they give us these classics to follow. Classics that say things like, "If he goes up, we go up. If he goes down we go down." (so far so good, that's good boxing). Then they say, "If he comes forward, we go back! And if he goes back we follow!" A sure way of getting your teeth kicked in! And this is what we learn in normal push hands. However, there is a better way. Many people will know that when they "do pushing" with a good master of the art, they are always being defeated and they don't understand what it is that this master is doing to them. And he is not

about to tell them either. As you come forward to attack, you will notice that your partner will not go back as expected but rather come forward and evade so that the harder you attack, the harder they are hit. I teach this right from the start and this builds good boxing skills rather than silly push hands skills.

R. Can you go into this area further?

E. No.

R. OK, You mentioned earlier about the Eagle Vision.

E. Yes, this is also part of the advanced boxing skills. We are also told in those classics, classics that no-one seems to be able to translate correctly, that we must look with the eye of the eagle. And that is all we are told. We are not told any of the technical details of how an eagle or any bird sees etc. I demonstrate this by using firstly focus vision where someone attacks, I block the punch and then re-attack. Once again a sure way of getting hit yourself. This is where I have looked at my attacker and have noted subconsciously his position in space, something that we all do. Then, my next vision is his next posture in space, when he has his fist in my face. The way that birds see is what is known as using the middle peripheral vision and locking on to the space created by that object. An object can only occupy the same space in time at any given time no matter what position that body is in. So we look past the object and see the whole object. Our eagle vision locks onto the space occupied by the mass and so every move that space makes causes our own body and mind to react instantly. So when the attack is made, we do not have to worry about what type of attack it is but rather rely upon our locking vision to cause our body to move, the very instant the opposing body moves. This way we attack the object the very instant it moves towards us and we have been able to evade on the way in because his timing is put off and the full power of his attack is never felt even if it does touch us because we have moved in straight away. This is not push hands. This is fighting.

R. Where have you gained all of this information?

E. Mainly from an old Chinese gentleman called Chang Yiu-chun a former student of Yang Shou-hou and from my own experiments.

R. Your own experiments! Many would say that this is not quite right in that one should always take information and not make it up.

E. Why! Someone had to make it up and who says that everything that the old masters gave us was correct for God's sake! They were only human and made mistakes just as we all do. So if something that I am using, given me by "an old Master" does not work, then I change it or throw it out. By the same token, if I stumble upon something that works then I don't throw it out because I thought of it. I give it out to my students so that they too can benefit from the discovery. And I will say that there have been many many of these discoveries over the years. One sometimes loses sight of what one was taught and what one has discovered by oneself.

R. Your main area then is the boxing now?

E. Yes, well self defence actually. I mean, why are we doing all of this? There must be some practical use apart from the great health benefits. You can make yourself healthy just doing the qigong, forms and push hands, and that's one good reason for doing push hands, for health. All of the other stuff is for the self defence area. So anything that doesn't bring benefit is a waste of time. I began my training and teaching with so much information and so much to teach others, I had reams of information on training methods, techniques etc. But now I have thrown most of all that out and only kept what is really useful in either the training area or in the fighting area. I still teach taiji for good health as this, as one gets older, is more important than the martial art and one sure way to win any challenge is simply to outlive one's opponents! So taiji is really good at winning challenges by making one very healthy. It is not good for physical challenges because people get hurt or killed as that is what taiji was invented for.

R. Do you spend much time in your workshops on the dim-mak?

E. Yes, I must because this was the original reason for taiji. To leave this area out is to not give good service to paying customers.

R. How do you get around the thing of not hurting your students in this area, how are the points demonstrated without actually knocking people out as some instructors are now doing.

E. As you know, my main area in teaching dim-mak is that of safety and to let people know that these strikes, no matter what they are, are extremely dangerous. I have prominent neurologists and cardiologists writing

and phoning me expressing concern about certain people doing certain things and I know that these techniques are extremely dangerous and that is what I tell people. How to demonstrate them? OK, it is possible to show how these points work using simple pressure. For instance, one chap wanted to know the effect of a Spleen 20 strike. So I simply took the point, applied pressure and had his left leg bouncing all around the place uncontrollably. But this also happens in acupuncture when the needle has hit the exact spot. One has to be careful however as some people have hypersensitive points and the slightest strike can harm. As an example, I had one chap badger me about showing him some other badger out point other than the main one that George Dillman does across the carotid sinus. I told this chap that I do not do that as it is dangerous. He kept badgering me until his teacher asked if I would just show him something just to shut him up. So there is a point called 'gall bladder 14' which when struck in one of four different directions will cause knock out. But if struck lightly will only cause the person to understand by way of a light-headedness and slight sick feeling, that if it were done any harder would cause something bad to happen. So I eventually struck this chap, very lightly with pressure that would not harm anyone else and something that I have done many times before but this time he was on the way out and I had to quickly grab his revival points to bring him back. It was then that I learned that this chap had been knocked out fully a number of times in demonstrations before this and as a result had become very sensitive to this type of strike! My advise to him was to see a doctor about the state of his carotid sinus. The gb. points work in the same way that the carotid sinus points work.

So there are a number of ways to prove these points without knocking people out or harming them in any way.

R. Many say that because these people are just sitting ducks so to speak that these point strikes would never work in a real confrontation.

E. That's right, in a class environment and with a willing partner, anyone can knock anyone out no matter how big he is. But in a street confrontation where someone is really trying to get you, your boxing skills have to be honed to perfection. This is why I teach boxing skills before dim-mak. You only have a frac-

tion of a second to react to an attack so the first area is not to be hit yourself and when I demonstrate these strikes I always have the student attack first rather than have him just standing there. But I never hit the points but rather just miss them causing a much lesser degree of distress.

R. You did an interesting demonstration with what you called 'come with me points'.

E. Yes, these points are useful in that if one is attacked by for instance a drunk who is not really intent on taking your life and you just want to control this person, there are certain death points that will achieve this. I used TW 17 in this case and only one finger is used to completely control the attacker. If I used too much pressure he would go into knock out and I wouldn't be able to hold him up so he is not harmed anyway.

R. Why is this, I mean how is his whole body controlled?

E. This point in particular affects the lungs and simply takes all of your energy away, the will to fight is taken.

R. You went to England from the USA?

E. Yes, England to me is like coming home. I have people teaching there who are my own students now and I like them a lot. I went to Manchester first of all for our Northern England representative, Steve Hurst. Steve was one of Master Chu King-hung's instructors and now for reasons of his own has decided to come along with us.

R. What is Steve's background?

E. Steve has been involved in the martial arts for many years. He started in karate and other martial arts and eventually found taiji to be what suited him the most. He is a good lad and has great respect for his students. Like most in the UK, Steve likes to teach taiji as a fighting art. His students are good people who like to get into the self defence area. I had one person come all the way from Malta for the workshop. Mario Borg has been studying the martial arts for many years. He teaches the T'ai Ki Ken of Kenichi Sawa and has been trying to glean what he could from my videos for years so this was our first meeting and his martial art is very good and he's a really nice man. Mario now represents the WTBA in Malta.

From Manchester I went to teach for our Leicester rep., Russ Merryfield. Again, Russ has a long background of martial arts and still teaches other kung-

fu styles, they break bricks at demos etc. and also treat taiji as it was originally intended, as a fighting art.

Next was Swansea for our rep. in Wales Tony Court. Once again, Tony has been studying many different martial arts for many years and is an old muso (musician) like myself, (so too is Russ Merryfield). The Welsh lads like to rough it a little and I quite enjoy myself when I go there. It was a little different as I also had to give a taiji healing workshop in Swansea where we had more women than men, (usually I have all men).

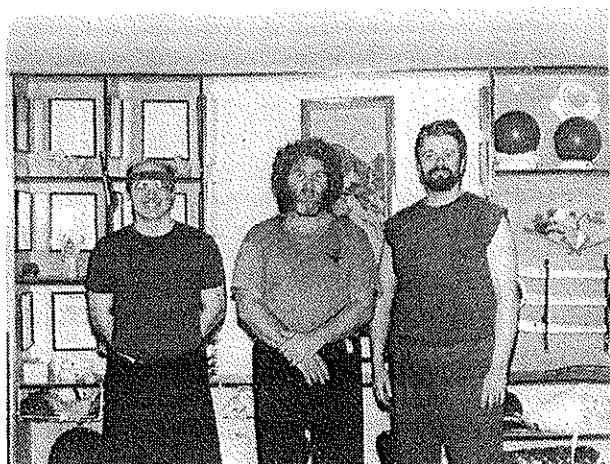
From Swansea I went to London and gave a short shop at the Hampstead Free hospital for our Chen style reps., there, Alex Lee and Paul Brecher.

Jim Uglow was next in London and I really like Jim and his students because they're tough. Mostly East Enders with broad cockney accents and they like to fight. In fact it's really good for taiji when Jim gives a demo somewhere and some karate school is also there. Some of the lads from the karate school at their last demo was poo pooing the taiji so Warren, one of Jim's students who knows his way around the ring, walked over to this chap and invited him out! He backed down quickly. These lads are always fighting! During the class, if one lad passes another, he will give him a quick shot to the mid section or face and an ensuing rough and tumble ignites. But all in good fun as they all have been together with Jim for many years which says a lot for his way of teaching. They also practice Hung-ga and Jim goes to Hong-Kong each year for lessons. They're a nice lot of lads. Jim Uglow has a very hard punch in fact one of the hardest that I have been hit by, along with Alan Weiss in Ottawa.

In London we had one man arrive from the West Indies especially for the workshop, Patrick Boulassy, we had Georges Saby our rep., from France, Leo Wagner one of our reps from Germany and Gerold Issur also from Germany and our rep along with Tuesday his lady.

R. You have been hit by! Please explain.

E. I practice and teach iron shirt qigong and it is my belief that anyone who does practice and teach this should be open



Alan Weiss (my Rt) Mike Babin (L)

to a full powered shot to the mid section including the solar plexus. So I allow them to have a go. I felt the power right enough but nothing happens. It is also a way of knowing who is able to use the whole body in punching and who cannot. Jim can.

R. Alan Weiss?

E. Yes, from London I went to Ottawa for our Canadian rep. Michael Babin. Michael is a colorful character who teaches taiji as it should be taught, as a fighting art. He has a great attitude towards the martial arts and his students and is always trying to bring people together in friendship. One of his teachers is Alan Weiss who studied with the late Mr. Li Shiu-pak. Alan was allowed to punch me and this is the only time I have felt the old barrel bend. He has tremendous power in his short punches. Mike has also studied with William C.C. Chen and has excellent movement and powerful pushing.

R. The "Old Barrel"?

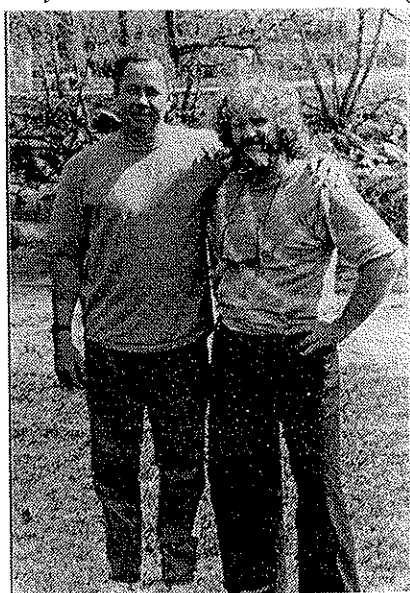
E. Yes, in iron shirt qigong we tend to build up a sinewy mass unlike muscle fibre that literally forms a barrel around the vital points on the front of the body. It's not like rippling muscle as this would tear and damage the internal organs if struck with this much power.

I was in Ottawa for 3 days and then travelled to Denver for Mike Sigman. Now, I had never met Mike and did not know his taiji at all. Now that I have met him, his taiji is very good. Mike is a strong man and has a torture chamber in his basement!

R. A torture chamber!

E. Yes, well to me it is because it reeks of hard work. Every conceivable contraction for developing the right muscles

for taiji is down there, things that I just looked at and would not even attempt. He has these iron bars that he sort of throws out and catches and I just tried to pick one of these things up and although I probably could, desisted for fear of tearing muscles! He has a 'thing' made out of a woodworker's bench with springs and pulleys etc. This is to teach him to use connective energy when striking. And strike he does! This man can knock you out using his shoulder! And he does not even have to load it, it can be lying on your back when he strikes. Mike is also a nice man who tries to bring people together. He also has a woman student, Kim Furry who is the 1989 and 1990 women's heavyweight (although she is only all of 8 stone) pushing hands champion. She won this title in the US National Chinese Martial Arts Competition in Houston Texas. Mike's views differ in several directions but then if everyone agreed with everyone else then it would be a boring



Mike Sigman on my Rt.

old world. We got along very well as he too has the tendency to 'ask to see' when people make ridiculous claims etc. If they can do it to him then he will believe. All of this is good for the taiji business in making it a little more realistic. Mike has a really healthy attitude, getting rid of the bullshit in the martial arts and there's a lot of that around. So now I go back home and how happy I will be to be back in the lucky country. I love Australia.

R. You have not talked about pa-kua chang, did you teach any of this art.

E. Yes, I usually only teach this rare art when people ask. Michael Babin is really interested in pa-kua and so we spent some time on that area. It was interesting because Mike himself is of the larger variety and some of his lads are also so we worked on the pa-kua in its two levels, that for the larger person and that for the smaller person. The larger person is able to just crush anything that comes in contact with him to get at the centre while the smaller person must use evasive techniques and the peculiar pa-kua walking.

R. Tell me about this type of walking, why do you do it?

E. Many people think that we walk in a certain circular way and using a certain slipping footwork in order to move quickly. That's wrong. We walk this way as the feet play an important role in attack and defence. A pa-kua person should be able to attack with his hands and feet at the same time, attacking to liver and kidney points on the legs as the hands are pounding inward.

We also practised da-lu and his lads were very quick to pick up this exercise.

R. I thought that you didn't agree with 'normal push hands'?

E. Da-lu is not push hands. This is where we learn about footwork. The hand applications are only there so that we can learn the footwork.

R. Your overall impressions of your trip.

E. As I said, it will be good to get back home. I love the people that I teach and I love meeting new friends but the travelling is so bloody draining both mentally and physically. Usually when I get back home from one of these trips, I never want to see another airport for as long as I live and I miss my wife and two and a half children greatly, a missing that even a phone call each day cannot fix.

R. Another child?

E. Yes, I'm working on a band. I don't think my wife has exactly that idea though!

R. Thanks Erle.

E. Thanks Ron.

A Baby Girl To Sandra & Erle Montaigne.

**Kathleen Talia
20/6/91 616,5oz.**

3 New Videos By Erle Montaigne

TAIJI CORRECTIONS

Small San-Sau

This is the first of a series of No.24 videos whereby Erle Montaigne corrects on camera. Usually, most people get the same things wrong and so in correcting on camera, you are able to see your own mistakes and correct them. Here, the small san-sau at an advanced level is corrected.

50 minutes: (Order No. MTG 24a)

Australia: \$39.00

U.S.A. \$40.00

Europe £20.00

PA-KUA:

Fighting Techniques & Training Methods.

For the first time on video, the 32 Fighting methods from Pa-Kua chang. Plus the major training methods. These are two person sparring sets and teach how pa-kua is used either for a larger body or the slightly built person.

1 hour. (Order No. MTG 25)

Australia: \$39.00

U.S.A. \$40.00

Europe £20.00

HOW TO FIGHT:

Using Dim-Mak & Other Internal Methods.

The secrets of how to use the internal arts for self defence are given here. Not just techniques, but how to fight. The techniques are only a way of learning how to fight. Things like "Eagle Vision" & Distancing are covered.

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Master Fu Shu-yun

An Interview By Erle Montaigue

Master Fu Shu-yun is an extraordinary woman of wushu. Wushu in the old sense of the word rather than the newer sense of acrobatic martial arts now being pushed forward as being representative of martial arts in China today. She now teaches in New Jersey in the U.S.A. and has been doing so since 1987.

Since she was 10 years old Fu Shu-yun has been studying the Chinese martial arts beginning with the Shaolin variety and later when she was 17 years old began studying at the Nanking Central Martial Arts Academy. While there she studied many of the Shaolin arts including, sword, knife, and staff as well as many hand forms. Her teachers include some of the most well known and respected internal martial arts teachers in history, like Yang Cheng-fu for her t'ai chi ch'uan and Sun Lutang for her Pa-kua chang.

In 1936 Master Fu attended the Olympics held in Berlin and gave a demonstration of Chinese wushu. After graduating from the Nanking Academy Master Fu began teaching at the Shanghai College of Physical Education. In 1949 she moved to Taiwan as did many of China's great masters to escape the revolution and she has been there ever since.

Master Fu is now well into her seventh decade and still moves like a woman many years younger. Her areas of martial arts include; T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Pa-Kua Chang, H'sin-I Ch'uan, Pa-Kua T'ai chi, and other Shaolin external styles.

Master Fu has been teaching privately during the Summer months in the U.S.A. Alex Krych, Mark Mondrone and David Voegel, three of her advanced students who have been with her for the past two years. See photo, from their left to right; Alex Krych, Master Fu, Mark Mondrone and David Voegel.

The following is an interview that I did with Master Fu.

1/. Can you expound a little upon "Pa-Kua T'ai Chi", is it a combination of the two internal martial arts or a totally different style?

Where does Pa-Kua T'ai Chi come from?

F. Pa-Kua T'ai Chi is a very old form which was founded by the Sung family before the Ching dynasty. The originator of the style was Sung Bang-chou. The style was taught as a closed family system for 14 generations until Sung Shu-ming, at the 14th generation taught Wu Jei-san. It was Wu Jei-san who taught me while I was at the Martial Arts Academy.

No, it is not a combination of T'ai Chi and Pa-kua, it is a system in itself, although the form has similarities to Yang style t'ai chi with a heavy influence from the Pa-Kua chang.

3/. What is your main style, there must be one of the many styles that you know that you prefer to all of the others?

F. I enjoy all styles of martial arts. In the Central Martial Arts Academy in Nanking, I was tested in many and was required to be expert in all. However, I do think that my best forms, the ones that I perform the best, are "Pa-Kua Lien Huan Tui" (a combination of Shaolin, H'sin-I, Pa-kua and T'ai Chi forms which is very powerful and explosive). Also the Quan Wu Tui (Shaolin Sword).

4/. Why do you practice pushing hands?

F. Push hands is the application of t'ai chi, you do push hands to practice what you learn from the form. Practicing push hands, you practice the eight principles of t'ai chi which are:

- 1/. Peng (ward off)

- 2/. Lu (vertical pull down)

- 3/. Chi (squeeze)

- 4/. Arn (press)

- 5/. Tsai (pull down)

- 6/. Li (forearm)

- 7/. Tsao (elbow)

- 8/. Kao (shoulder strike)

5/. Do you think that in China today, perhaps they are losing some of the traditional martial arts because of the great emphasis upon the sport of wushu?

F. Today, the teaching in China is very different than when I was young. Teachers were very strict. The Master was treated differently than today. Now, classes of martial arts are taught more like university classes losing the 'Master/Disciple' relationship. Wushu now is more performance part of the martial arts, whereas Gung-fu is more personal training and a way of life. Wushu is more how other people see you, the performing art. Many changes today are due to the changes in attitude of the students, more students in classes than before, the teaching has become more simplified and not as personal as before. Because of these things we are moving away from the traditional arts.

6/. How do you relate, or differentiate between the martial art and the healing arts.

F. When I was taught, the martial and the healing arts were the same. There was not a break down of terms as today. T'ai Chi Ch'uan is a gentle, slower art, best for health for everyone. Arts such as H'sin-I, Pa-Kua, very fast arts are good for exercise but are too energetic for someone who is older or who is recuperating from illness. Certain pos-

tures from the t'ai chi form are good for certain illnesses. The whole form does not have to be practised. For example the posture of 'Brush Knee and Twist Step' can be practised over and over to help the heart.

7/.How does T'ai Chi heal the body and mind. Surely it is not only the physical exercise that heals us.

F. The practice of t'ai chi helps to train the mind. It makes a person more content, more internally balanced. It maintains the internal organs.

8/.You were chosen to attend the 1936 Olympics in Berlin? In what capacity were you there?

F. I was chosen in a group of six people to perform as the Chinese Martial Arts team. I performed 'pa-kua lien huna tuei', Quan wu tuei sword, Pa-kua taiji and Shan-ho Tuei sword, a combined two person set with Luo Chen-Li as my partner.

9/.You learnt the Yang style from Yang Cheng-fu? Was it different to that which is taught in his name today?

F. I studied with Yang Cheng-fu in the Central Martial Arts Academy in Nanking China. Training was strict and hard. Today, teaching is different, more simplified. More people are being taught and teachers are not as personal.

10/.Sun Luc-tang taught you. What did you learn from Sun, Pa-kua, Taiji or H'sin-I or all three? Nowadays we are so far removed from these great masters and it would be good to have some background from one who was there and one who actually studied with these great masters about what it was like to learn with them. Did they teach differently to how we learn today? Was the training hard. How did you incorporate the martial arts aspects of the arts into your training? Did they differentiate between the healing and the martial art?

F. I studied Pa-Kua Chang from Sun Luc-tang. I began studying martial arts at the age of 10. When I was 17 years old I observed the National Athletic Meet-

ing in Nanking where the students of the Nanking Central Martial Arts Academy studied. I was tested and was accepted into the Academy after observing these abilities. The Academy had the best teachers and they were strict, hard and very good. They pushed their students and the students worked hard. I rose at 4.30 a.m. and began training. The days were long and rigorous. the classes were very different than today, male and female students could not even talk to each other. The relationship to the teacher was Master and Disciple, the teachers taught and you learned and performed.

11/.Can you give a list of your teachers in China.

F. Yang style T'ai Chi with Master Yang Cheng-fu

Pa-Kua T'ai Chi with Master Wu Jei-san

Pa-Kua Lien Huan-Tuei with Master Wu Jei-san

H'sin-I ch'uan with Master Huang Bua-nien

H'sin-I sword with Master Huang Bua-nien

Pa-Kua Chang with Master Sun Luc-tang

Shaolin (tan-tui) with Master Yang Jung-shan

Shaolin (Baji Ch'uan) with Master Ma Hon-tu

Shaolin (Shi Lu Twan) with Master Shun Yu-ming

Shaolin (Shing wu-su) with Master Shung Yu-ming

Shaolin Sword and Spear with Master Yang Jung-shan

Shaolin Staff and Knife with Master Shun Yu-ming

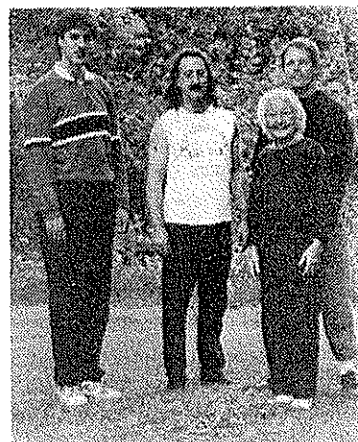
Pa-Kua Dragon Sword with Master Wu Jei-san

Master Fu, thank you so much for answering these questions. Your being in the Magazine will enhance the overall quality of its content.

Master Fu Shu-yun has been studying the Chinese martial arts for much longer than most of us have been alive. Her experiences would fill a large book, one that she is, I am told in the middle of writing. Such experience should be sought out and bought, borrowed or stolen, she is one of the great ones left in the Chinese martial arts, one of the 'old school'. Martial artists

in the U.S.A. should be proud that she has chosen your country to live even if for only half the year. (Erle Montaigne)

Alex Krych can be contacted on 908-4751619 in the U.S.A. He is the contact for Master Fu.



From L to R. Dave Voge, Mark Mondrone Mrs Fu Alex Krych

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WHAT TO BE OR WHAT NOT TO BE!

By Greg Crockett "Head Instructor, College Of Internal Arts"

Is this the question or the answer? Well in the martial arts it sometimes seems to be both. Anyhow with that cryptic lead-in out of the way let me share with you some views I have beheld closely over the years; Please excuse.

Now everybody's purpose for taking up the martial arts is the same as 'one mans ceiling being another mans floor', in that I mean we all have different reasons. Some do it for exercise, fitness, self defence, competition or whatever. Me, I study the martial arts for self defence & good health.

Now I too believe the art should be classically preserved & handed down to keep the art alive & growing, but unfortunately no martial art is truly a self defence art. We can only use the martial arts as tools along with our common sense & more importantly our intuition to develop the self defence art.

One of the greatest hindrances I believe we can have is competition. Sure it's a tool but it's more like a 'spanner' in the works than any real use. Though the 2 main problems (apart from reliance on forms or katas) is that we either have 1) the wrong tools or 2) too many of them & probably the most misused tool (which becomes a wrong tool) is sparring (here's where I get the hate mail).

This goes for our push hands & chee-sau too if we have the wrong attitude, I mean it's only an exercise it's not a martial art in itself (it does however at an advanced level have more to do with combat thus amplifying its use) You know, I really enjoy my training & it's great fun, I certainly wouldn't stick with it if it wasn't but if I had a student enter a push hands competition I think I'd have failed.

Now before you lynch me on all of this let me elaborate. If one is ever to attain the highest level in self defence (whatever that is!), after many years of

training one's reactions must become free & subconscious. You can't expect to be in a confronting situation with some madman who's going to take your head off & think ok, drop into a stance & respond with techniques A & B from page 27, chapter 4, paragraph 3. With all this conscious thought, which roughly translates to time wasting, you're going to get clobbered.

We have to react to exactly what's happening not to some situation we've recited over & over in the training room. That doesn't mean we don't develop technique, we must, but most of this will only develop mechanical skill & it's this dependence on technique that leads to a false sense of security & totally inhibits our growth towards freedom. In a realistic situation we must be totally aware yet calm & respond from our subconscious, no actions can be based on an idea, only then will we perceive.

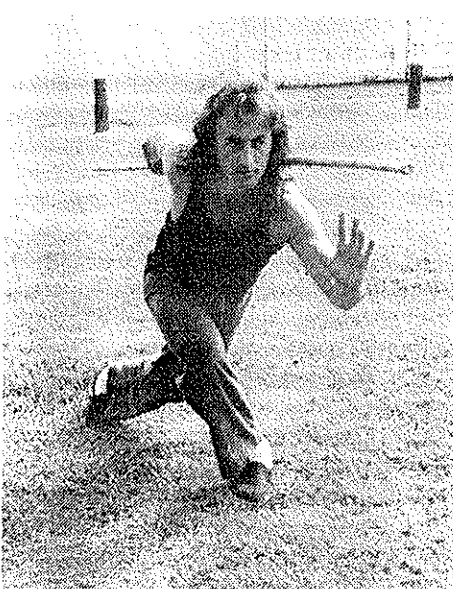
So with this in mind, sparring (generally) becomes a totally unnatural situation. Not just because we're using the conscious mind but because it's not actual combat ie; there is no threat, it's just way too controlled (I won't go into the few areas of sparring that can be beneficial as that would take up another article). Secondly, how many techniques do we need? Some martial artists seem so obsessed with gathering more & more techniques under their belt (pardon the pun) that it gets ridiculous.

Really it's not important how many techniques we know it's how well we understand them & ourselves that leads us towards true self defence through our subconscious. Basically we have to do all this training for years to develop all the techniques that really work & then we've got to let them go, it's only then we will have 'no technique'. To quote the great Bruce Lee, consider the subtle difference between "having no form & have no

form" the first is ignorance the second is transcendence.

So disregard the inhibiting ego & search for freedom within, the truth is within, the search is without end, please consider...

Greg Crockett teaches in Sydney Australia and is a member of the WTBA.



Greg Crockett

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Internal Stillness

By Mark Boys Australia

The internal stillness that sometimes happens in a self defence situation is a subject that I find very interesting, and certainly pleasurable to experience (apart from saving injuries). I have experienced at times, a complete stilling of internal dialogue, and a clarity that I strive without striving to carry with me through my daily life and it certainly has become more prevalent both when practising and when just living.

As soon as my responses began to become fully automatic, I began to notice this process and have simply watched the process happen in spirals as I have trained. Although it certainly accelerated during my stint as a security person in night clubs in Sydney.

When you are faced with the "Oh My God, where am I at as a martial artist". I felt I was representing taiji to the other personnel who represented other martial arts. (I know that it doesn't matter a pinch of shit - your taiji is for you and your presumably happy life). However, I did pull through quite nicely of course and here I am writing this to you all.

Now my being here had as much to do with timing, speed and the extremely logical strategic and physiological aspects of taiji, I believe that matter being settled is the most vital aspect when under the threat of impending violence, the state of stillness which becomes like a walking qigong or doing the form, or a form called "walk through a disco dressed in a silly bow tie". I also found when sparring with people as I did in the not too distant past such as a kickboxer, street fighter, who in fact had very little formal training - but could he fight! - I was pushed to the limit and found myself as if I was an appreciative observer standing outside of myself.

Certainly though the most pleasurable aspect of this state is when it crosses

over to my dealings with family, friends and people generally.

Hopefully more people will experience this gratifying result of training in taiji which I arrived at by training and observing and experimenting with techniques, situations and paradoxically what boils down to violence (not from within myself).

Maybe people would be looking at alternatives to using oil, thus nullifying completely the need to spend lives and millions of dollars (not to mention boring shit out of us with staged all american sketches passing as news).

Keep practising with yin and yang without fear and like my teacher once said to me, "You are taiji".

Somehow he was right.

My favourite Techniques

Here are a few techniques that seem to suit me. They are fairly straightforward. I believe having sparred with a variety of martial artists and having had a stint as a security person in nightclubs, that the most important aspect of applying any technique lies in:

- 1. Using peripheral vision;
- 2. Waiting and having sufficient sensitivity and clarity to perceive the right moment;
- 3. Moving always forward the instant that moment occurs, ideally the very first attack;
- 4. Exploding completely into a technique without any doubts;
- 5. Having the flexibility to flow to the next technique if necessary (it shouldn't be - though it

is possible that you may have to flow to another person).

Obviously the most complete form of self defence involves not being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Also, I would say that whilst I obviously agree with that taiji is a style offering a vast amount to those who work long, and hard, I would caution everyone practising internal styles to never over estimate themselves or under estimate anybody else, whoever they be, whatever style they may or may not do, as the will and perhaps even just plain stored up anger and/or a body that is fit and strong, can produce a dangerous person out of anybody. \never get angry and never doubt. Just be centered and let yourself express. If you have trained realistically it will happen. \If not, you have probably spent too much time talking yourself up and getting very complicated about things that, after a certain amount of training physically, really are not (NB: the emphasis is on 'physically'). Even practising taiji or any internal style in itself is no guarantee of success in a self defence situation.

Get real. Get cool. Practice.

Photo No.1 shows the initial attack which Mark blocks with his left palm. He now comes forward to attack to the eyes with his left palm while controlling with his right hand.

Photo No.2. Now he finishes off using the knee. Photo No.3.

Mark Boys is a member of the WTBA and teaches in South Australia. He can be contacted on: 085-582397

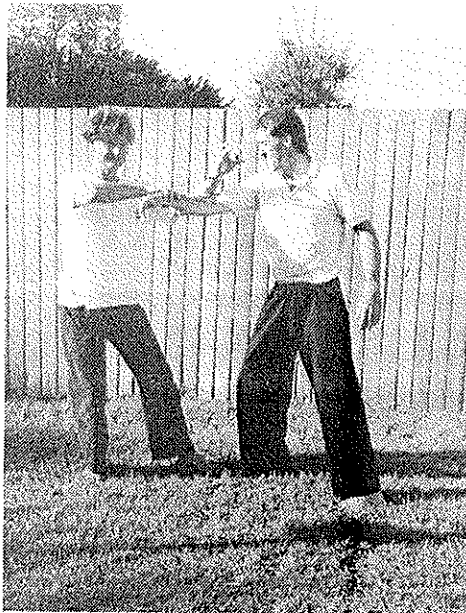


Photo No.1

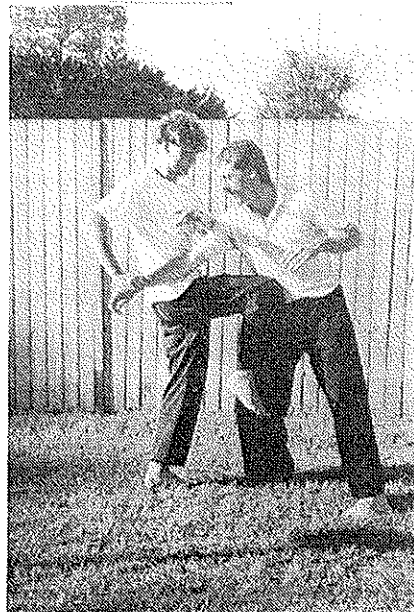


Photo No.3

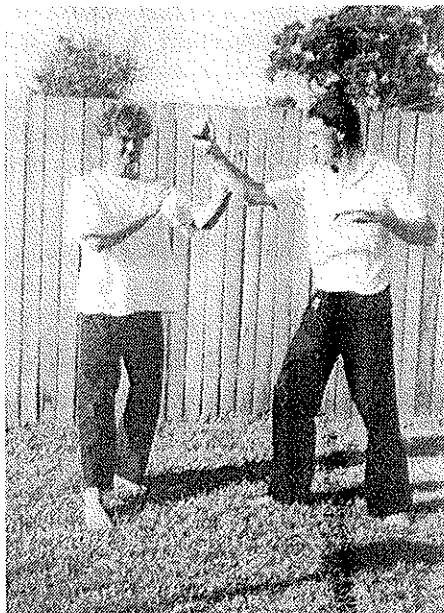


Photo No.2

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T'AI CHI CH'UAN

And Attribute Theory

By Hans Eric Petermann (South Africa)

The fact that T.C.C. is a fighting art, and a highly efficient one at that, no longer is in doubt. What is perhaps needed is a structural explanation of what makes it work as a fighting art. In other words a framework, or model, which is not the equivalent of reality but helps us to understand it better. One such model having wide applicability to different fighting arts is the "attribute theory" as popularized by Jeet Kune Do instructors such as Paul Vunak. (Student of Danny Inosanto).

Most fighting arts practitioners will (hopefully) agree that it is quite possible for a vicious street fighter with lots of practical experience but no martial arts training to demolish a black belt half his weight. Technique itself is not enough, "attributes" such as power, speed, timing etc. express themselves through technique. The clumsy hook of the street fighter may lack the technical perfection of his black belt opponent's reverse punch but if its speed, timing, accuracy and power are superior, I bet on the hook. The repeated practice of movement patterns in the air or against non-human apparatus is therefore not the only or even the most important factor in attaining combat proficiency. Attributes, therefore are qualities which make actual techniques work. True fighting arts usually have a fairly wide variety of practice methods specifically used for developing one or more of these attributes. A partial list of the most important and recognizable attributes would include; speed, power, balance, timing, distance appreciation, sensitivity, accuracy, coordination, stamina, tension-relaxation changes, flow, flexibility (physical and mental), rhythm and balanced integrated body movement.

Attributes do not exist in isolation - herculean strength is useless if ex-

pressed at the speed of a snail. Also, the more specifically a method trains certain attributes, the more useful (economical) it is. For example, the method used in some karate schools of practicing endless repetitions of basic blocks whilst standing stationary in a natural or a horse stance, trains few, if any attributes directly and is thus at best, a simple grooving of individual techniques. Aside from the economy factor there are other note worthy points. Certain attributes are more easy to maintain as one grows older, such as sensitivity for instance, which can be maintained until long after muscular power has become a fond memory. A fighting art based upon such age unrelated attributes is thus, over a lifetime, more efficient and economical than one based upon power, tension etc. In a power and tension orientated type of art, the older practitioner is often said to rely upon his years of experience when fighting a fitter and stronger young man. In reality he is relying upon attributes such as sensitivity, timing and accuracy, which, although only secondary by products of his training, have accumulated over the years and now at least give him a fighting chance.

How much more economical and intelligent to focus specifically on these attributes from the word go. Also, the T'ai Chi fighter is training the same attributes at sixty that he was training at twenty. It is this accumulation of ability over time, ie; 40 years of improvement which may explain some of the so called mystical feats of the "old masters". In reality it may not necessarily be quite as simple as outlined above. The sixty year old T'ai Chi man against the 25 year old street fighter must also comprehend such concepts such as fighting range, ie, he must strategically dictate or guide the fight so that he can bring his attributes into play. Sensitivity works better at close range than at kicking range.

Finally, some techniques are structurally dependent upon certain attributes. High kicks and flying kicks for example are based on power, speed and flexibility and many many hours of practice to maintain as one gets older and at a certain age may even become counterproductive from a health point of view. This is why one seldom sees a 70 year old flying kick

specialist. An elbow strike or wrist lock is technically something a 70 year old person can do, provided he has the sensitivity, balance and coordination to get his body into the correct position relative to his opponent.

What then makes T'ai Chi Ch'uan and the other Chinese internal arts work? First and foremost, the practitioner must perceive his or her art as a fighting art. If in his mind he believes he is doing what is exclusively a health dance or exclusively a "becoming one with the universe, through and in motion", he will probably never reach any level of fighting ability. Which is not, to state the obvious, to deny that correct practice cannot or does not have a phenomenal effect on one's health and consciousness, even if one doesn't want to study it as a fighting art.

Secondly, a good teacher and a full curriculum are essential. Many present day teachers teach a few warm up exercises, the form and maybe some stationary single hand pushing, the later done with the arms moving like cooked spaghetti. This is not T'ai Chi as a fighting art, nor as a health art. A full curriculum may include extensive and specific warm ups, stepping practice, form work as a whole or techniques in isolation, qigong, push hands, single and double both stationary and moving and including da-lu, jing gung, (exercises to develop specific T'ai Chi energies or means of expressing Ch'i in movement), pau chui and san-sau, weapons practice, single technique practice and drills with a partner or with apparatus like the heavy bag or punching mitts, fighting combinations practice, specific and non specific defenses against weapon attacks, fast form practice, the study of strategy etc.

Let us now return to look at which attributes are specifically developed by such curriculum. The warm ups not only prevent injury but also increase one's potential range of motion. Stepping practice teaches balance and the transfer of weight from one leg to the other. The form is one of the corner stones of T'ai Chi, teaching coordination, flow, relaxation, balance, posture etc. Qigong promotes and develops the energy whilst jing gung (practicing single technique with fa-jing for instance) trains to apply and issue it whilst moving against an opponent.

Push hands develops sensitivity, yielding, rooting and absorbing. San-sau develops relaxed movement with speed against an opponent and eventually develops a comprehensive library of instinctive technical responses to attacks. Practice with weapons develops a variety of attributes and skills. The broadsword for instance develops hip and waist flexibility and utilization.

Power comes from learning to fully utilize the body, everything moving together in motion, an uninterrupted power line by correct alignment - eg; tucking under the buttocks. From relaxing fully until the moment of energy discharge. T'ai Chi is one of the best arts for achieving this sophisticated power.

Speed is the result of relaxation of using literally only those muscles which are necessary to produce movement. The connection to T'ai Chi here is obvious.

Fighting spirit and reflexes are built up by training the students to defend themselves in a variety of contexts by means of an assortment of drills, culminating in defence against unrehearsed "barging attacks".

Two person drills, use of mitts etc, develop timing, accuracy and distance appreciation. The list could go on and on.

What should have become clear by now is that T'ai Chi is a superbly comprehensive training system, which, if taught and practiced correctly must lead to a high degree of combat proficiency, as well as health and a feeling of harmony with one's environment. Mystical abilities may or may not exist, but I have never seen anything that is incomprehensible to be in normal terms understandable to anybody. Then again, I have not seen everything. Certainly any abilities, mystical or otherwise are based upon practice, practice and more practice. And with equal certainty attribute theory is a useful tool for understanding the combative abilities of the well trained T'ai Chi person.

Hans Eric Petermann is the WTBA rep., in South Africa.

Combat Aikido

By Ed Star, Three Stars Taiji Club Fresno California U.S.A.

Aikido, like its Chinese internal counterparts is highly complex in subtlety of circular motion, centred and friendly in spirit, very meditative, and potentially very brutal in a direct linear assault. And as in Taiji, pa-kua chang and H'sin-I, it is important to gain an understanding of what methods are street worthy and therefore always tend to work, and what methods while useful in some circumstances are generally of more use to develop body structure, weight underside (hip command), timing, distance appreciation and follow through. But before I begin this feeble attempt by myself of a simplified analysis of a rather complex art, it would be proper here to say at the outset, that I am no expert, and that the main reason that people practice aikido is not for self defense, but for the actual practice itself.

Aikido has a very special feature about it that makes it quite holistic and spiritual without being religious. I have always likened it to a Zen meditation in movement without either the little bald guy wacking you on the shoulders with a split bamboo stick nor the influence and study of Buddhism.

To Aikidoists, the practice is perfection in itself, it is its own push hands and san-sau, and its way to loosen up the body free qi to travel and extend itself through technique.

The most basic circular method comes down to the method of entering from the rear (turn outs), known as "irimi". Irimi is used along with a sword or ridge hand "teगतana" to counter the opponent's grab and then persuade them to go as you wish. Not unlike the taiji use of "p'eng" (ward off), irimi is used to set up all subsequent throws or body drops.

There are several throws which just take up too much time to set up or are too delicate or complex to use against a seasoned street fighter, unless one is 4th dan or street real. The bare bones

basics of irimi's ability to control, turn-out, enter and throw the opponent is not in doubt and is very, very solid, and can only be described as pure beauty. And irimi translated into "randori" is one of the most effective defenses against multiple attacks there are.

As to linear methods, ironically many aikidoists either don't train in these straight forward moves at all, may not even know about them, or may consider them the province of the older more aggressive aiki-jujutsu systems and therefore not suitable to the more holistic beliefs of the aiki-thrust, known as "Tsuki". In this regard, aikido, aiki-jujutsu, ken-jujutsu, etc., can be quite like H'sin-I (form of mind & intention boxing) ch'uan in speed of action, possibly more devastatingly simple to enact, and with its broad hip base at least as brutally abrupt. And without any sacrifices of internal body structure and principles (though aikido is double weighted as opposed to single). All movement straight or circular are based upon weapon use, the sword, spear and jo. And the way in which a sword or jo is held in regard to hand and arm positioning, along with powerful hips, and highly mobile footwork, give all techniques their strength and fluidity. the use of tsuki can vary greatly from single or double palms, ridge and sword hands, backfists, elbows and the more common horizontal extended arm thrusts. The effectiveness of tsuki is the same committed explosiveness that h'sin-I, the small san-sau of Yang shao-hou, and several of the short actions of pa-kua chang use to dire consequences to the attacker. As I like to remind students when it comes to frontal assaults, if you're not totally centred and committed, stay the hell away and/or defend on the fringe of the circle, regroup and live to fight another day.

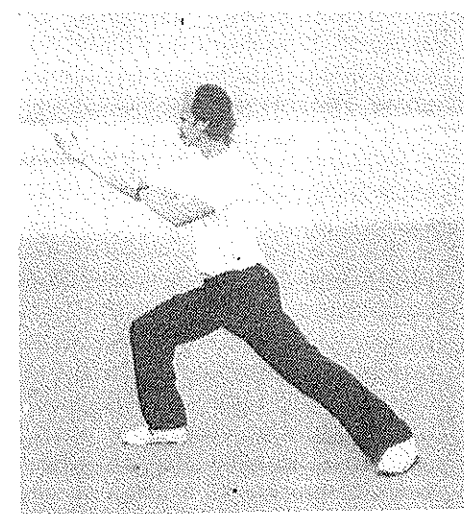
The variations and variety of tsuki, as most aiki techniques is probably endless, so if I haven't mentioned what is useful to you, or if my use is offensive to your idea of aikido, or you just find

it terrible the way in which I reduce complex methods to their simplest elements, I do apologize my friend. Please feel free to write to me of your displeasure and no I won't be offended if we disagree. How else can we learn?

By the way, the variations of the tsuki-thrust, as well as the combat use of aikido, do get maximum exposure in most of the Steven Segal's martial arts movies, which on at least the level of technique are excellent.

ADDENA: Though I've been enamored with aikido for 13 years, my only ranking (nidan) is in an extremely esoteric Yama Bushi system known as Mikkyo-do (Konjin) Kenjutsu, and, no I'm not into ninja stuff, nor do I even find the time to keep up with my aiki practices since becoming currently enamored with the Chinese internal systems. Unfortunately there is so much to learn and I'm not that clever, hence I'm always reducing everything to their common denominator.

Ed Star teaches in Fresno CA and can be contacted on (209)268-2719



Ed Star

Chang Yiu-chun On Weapons.

Interviewed by Erle Montague

The following is a series of questions asked by myself during my training period with Chang Yiu-chun. At first, I thought that the answers were a little strange going on what I already knew about the weapons from T'ai Chi Ch'uan. I used to do a lovely sword form with the fingers of the other palm pointing in the correct direction and held in that strange taiji way. After my training with Chang, I was once again placed in the position of either forgetting my original forms or disregarding what Chang had taught me. I chose what Chang had taught me and I am now very glad that I did. His sword, saber and spear forms along with a host of other lesser known weapons are the most powerful that I have ever seen from the taiji area and for once, I was not feeling that I was only dancing but actually performing a powerful weapon set.

E. What you are showing me is totally different to what I have learnt previously. Why is this?

C. *Do you want confirmation about what I am showing you, is that the real question?*

E. Yes, I have never seen the sword done quite that way.

C. *What do you mean.*

E. You do not have the "sword fingers" that is so inherent in the other taiji sword forms that I have seen and you do not perform the form slowly and flowingly but with great speed and power.

C. *Do you wish to use this weapon for fighting or do you wish to use it for dancing?*

E. For fighting.

C. *Then do it the way I show you. Tell me why is it that some people hold the fingers in this way. (the sword fingers).*

E. I have been told so that the sight, focus and I suppose qi is directed in the correct direction.

C. *Do you worry about all of this when you are attacked by someone with a sharp sword? Or do you defend yourself?*

E. I defend myself.

C. *Then forget about the fingers. When I was taught originally, I was shown to hold a small knife with my other hand and this knife was pointed in certain directions. But when the knife was abandoned from the form, then there was no longer need to point anything. Some people continued the tradition of pointing the fingers to represent the knife. I was taught that the fingers were not necessary in learning the sword or the big knife (saber).*

E. Then do you still use the knife when you practice?

C. *Yes, when I practice the sword/knife form I do but when I only practise the sword form, then I only use the sword and not think about the fingers.*

E. I have never heard about this sword/knife form.

C. *I know, other wise you would not be asking these questions. People do not like the sword/knife form as it is too brutal for them. Most people only like the slow moving sword form as this is nicer to do and gives one a feeling of relaxation. But when I practice, it is for the real and if my life is dependent upon my sword skills, then I would prefer to know how to use the sword rather than to meditate with the sword.*

E. But isn't meditation a very important part of taiji?

C. *Yes, but you must remember that once a student has reached the area of weapons, then all that has been learnt before takes one to a high level other wise the weapons will only be used superficially and by this stage, the whole forms must have become continual meditation. It does not matter if you are doing very explosive movements, you are still in meditation so there is no need to perform the sword or any other weapon form slowly and meditatively because you have no need by this time.*

E. Does this also apply to the fa-jing of the san-sau and your Yang style form when you fa-jing?

C. *Yes, the fa-jing is a term used for any explosive attacking movement but it must not be a fast movement when the mind has known what you are doing, the mind must not know what it is you are doing and your inner mind must take over. If you know that you have done fa-jing then you have not done it. You look confused.*

E. Yes. I must do fa-jing but not know that I have done it?

C. *Yes, sometimes you have told me that during your taiji form practice, you seem to forget that you have done certain postures but that you have already done them. It is the same with the fa-jing. Your body and mind must come to such a state as to be one and so therefore if your inner mind thinks about it, your body has already done it before you have time to think about it physically. You see me doing the fa-jing?*

E. Yes.

C. *I do not.*

E. So what do you feel when you have finished the forms?

C. *Like warm water.*

E. Warm water?

C. *You know warm water?*

E. Yes.

C. *Then that is what I feel like. I look out and only see the whole and I am warm, I do not remember doing the form, then I can go about my daily tasks. You see that bird over there. Chang used to train down by the Garden Island dock Navel dock yards in Sydney Australia during his sojourn in Australia, he was referring to a seagull.) That bird is doing what I was just doing after my practice. His weight is in his whole body and not just upon one part of his feet. The rest of his body is ready for instant action without conscious thought. Most animals are this way.*

E. Is this what is meant by the classic of "the head is suspended from above by string"?

C. I suppose so. But these translations of the Chinese lose much.

E. Some people say that the Japanese katana is more powerful than the Chinese sword and the Chinese swordsman could never beat a Japanese swordsman.

C. I will show you something. (Chang next moved over to a clump of bushes and struck one causing it to shake and almost break at its trunk.) "This is power, this is the Japanese sword." Next, he struck at one small branch with a punch that was almost unable to be seen by the eye, the whole tree shook down to its trunk. "Same effect but I have used much less energy".

E. But the Samurai are said to be very accurate.

C. They are, but their sword is so sharp and strong that they must cut a person in half, that is the only thing that a katana will do, that is what it is made for. My sword is made for the striking of points on the human body, one small strike here or there without much blood loss and you are dead, much cleaner and confuses the authorities when you are taken to gaol.

E. So this is the same way that we strike using the points, the same way that I am learning.

C. Yes. The sword is not used to cut large people into tiny pieces, to do this, we must commit ourselves fully to the task and if the other person is skilled at sword play then he could trick us into this. Doing it our way, we are able to use much less power and concentration to only strike at small portions of the body to cause the much desired effect.

E. You have told me that the last weapon that I should learn is the spear. Why is this?

C. If you wish only to learn the spear movements then I can show you right now, or perhaps tomorrow as well. If you wish to learn how to use the spear then it takes much longer. Not longer in spear movements but longer in basic training. Everything you are learning is going towards your weapons as well. This is why we learn the spear at the last. Your basic training must be so inner that when I show you the movements of the spear, they will be a part of you. You will be able to do this. (Chang takes the spear and strikes with great speed at the bushes. There is a leaf on the end of the spear, only just pierced.)

E. What are the movements of the spear?

C. I do not like to think of definite movements. But in order to learn, one must know certain ways of using the tip and the end. "Cut", this is where we use very little body and arm movement but the tip of the spear cuts across about one to two inches very quickly. When one is struck with this type of attack, the person does not know that they have been struck, only that they are on the ground. "Whip". This is where we use the spear thus. (He uses so little body movement but the tip of the spear is thrust inward by one inch). This is when we have parried an attack and the tip of our spear is only one inch from the target. "shake". This is where we use more body movement but the end of the spear cuts across and back several times. This strike is used to cut several major points and arteries in one movement. "Blunt". This is where we use the other end of the spear to strike at major points to cause the person to be unconscious.

E. Your movements in this weapon are much smaller than the sword or big knife but the weapon is the largest of all.

C. If I have a big weapon, there is no need to move much. If I move only a small amount, by the time that movement arrives at the end of the spear, it has increased greatly. Doing it this way, we are able to confuse the enemy, he does not see what it is we are about to do. But if we make large movements then he will be able to detect our attacks. T'ai Chi Ch'uan is very small and sparse of movement, you know this by the form of Yang that I have taught you, we begin with large open movements but at an advanced stage, we progress to smaller almost unable to be seen movements. This is true T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

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Teaching Children

By Robin Neisser London

I have been practicing the martial arts now for over fifteen years, my main style being T'ai Chi Ch'uan. My husband and I live in "the bad part of town" near London.

Just about the same time that our little girl was born, myself and my husband took up T'ai Chi Ch'uan in the hope that some day we would impart all of this internal knowledge onto our child. I used to become really upset when I found my husband teaching our beautiful little girl self defence methods like taking out eyes and kicking to the groin etc., Why, because T'ai Chi to me is supposed to be more than just that, it is supposed to give someone the higher values of living, the meditation areas the love of nature etc. My husband's idea was that because of the era in which we live and especially the area in which we live, our baby would have to learn to look after herself. "But people only bring trouble on themselves" I used to argue. I would say that if one thinks positively then nothing wrong will happen.

My husband insisted on teaching her the more fundamental self defence applications from T'ai Chi Ch'uan to my disgust. I would even try to hide the fact that our daughter was learning to kill people!

So here she was walking home from school minding her own business and these two chaps stop in a car, jump out and try to drag this now beautiful 15 year old girl into their car. She places her fingers into the eyes of one man and pushes very hard blinding him. The other one she kicks in the groin doing much damage.

She escapes and we have now taken her out of school. What a sick world. Now we all do the martial side of T'ai Chi Ch'uan and we are all learning to kill, we have to!

Safety And Sparring

Essential Taiji Martial Training Tools

By Michael Babin Ottawa Canada

Two factors should be uppermost in the minds of any instructor/student in terms of self defence training: is it safe and is it realistic?

Like any seemingly contradictory aspects of training, these two do not necessarily have to be mutually exclusive — but often are!

To make your training in posture applications, push hands, da-lu or shan-shou effective, you need a sparring partner you can trust — to work the **both** of you as hard as he or she can while doing so as safely as possible.

One way to maximize the use of a good sparing partner is the use of safety gear. Like doing the form as well as martial function in t'ai chi; combining a sparring partner with safety gear gives you a return on your investment of time and effort which is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

SAFETY GEAR

Protective padding/safety equipment can provide the opportunity to train with more of a combat edge without greatly increasing the risk of injury. However, the use of such equipment can also create its own set of problems. Psychologically, the use of such gear, especially in relative beginners, induces fear of contact as the training suddenly seems "serious" when such equipment is donned by the students. This fear may cause some students to stop training of any kind and cause others to toss sensitivity, yielding and centering aside in favor of brute strength and crude technique.

Instead of pairs of students training a little more energetically because of the safety factor allowed by such gear, you're as likely to end up with students who circle each other overly-cautiously or who batter fiercely at each other because of the presumption that protective gear has suddenly made them invulnerable.

That is particularly crucial when working with weapons, even wooden or rubber ones. A hard plastic knife point will blind you as readily as metal if thrust into your eye! Those students who train the function of the traditional t'ai chi weapons are, in my experience, likely in the beginning to get carried away with the fun of mock battle. It can be easy to forget that wooden weapons can main and that plastic and padding don't have the same "stopping" value as metal or leather armor.

You must also come to terms with the age-old problem that has bedeviled fighters for thousands of years: if the protective gear is to be truly effective it limits mobility and peripheral vision; if light enough not to limit those factors then it provides much less protection.

For unarmed self defence practice; the minimal equipment includes good head gear, a throat guard, eye protectors, a chest piece, athletic cup and shin guards. If you wear forearm/fist protectors and/or padded gloves you must sacrifice a great deal of the tactile use of the hands.

For self defence applications of the traditional or non-traditional weapons, you need the above as well

as a solid helmet and face mask, shoulder/upper arm pads, a heavy duty throat guard and padded gloves with fingers.

Hard shin and knee pads are also useful as are upper thigh protectors. Kendo armor is ideal, if expensive, and you get past the emotional response of training taiji tactics while looking like an extra in a B grade Japanese B grade movie epic. My students and I use padding designed for a variety of more mundane contact sports. Such equipment is more readily available than that designed for martial arts use, is cheaper and gives you the option of looking like an extra from *THE ROAD WARRIOR*!

Whether for unarmed or weapons training, the use of protective gear allows for moderate or heavy contact to the body*, for at least part of your training, gets you (and your partner) used to making contact with force and with being hit. You can't learn how to absorb, re-direct or (at its crudest) ignore being hit, unless you actually get hit!

SPARRING PARTNER

A good training/sparring partner is difficult to find and, like any relationship, difficult to keep. Both must learn and grow from the training or one will surely grow tired of being a human "punching bag" at some point.

You must also take care that the need to grow and evolve in one's skills doesn't just become a competition between you and your partners to see who will become the "best".

* For the average practitioner of self defence skills, there is no need for training with hard, deliberate contact to the head. Protective headgear is to minimize the chance of injury from accidental contact. Repeated contact to the head destroys brain cells and can cause mental/physical deterioration. T'ai Chi skills are meant as much to improve and maintain health as they are to give you self defence skills.

Being the "best" is a meaningless concept as there is always someone, somewhere who does what you are doing better than you do. This is also the reason for training with a variety of partners so that you have the exposure to a variety of personalities, physical types and ranges of skill. What works with the guy you've been working with twice a week for three years may well fail with a stranger.

A good sparring/training partner is essential to martial development. In fact, one of the best "selfish" reasons teaching t'ai chi or any other martial art is having the opportunity to train regularly with people who share your interest and want to evolve along similar paths.

CONCLUSION

While Thai Boxers make most t'ai chi practitioners look like sissies by comparison, even such training as I have just advocated may seem antithetical to the "soft" aspects of t'ai chi. Perhaps I, and those who share my attitudes, are a little too Yang for our own good; however, you can't as the saying goes "make eggs without breaking some shells".

Any instructor who tells you that you can learn self-defence without some risk of contact, even if accidental, is, at best, self-deceiving — at worst, a liar.

Michael Babin is a regular writer for TC, C&H and a founding member of the WTBA. He teaches the Yang style in Ottawa, Canada and has been studying the art since 1975 and has been teaching since 1985. A former editor/writer with the Royal Mounted Police, his articles have been published in dozens of North American and International police and martial arts magazines. He can be contacted in Canada, (613)739-7805. Michael is one of the nicer martial artists. (editor)

HOW SOON DO YOU WANT IT TO BE PERFECT?

By Jennifer Press (Gondwanaland)

Have you ever watched anyone playing a piece of music beautifully, speaking a strange language fluently or executing a sword form with the least amount of effort and wished that you could do just that? The funny part is most people who come to learn Taijiquan want immediate results in the first few weeks. They don't realize that Taijiquan is a life process. A constant taking away instead of adding on. It's a matter of leaving the baggage behind instead of adding more baggage. Becoming like a child again - spontaneous, looking at everything with a sense of wonder, playful, curious, vulnerable, open, soft, and supple, no pre-conceived ideas. The other day a student asked me, "How soon will my form be perfect?" I might add this student has just begun learning the form. Instead of taking her time with a relaxed attitude she is wanting to put herself into a stressful situation.

What is perfect? Complete, finished, whole, unspoiled, faultless, excellent, of highest quality.

How many people want the "perfect" World, child, relationship, body, and so on?

A lot of competition goes into being the best, the most perfect.

Learning Taijiquan teaches you more about your approach to life.

Spend time to study the changes. Observe, discriminate, and understand each movement before rushing on to the next and you might be surprised at how much you remember and feel the difference in your progress. One person may practice daily on a particular form and fail to make any progress, while another shows daily improvement. The difference lies in the fact that the first one only repeats and memorizes with no awareness, while the second one observes what he is doing while he plays.

Each day we are offered new means for learning and growing. When we are more observant, flexible, aware, then we grow. Even the seemingly most insignificant thing can bring us closer to ourselves and therefore to others.

As the Japanese haiku says, "My barn having burned to the ground, I can now see the moon." If you can breathe you can practice Taijiquan, you don't have to be perfect. When a student thinks he/she has to be perfect at something he/she becomes stiff and inhibited. It's not a question of being "correct" or "perfect" but rather of discovering greater flexibility and freedom in your movements.

- Breathe easily and naturally through your nose.

- Perform each Action as though for the first time.

- Know and feel where your "head" is.
- Listen to your own "drummer" and go at your own pace.
- Root your feet and think in an "Upward" direction. Every movement has a line, a breath, and a centre.
- Explore your inner world as well as your outer world.
- Examine your motivation.
- Question your values in life.
- Use your legs, elbows, and a quick wit.
- Know "how" to use your potential.
- Begin all your movements from the Centre/Dantien.
- Keep a sense of humour. There is a Chinese saying, "Watch out for a man whose stomach doesn't move when he laughs."

Learning Taijiquan is a process of not giving up. Being alert and attentive in each moment.

Instead of trying too hard to be perfect we become "AWARE" of what we are doing. When we know what we are doing we can do what we want.

Learning from nature we realize transformations are possible, maybe not immediately, but gradually. The first stage in learning Taijiquan is to study ourselves. Daily we note the changes in ourselves. In the beginning more gross changes and then as we progress more subtle changes.

The value of increased concentration, improved memory, and using our whole potential are far more important than just being "perfect".

Jennifer Press has been teaching and living in Europe, China, India & Thailand. She has worked with Chinese Medicine, Drama & Dance students throughout the world. She has trained with many remarkable teachers in Monasteries and Privately including Master Chu King-hung, (London), Grandmaster Fu Zhongwen, (China), Chungliang Al-huang, (New York), Dalai Lama of Tibet, (India), Lamas, (Himalayas), Achaan Buddhadasa, (Thailand), Monks & Nuns. She now leads Workshops and Classes in Taijiquan, Qigong and all forms of massage.



Jennifer Press: "Snake Creeps Down"

EXAMINING GOALS

"Ch'i" & "Internal Strength"

By Mike Sigman Golden Colorado U.S.A.

One of the most confusing aspects of the "internal" martial arts is that the terms "internal" and "ch'i" seem to have myriad definitions. There is a strong appeal to the pursuit and acquisition of the esoteric and poorly understood phenomena of "ch'i" and "internal power", but we are confounded by much information, often from people calling themselves "master", information which doesn't ever seem to tell us *how* to do these things or internal things. Sometimes we see demonstrations of physical deeds which are termed as "internal" or "ch'i" power etc., but since few people really understand these terms it is difficult to really critique the deeds, or even use the demonstrations as learning tools.

Early on, I found it was much more fruitful to stick with truly knowledgeable Asians than to get involved with the "Spanky and Our Gang" (make it up as we go) teachers that seem so prevalent. Luckily, I was able to choose my teachers; I recognize that not everyone has had this option, so my comment is not necessarily negative. From the viewpoint of my knowledgeable friends and teachers, and from my own experience and practice, I would like to list and explain a few of the internal-arts topics which, if they had been explained to me, would have saved a number of years in my practice. Perhaps these explanations can save study time for others, also.

Incidentally, we are all students; there are only 3 or 4 "masters" as such who are recognized here and in mainland China. The sprouting number of 'masters' in Northern America seem to indicate that some people grow with internal arts, some people only swell.

If you are involved with a teacher or "master", be respectful but don't stop looking for patterns and common sense in your studies; use common sense in establishing the credentials of your teachers. Avoid the unclear discussions which lean toward the mystical, for instance, if you're talking about a tangible force, don't call it "energy" just because it sounds grander.

Differentiating Between Internal & External Martial Arts

Internal strength derives from using the body as a unit. Within the unit-structure, cohesiveness is maintained by coordinating all muscles as if they are bound together like an amoeba's body: structural power, which originates from the ground, is derived from a mobile articulation of the skeletal frame in such a way to propagate support from the ground in both vertical and horizontal planes.

If we simplify definitions, the tenuous tensile connection throughout the body is referred to as "pulling silk" (chou ssu chin); torsion developed while maintaining this connection is referred to as "reeling silk" (chan ssu chin). The relaxed control of the ground's support throughout the body is referred to as "peng" the ward off strength. In order to learn to use both the ground derived "peng" and the whole-body connection, the body has to be trained away from the isolated use of the limbs; this requires that the body be kept relaxed and deliberately re-coordinated in the use of the body as a whole.

A good picture of the use of the two internal criteria is when a dog shakes water off itself — the body functions

as a connected unit, deriving the strength for its movements from the ground. If the dog were to "shake hands" or bite, we could describe these isolated actions as "external", because they don't require that the whole body be used in coordination. Furthering the analogy, we can view the same dog in a fierce battle, making use of both "internal"(soft) and "external"(hard) techniques. Superior fighters are reputed to use both forms of strength, internal and external.

Static posture practice or doing a series of martial arts movements quite slowly can build up either external or internal strength, depending upon how the body is structured and coordinated.

Differentiating Between "Ch'i" & "Internal Strength"

Liang, Shouyu, who is one of my teachers, has told me of his explorations in search of supra-normal control of "ch'i" while he was a coach and performer on mainland China. He indicates that he has yet to find a person who was able to project vast ray-like emanations of power or any of the other extreme (but often secretly hoped for) goals that seem to entice many into the studies of internal arts. Since he is an acknowledged master whose family has for generations specialized in not only the martial arts but also qigong, I have great respect for his knowledge and ability. On a martial level, I found that whenever I mixed descriptions of "ch'i" and the martial "internal strength" he tended to treat this as mistranslation. My long-term lesson that I have learned in differentiating internal strength from "ch'i" still doesn't dampen my enthusiasms

— if you know of a spectacular “ch’i” demonstration which doesn’t depend heavily on a teacher-student relationship, please let me know.

Although “internal” martial arts are an unique subject in themselves, it should be understood and recognized that they are comprised of 2 major factors,

- 1/. Physical use of the body as a ground-based unit structure, and
- 2/. Arts manipulating the internal circulation of “ch’i” as an **additive**, but secondary function.

In respect to the physical development of the body, t’ai chi ch’uan historical sources, such as Yang family legends, indicate immediately that people physically practiced great amounts of time daily (T.T. Liang’s compilation of Yang family anecdotal material easily points in this direction). Aikido, H’sing-I, and Bagwa sources also indicate a trend toward real-world hard work as opposed to silently meditating to the point that a devastating green aura erupts from the palms of one’s hands. Interestingly, but **not** surprisingly, an examination of the postural criteria of H’sing-I, Bagwa, Aikido, and Taiji indicates that the basic unit-body structure is the same in all four arts. The confusion sets in when a martial art, for instance, “Ki” Aikido, stresses the physical aspects of **peng** and unit-body function, but hazily refers to these properties as “ki” (ch’i, or qi in Chinese), thus promoting the aspect of a physically powerful, but unseen force.

Liang Baiping, another one of my teachers and a member of the **Beijing Chen-Style T’ai Chi Ch’uan Society**, has further explained the real world study of internal arts to me — I have found out that there is a bi-annual publication in mainland China which treats the use of “internal strength” as a science. In this type of literary study, the intangible “ch’i” and the substantive “peng” and “pulling silk” strengths can often be hazily interchanged. Usually, a calm tracking of the body as a unit structure (using the ground as the origin of power) will provide a sensible understanding of how the expanding or contracting unit-body strength is directed. Bear in mind that the lower path of the ground

strength “peng” is usually an understood factor; ie., the solidity of the ground is transferred through the leg and relaxed and aligned (“open”) hip joint into the “Dantien”. From the “dantien”, the upper admixture of “ch’i” and ground strength can become confusing in most translated literature; power following the path of least strength “peng” and “pulling silk” will yield the most “internal” strength. Descriptions of power usually describe the origin as from the “dantien”, helping obscure the difference between “ch’i” and “peng”. In my opinion, based on anecdotal sources and observation, some Chinese masters circumvented this whole mass of confusion by talking in terms of force vectors — an approach worth emulating if internal power is your goal.

Differentiating “Internal Strength” & Qigong

To my great surprise, I was once caught unaware by a qigong taught by Liang Shouyu which yielded a tangible, beam-like awareness of external “Ch’i”. Although this can be used as a healing phenomenon, according to Mr Liang, it is childish to consider this as a basis for a martial victory. However, this type of “real ch’i” adds to the strengths of the internal martial arts and follows the paths that are established by correct body postures using “peng” and “pulling silk” (chou ssu chin)

Both internal and external martial arts have their attendant qigong exercises. Despite the fact that qigongs do their work to the “internal” aspects of the body, a person doing an “external” martial art with a form of qigong is not doing an “internal” martial art. I often encounter internal practitioners who do qigongs from the external systems. Because these qigongs work on aspects of the inside of the body, many people feel that this legitimizes their claims to mastery of an internal art.

Qigongs run the gamut from the physically-based, which can include “iron shirts”, strength and “facia” enhancers, to the pure “ch’i” and nervous system enhancers. However, in relation to a martial art, a qigong is only additive; the basic martial skills, techniques and strengths mainly deter-

mine the ability of a martial artist. In my opinion, the Buddhist-derived breath exercises can lead to physical problems if not correctly taught and practiced — **do not** accept the guidance of a teacher in these qigong exercises unless you are sure of credentials.

Uses Of Internal Strength

The use of the physical aspects of “internal strength” is a learned ability, not an intuitive one. A couple of years ago I did an “in service” presentation at a prominent neuro-surgeon’s invitation. After a lively show-and-tell in which people were bouncing each other around, my discussion was toward the enormously efficient use of strength engendered by “peng” and body connection (“pulling silk”), hoping it would be of benefit to some physically debilitated patients suffering from neuro-trauma. Since these skills are acquired skills requiring re-patterning of muscular coordination (why do you think t’ai chi ch’uan is practiced so slowly), it was dismissed as an acceptable solution for neuro-trauma patients, and rightfully so; re-patterning muscular coordination for “internal” strength would be an added burden, not an aid.

However, for people less handicapped, the day to day uses of “internal strength” (and the health and suppleness that develops concurrently) are great. The beautifully logical development of great power can be applied not only to martial techniques, but to simple daily chores. As skill in this form of movement increases, your potential strengths increase — this gives rise to the statement that internal strength increases with age.

I hope that the above discussion of terms used in internal martial arts will help speed your progress. Whether you practice for health, martial skills, or for art, the correct use of the body is very satisfying and productive. Good luck!

Mike Sigman teaches in Colorado and can be contacted on U.S.A. (303)2789894. Mike is a good teacher and speaks a lot of good sense.