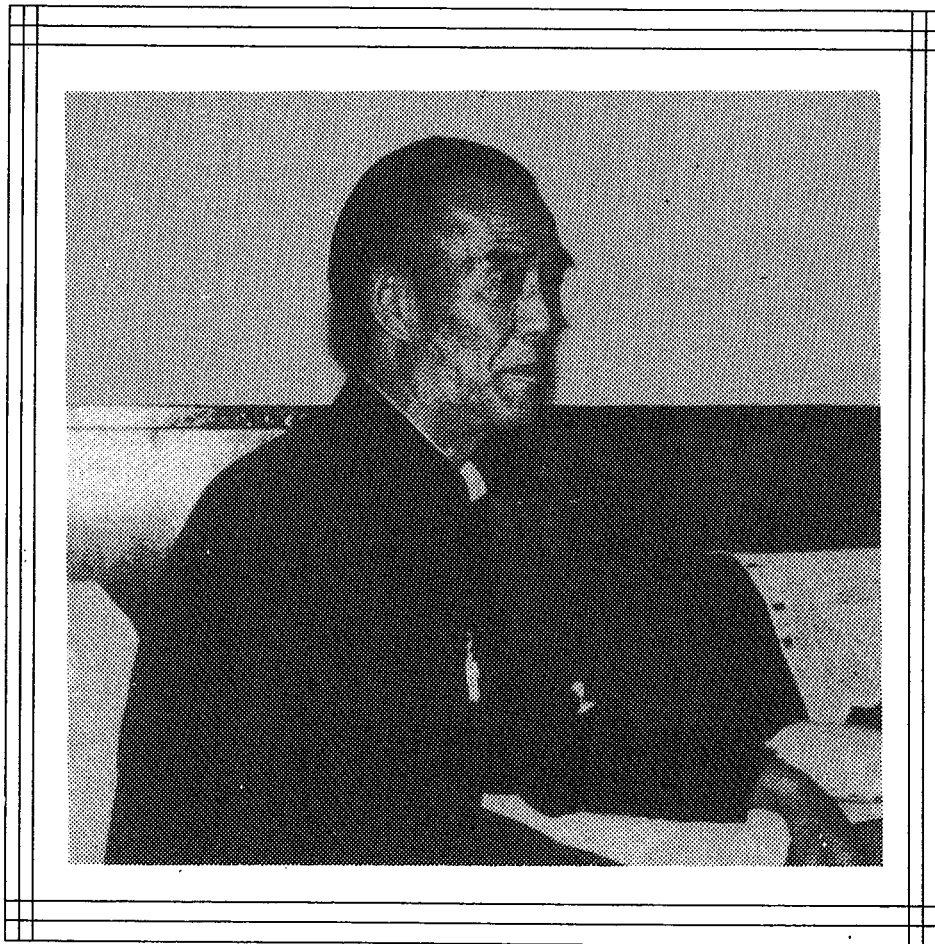


T'AI CHI

Combat & Healing



june 1992 number 9

T'AI CHI

COMBAT & HEALING

EDITOR

Erle Montague

ART DIRECTOR

Ben Gabriel

U.S Correspondent, Rolly Brown:
SUB EDITORS:

Sandra Press and Eli Dana

TECHNICAL ADVISORS

Master Wang Xin-Wu China (Taiji, H'sin-I)
Master Chong Kwok China (Healing)
Master Mak Po-Sun Australia (Taiji)
Master Shao Shan-Karn China (H'sin-I)
Michael Babin Sifu Canada (Taiji)
Edward H Star Sifu USA (Kung-Fu)
Master Fu Sheng-yuan Australia (Taiji)
Mike Sigman U.S.A. (Chen Taiji)
Master Fu Zhongwen China (Yang Taiji)
Stephen Hurst Sifu England (Taiji)
Graham Noble Sensei England (Karate)
Uri Slomonski Poland (Pa-Kua Chang)
Master Dan Inosanto USA (Geet Kune do)
Jim Uglow, England (Hung-Gar & Taiji)

T'ai Chi, Combat & Healing is independently owned and published for the International Martial Arts Community, distributed worldwide. Opinions and viewpoints expressed in this magazine do not necessarily represent those of the editor, staff or publishers. Many will disagree, many will agree with articles and views published in the magazine. In the interest of fairplay and harmony among martial arts schools, all responsible instructors, individuals or organisations with something valid to say will be given a go.

POSTAL ADDRESS:

Taiji Publications, P/O Box 792 Murwillumbah NSW
2484 Australia (066)797145.

Published quarterly by Taiji Publications. Reproduction of any material without permission is strictly prohibited. All material remains under copyright to the publisher.

The acceptance of advertising does not necessarily imply endorsement of services or products. All articles, photographs and other material submitted for publication must be accompanied by return postage unless specifically solicited. Contributions are encouraged with each article being accepted or not upon its own merit.

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



ABOUT THE COVER

Master Wan Wu-tien was 75 years old when the photo was taken. He only took up Taiji at age 50 after having 11 open heart operations! He has since not had any trouble and was, back in 1985, the Chairman of the Ningxia Taiji Association. I believe that Master Wan still lives in Ningxia in Yinchuan, an autonomous region about 700 miles West of Beijing.

CONTENTS

- 1 Advanced Ideas On The Internal Arts: By Stuart Le Marseny, (Australia)
Stuart puts forward some pretty challenging scientific ideas on how to prove 'Qi' and gives some simple experiments to help. Were you **really** here six months ago? Read on!
- 6 Learning Bagwazhang The Hard Way: Michael Babin (Ottawa Canada)
Michael gives some sound advice on how to keep learning even when you don't have a teacher.
- 8 Chang Yiu-chun continues his talks on his ideas of Taijiquan.
This time on the Taiji form and diet.
- 10 Taiji & T.E.A.C.H. Randell Waddell (Australia)
Randell Waddell talks about some innovative ideas on how not to get into a fight.
- Ritual Fighting: Georges Saby, (France)
- 13 Georges Saby talks about some pretty instinctive habits inherent in us all and how to make use of these traits in a confrontation. More of how not to get into a fight.
- The Physical Side Of Qi: Mike Sigman (U.S.A.)
- 16 Mike continues his informative and down to earth articles, this time demystifying the 'qi' debate and bringing it into the physical realm.

Workshops U.S.A. & Canada by Erle Montague

September 26th & 27th Ottawa. Contact: Mike Babin. 613-7397805
September 28th & 29th New Jersey. Al Krych. 908-4751619
September 30th & 1st Oct. California. Jon Parmenter. 818-2461918

WTBA Taiji Gathering Winter 1992:

July 20th until July 26th: Camp Bornhoffen, Numinbah Valley Qld.

WTBA Training camps in 1993 will be held in Spring and Fall.

March & October 1993. All welcome. Even Mike Babin, will be there.

Advanced Ideas On The Internal Arts

By Stuart Le Marseny (Australia)

The following article, if it is to be understood properly by the advanced student of T'ai Chi, will require the reader to 'think' a great deal, to conduct some minor but harmless experiments on oneself, and to do some minor research into suggested reading materials.

Much has been written of late about the internal arts, mostly regarding T'ai Chi, as it is the most common and information previously withheld is now being released. People are realizing that the information was withheld for a very good reason. The aspect I am referring to here is the devastating Dim-mak. The information to date has almost entirely been conducted with technique, eg. how to do it, and just when you thought it was easy, along comes, 'how to do it properly', an absolutely vital source of information if one is ever going to be proficient.

But what we have after we start to use dim-mak which was learned on a non-face-to-face basis is still an external phenomena. A very effective one, but an external art still. The use of the word 'internal' accurately describes that the movement begins and finishes entirely within the scope of control of the practitioner. No outside influence can disturb the balance, timing or the return to central equilibrium from the instant it is decided to move, until the movement is fully completed.

The placing of the body is a particular posture, or the way in which to get from one spot to another to effect the next movement has virtually nothing to do with the essence of the internal arts.

We have certain techniques which advanced students are trained in to shorten their reaction time and to control, as far as possible, the nerve impulse, transmission mechanism to achieve almost unbelievably fast reflexes. These most certainly are internal, but they are not the purpose of this article. The purpose is to explain the internal movements we are dealing with and how to bring them under control so that this energy can be more utilized and understood by the advanced student.

All things written on this subject in the past especially in the classical texts have been written in such a way as to establish and maintain an air of mysticism around the author, and usually they leave the reader more confused than ever before, rather than giving a clearer insight. More recently, articles have been written denying that internal energy even exists and putting the effectiveness of T'ai Chi down to merely good body mechanics and good timing, both certainly indispensable, but this is certainly a case of more happening than the eye perceives.

I will begin by stating a few scientific facts and I will build from there in a rational and logical manner so to make a subject that is extremely complicated, as easy as possible to follow and understand.

Brain activity and nerve impulses throughout the body are likened to electrical energy in modern medical texts. Where does this energy come from? We don't obtain energy from an external source as such, other than the food we eat, the water we drink and the sun's rays. It should be mentioned there that it is a basic law of physics that energy cannot be

created or destroyed, merely transformed from one state to another.

On a physiological level, our bodies absorb nutrients through the stomach and the villi of the small and large intestine. On a life force level, unless we have some sort of generator inside of us, we must also absorb and store the energy needed by our bodies from these same sources, the logic I feel is inescapable.

This is why many people who play T'ai Chi, develop a craving for a better diet, giving up meat, eating more fresh food etc. They subconsciously crave more energy giving foods as they become more aware of their body's energy system, and this system regulates itself.

The transforming of this energy is extremely complicated and on this point alone a very large book can, and has been written. Any good medical text can be obtained for more information on this.

The electrical type of energy that we have discussed, also exists within the body to operate the muscles. To do even the most minor actions, sometimes requires a great many muscles to be operated at once. Every movement requires some muscle action. If you accept this energy movement as fact, then it stands to reason that this energy must be stored somewhere in the body, and then travel via some pathway to reach the muscles.

The energy or electrical impulse to operate the muscles used while merely going about daily activity, is sent via the brain, but the energy does not originate here, it can only originate from where our food and water are digested or processed, in the body, the lower abdominal area. The Chinese have a name for this, the

'Tan-Tien', or lower energy centre. Being able to feel this energy centre and channel its contents is one of the basic objects of T'ai Chi.

The plotting of this energy movement through the body and how to alter it, is the basis of acupuncture and the physical movements that affect this energy movement are the very fabric of T'ai Chi.

Briefly, what we do in T'ai Chi is to accelerate this energy flow in the body from a once in 24 hour period to a three times in 20 minutes cycle. Or in the case of Qigong (breath work), to bring this energy to a particular point and hold it there to heal intensely that particular point.

The more advanced student's aim is to bring this energy centre and its energy contents under the limited conscious control allowed by the mind. This control is possible only as long as its basic life support function is not interfered with, and it is this aspect with I will expand later.

The reason that normal activity does not affect the energy flow, and that T'ai Chi does, is because the T'ai Chi movements open the energy channels in sequence to allow the energy to move through the body. In normal activity, this does not happen.

The movement of this energy or qi, as it is commonly known, is a well documented phenomenon and I doubt if anyone will now doubt its existence or its associated medical use. Leaving aside its T'ai Chi aspect, it is the basis of acupuncture, acupressure, touch for health and all muscle balancing healing sciences, as well as the Japanese Shiatsu and the Chinese tui-na massage systems.

The scientific equipment which measures this minute energy movement is only now being invented and used, although, already, there is much scientific study being done in China on the qi flow in T'ai Chi and

Qigong. Both in the East and West, scientists are now beginning, slowly to accept the idea of an energy flow. It is not at all unusual to accept logical scientific conclusion backed up by practical experimentation, and in this case, countless cases of the principles being used (acupuncture), without having the instruments or apparatus available to measure (back then), see or weigh have been accepted by medical science.

The energy flow or qi as I will refer to from now on, is vital for life, as vital as the very air we breathe "literally", without it we would simply fall apart. It is the very essence of being, and as such, this qi is under direct subconscious control exactly the same as the other main life support functions, respiration and heart activity etc. There are many other body functions under subconscious control such as digestion, the lymph system and half the nervous system, but the ones we are concerned with to make this article understood are the more obvious ones.

I will deviate briefly to give a small insight into the complex role of this qi in the body function. In acupuncture, the doctor either increases or decreases the flow of qi to a particular part of the body, this is fine, but what is never discussed is the what is the energy doing there in the first place; briefly it is this:

The body is a continual hive of subatomic activity .. All body cells are continually being replaced as they wear out. Some live for days or weeks, none more than a few months. This continual activity is the very essence of our being. If it slows or weakens, we become ill. If it stops, we die. This is the main activity of qi, to supply the energy for this essential function and to regulate the flow of this energy.

The main acupuncture channels can be likened to the arteries and veins of the body, and from these vessels

eventually come many thousands of smaller and smaller vessels, to carry the blood to all parts. So it is the same with the qi, there is no corner of the body that the qi does not reach. The other main function is the formative aspect. When the body takes form in the womb, grows from child to adult and undergoes this continual subatomic cell replacement activity, there must be a controlling influence to keep an eye as an eye, a finger as a finger or the whole body as it should be in relation to size, shape or colour, function etc. Remembering that not one spec of what we were made of 12 months ago, now exists. In any 24 hour period the adult body loses billions of cells from various parts of the body. The body is being constantly renewed and if this controlling influence malfunctions, we get cancer, lumps, bumps and humps, and disease etc.

This is where acupuncture and its other associated health sciences come into play. It restores the energy flow to its natural balance, the same as T'ai Chi, it returns the energy to it correct balance and flow. It restores health and vitality.

The qi is no different to the other vital life support functions of respiration and heart function in that they can be brought under limited conscious control with correct training and concentration. As long as their basic function is not interfered with. If this basic life support function is endangered, then the subconscious will regain control by rendering the conscious side of the brain inoperative, and reestablish the correct balance.

The Breathing:

Anyone can speed up or slow their breathing as the mood takes them, as long as you do not swing the balance of the body too far from centre. As an example, go for a short sprint, you would now be breathing heavily,

try to breathe slowly and shallow, you will not be able to for long, you will lose your control and you are forced to take deep breath. If you had sufficient control and concentration to maintain the shallow breathing, you would deprive the body of oxygen, thus interfering with the basic function. You would then lapse into an unconscious state and stay that way until normal function was restored, at which time some control would be returned to the conscious mind and you would awaken.

At the other end of the scale, breathe deeply and fast without doing any exercise and you will hyperventilate. You soon become heady and disorientated and if you continued, you would lose consciousness once again. You would stay out until normality is restored by the subconscious mind, then you would awaken.

Both of these are examples of consciously seeking to interfere with the basic breathing function of supplying the correct ratio of gases to the body. The subconscious mind reacts to prevent this interference in vital function. The point is that you can consciously control your breathing but only within certain parameters. Control of heart function takes a little longer to learn but is no more difficult.

The heart beats at a certain rate, continually changing to meet the body's needs from internal and external conditions. In this experiment, do not expect success at first, you may, but more likely, success will come at the fourth or fifth time.

Sit quietly in a silent place, you should be able to see a clock with a prominent second hand. Firstly, concentrate on your body and feel the pulse within. If you have never meditated before, this in itself may take some time.

After becoming aware of your heart beat, super aware. Feel the pulse,

hear the heart, picture in your mind's eye the heart working. Once again, this step could take some time, perhaps one or two half hour sessions. After having achieved this, continue the awareness and watch the second hand of the clock. Work out how many beats of the heart per 5 to 10 seconds. we will take a normal rate of 75 beats per minute, 12.5 per 10 seconds. Now, having established this relationship firmly in your mind, concentrate on slowing the heart down to 10 per ten seconds. Then 9 then 8 etc. This is not particularly difficult. but requires very good concentration.

If you were to continue this, initially, the subconscious would slow down all bodily functions to maintain homeostasis. You would go into a meditative dreamlike half sleep state. If you continued further, the heart would slow down to such an extent that life would be threatened. At this point you would pass out. The conscious loses control. The subconscious regains this control and restores the homeostatic balance, at which point you would regain consciousness. The subconscious thus having relinquished control of some functions to the conscious once more.

Now, after having read this passage and in time trying these experiments, it is not difficult to understand that the other main, vital life support function which we are dealing with here, qi flow, can also be brought under conscious control. However, only to the extent that its basic function is not interfered with. To go beyond this point, the subconscious will take control to fulfill the qi flow's basic functions.

The next point I wish to establish beyond doubt, is the existence of the energy field around the body. This field is totally separate to the internal meridian system and is not to be confused with the body's aura.

This energy field is not perceptible to the human eye because the electromagnetic waves and ultraviolet radiation cannot penetrate glass, nor the adult human cornea. This of course, is a protective mechanism to prevent ultra violet light from the sun entering the cornea. So it is not to be confused with the human aura which is very real and perceptible to the trained observer. It is a slightly confusing point because we have the two energy fields around the body, independent of each other but intertwined.

One of the first accurately recorded scientific attempts to view the aura was made by an electrician from St Thomas Hospital, London. he invented coloured or dyed glass lenses which allow anyone with practice to see a glow around the human body which changes in intensity and colour depending upon the viewed person's emotions. It is this point regarding emotions that so interests us as will shortly be explained.

The fact that this electromagnetic energy field totally surrounds and permeates the human body is a well documented fact in scientific circles, both East & West, and supported by *Kirlian photography*. This process refers to the photographing of the energy field around plants, trees, leaves, animals and what concerns us, people. The process is described here by *Harvey Oldfield*, an English physicist;

"The Kirlian effect is the result of a High-voltage corona discharge caused by pulsed high-frequency waves (which must not be confused with simple high-frequency waves), and it can therefore be explained in terms of ordinary physics; through the action of high-frequency fields, electrons are emitted from the body of an organism and this energy is dissipated in the photographic emulsion in the same way as light. An image is thus formed in the emulsion, de-

pendent to the strength of the emitted electrons.”

One of the earliest quantum physical explanations of what was happening in Kirlian photography was offered by Dr W.A. Tiller of Sanform University;

“A basic idea in radionics is that each individual organism to material radiates and absorbs energy via a unique wave field which exhibits certain geometrical frequency and radiation-type characteristics. This is an extended force field that exists around all forms of matter whether animate or inanimate. A useful analogy here is the physical atom that is continually radiating electromagnetic energy in the form of waves because of its oscillation electric development and its thermal vibrations. The more complex the material, the more complex the wave for,”

The energy field described above increases in depth and intensity with varying phenomena such as temperature, both body and atmospheric, time of day, medical condition and the one which most concerns us here, mood.

The energy field increases in both depth and intensity most dramatically when the subject becomes angry, it becomes scattered in intensity and irregular when the subject is agitated. This is the most important aspect. I think that everyone has personally seen, experienced or at least heard of the almost superhuman strength or activities of an extremely angry person. This is the phenomena we wish to control.

What we are aiming to do is to have the positive energy benefits of the mood without the negative effects of the actual emotion.

The reason the study of energy field mentioned above is so important is that through a series of practices, we move to take control of this energy

field by controlling the circumstances which cause it to alter.

The factor which is most relevant to us is anger. This has an effect energy wise which is desirable as I explained earlier, increasing and intensifying the energy field. But conversely, anger in a martial confrontation has many disadvantages. It causes loss of timing, loss of control, loss of power and because of this, loss of the exchange. So what the advanced student is training to achieve is emotional detachment whilst retaining the energy benefits.

The way in which we control this is to alter the way the mind, “brain”, perceives stimuli. The way to do this is to alter the way the stimuli are received and sent through the main receptors, the eyes.

Our moods are influenced by many internal factors, state of health, view of oneself, hormonal disturbances, cosmic influences etc. Whilst recognizing this, I will, for the purpose here, assume that all influences are balanced and we will deal only with external factors. These can include what we might feel through the skin, prevailing weather and temperature conditions, noise, what we might taste etc. The thing that has the quickest and most dramatic effect is what we see. What the advanced student is taught to do is to alter the way in which the eye perceives the circumstances around them. This, in effect, with the correct training, creates a false sense of anger in the mind, so that the energy benefits are achieved without the loss of control that comes with the actual emotion of anger.

This action is hinted at, but never explained in classical text with such comments as;

“Narrow the eyes, but do not furrow the brow...” and;

“The student must feel what he sees...”

The advanced student practicing “eagle vision” is already exercising

this principle of altering the visual input to control the frame of mind.

I will give a few examples of what I am trying to explain to make the link very clear.

Try to really concentrate on something with your eyes held wide open. It is very difficult. It is natural to slightly close the eyes and to furrow the brow. Try to lift something heavy with eyes wide open. Once again unnatural. It is easiest with the eyes almost or even closed. Because you go internal to activate your inner strength.

On the opposite side, try to maintain a happy frame of mind with a furrowed brow. After a few seconds, the eyes begin to affect the state of mind. Study photographs in newspapers or magazines and look at just the eyes. Cover the rest of the face. It is quite obvious whether the person is angry, sad or happy, just by looking at the eyes. The eyes are linked to the emotion, undetachable. What we are doing is framing the eyes in such a way as to create a state within the mind instead of a state within the mind exhibiting itself in the eyes. The link between the eyes and mind is so strong, that one cannot be altered without it exhibiting itself in the other.

So Far Established:

- 1/. We have an energy flow through us. (backed up by acupuncture science.
- 2/. We have an energy field around us. (scientifically recorded by Kirlian Photography).
- 3/. This energy cannot be created or destroyed merely transformed from one state to another.
- 4/. The energy originates from the lower abdominal area, tantien.

- 5/. This energy flow is under subconscious control and other functions normally under subconscious control can be brought under limited conscious control with concentrated practice.
- 6/. Our external energy field alters from day to day in response to changes in internal and external circumstances. The changes brought about by internal circumstances can be controlled to our advantage.
- 7/. The eyes provide the easiest and quickest way to alter the stimuli that are reaching the mind because of their direct connection to the cortex. Therefore, the easiest and quickest way to alter the body's energy field to our advantage.

All I have done up to this point is to establish the parameters for what I am about to explain. Please do not think that what I am about to detail is all there is to internal energy control movement, it is but the beginning.

Through a series of specialist exercises and meditative techniques, most notably the T'ai Chi forms, both the slow meditative ones and those containing the explosive fa-jing energy release points, and certain qigong postures, a person studying the advanced levels of T'ai Chi are taught to, at first feel the energy flow, then to become super aware of it. And finally to bring it under the limited conscious control allowed by the parameters previously explained.

This is basically no different to the experiments detailed earlier in regard to bringing the heart rate under control. However, it is somewhat more difficult, and takes much longer, a couple of years of daily practice at least.

What you are in fact doing is bringing the two sides of your conscious closer

together. Bridging the gap if you like. You can perceive something at a conscious level, but move on a subconscious level with all the power and speed that comes with this subconscious movement.

At the same time as learning this energy control, the student is being taught the techniques of internal physical movement, body alignment, body mechanics, timing, accuracy, strike points and their effects and of course the actual way in which to evade, counter, counterattack, kick, strike, etc.

The advanced student none has control over the energy movement within the body and around the body and the practical means to use it. What happens now? Do lightening bolts zap from the fingers? No, but it isn't all that far from the truth. The two energy systems act in different ways.

- 1/. The student causes the energy field around the body to increase in depth and intensity by means detailed earlier. This has a dual benefit, in that the advantages of the emotional state are achieved without the drawbacks. Also, the striking part of the body eg. the fist is surrounded by increased energy field. It is literally like wearing a protective glove.
- 2/. On an internal level, I have detailed earlier, how the student is taught to accelerate and increase the energy flow in the body. Having achieved this, when he strikes with all his commitment, speed, timing, power etc. the subconscious perceives there is enormous work to be done and sends qi or energy to do this work. This energy rushes into the hand, or whatever is being used, and because the movement of the hand, and indeed any work done by the body is physical, this energy is changed into a

type of electrical impulse energy to operate the muscles. This in effect, super charges the muscles incredibly for a millisecond. In time, achieving the desired effect of being able to move incredibly fast and to strike with tremendous power. Couple this with the accuracy of a strike to a dim-mak or acupuncture point of the body and you have why T'ai Chi, the Mother of all internal arts, is the most dangerous, effective and devastating martial art ever conceived. And why the actual personal instruction in these methods have always been, and still are, a closely guarded thing.

Stuart Le Marseny is the leading student of Erle Montaigue and is the highest graded instructor for the WTBA. He teaches on his property in Northern NSW Australia and holds regular classes for people to come and stay on the property. You'll have to do some work though!

Phone WTBA headquarters on (from Australia) (066)797145. Or from overseas: (your overseas code) plus 61-66-797145. People who attend these, live in classes, will also have access to Erle Montaigue for private lessons depending upon time and availability.



Stuart Le Marseny Using "Brush Knee Twist Step"

Learning Pa-Kua the Hard Way

By Michael Babin Canada

In 1991, I and some of my students had the opportunity to meet and for a few hours, train with Erle Montaigue in the basics of Pa-Kua Chang. Since then, I have been practicing what little I learned at that time and have purchased the relevant videos to learn more.

I'd like to share my experience as a pa-kua novice with those of you who are contemplating or have recently begun trying to learn it (or an other internal martial art) the hard way — with no or infrequent personal instruction.

For those who are unfamiliar with Pa-Kua, it is a weirdly beautiful discipline filled with agile twists, sudden swoops and lifting actions as well as speedy hand movements. Its internal healing and life-prolonging benefits are proverbial and the martial aspect is highly effective if morally ugly. It is designed to penetrate an attacker's aggression and maim or kill, Erle quite rightly refers to it as the "art of overkill".

The roots of Pa-Kua Chang, pronounced "Bagwazhang" and meaning "eight Trigrams Palm", lies in the deliberate obscurity of its Taoist originators in China.

Perhaps as a modern reaction to this, as with T'ai Chi, much of the self-defence aspect has been lost or minimized by most of its present practitioners. This is not altogether a bad

thing as we do not live in lawless or feudal societies. However, it is also true that learning a martial art should imply that you are developing realistic self-defence skills.

If challenged, it's not enough to think "My martial art is more spiritual than yours." You, not the other fellow, also have to be standing and conscious at the end of the discussion! The roots of Pa-Kua Chang, pronounced "Bagwazhang" and meaning "eight Trigrams Palm", lies in the deliberate obscurity of its Taoist originators in China. Their exercise therapies to aid meditation, prolong life and provide self-defence skills were refined (in combat terms) by laymen who learned the art and depended on it while employed as convoy and personal bodyguards.

Like T'ai Chi and H'sing-I, this art emphasizes balance, natural breathing and total relaxation, stability of stance without rigidity, the development of internal energy, use of the waist/tan tien and the use of the mind to create intent.

You can think of the energy movement in Pa-Kua like that of a roller coaster moving up and down on a circular track, whereas that of T'ai Chi is like a roller coaster twisting freely in all directions.

On a martial level, most defensive and offensive movements are done with the open hand, the weight of the body stays on the back foot, kicks are low and the footwork is precise and nimble. The central essence of this art is in change. Change of direction and/or tactic done while walking a circular pattern and executing, at a

basic level, combinations of the eight hand positions.

The most famous instructor of the art lived at the turn of the century. Tung Hai-ch'uan was renowned for his ability to adapt the principles of his art to the existing martial capabilities of his senior students. Consequently, the styles that evolved from the efforts of those students, often differ markedly one from the other.

Modern Pa-Kua comes in a bewildering variety of styles and interpretations and skilled instructors are relatively rare in China, much less elsewhere. The popularity of the art is, however, growing rapidly and outstrips the supply of legitimate instructors.

If challenged, it's not enough to think "My martial art is more spiritual than yours." You, not the other fellow, also have to be standing and conscious at the end of the discussion!

Consequently, home-study through videos/books is often the only means of instruction available for those determined to develop some skills, no matter how rudimentary. Based on my experiences to this point, I would like to offer some suggestions on maximizing training on your own.

It helps to have relevant experiences when learning a second art. I have been practicing Yang style T'ai Chi for some years and teaching since 1985. Having a core understanding of its principles had certainly been an

asset in trying to fathom the Pa-Kua.

Conversely, too much experience can also hinder rather than help your exploration of Pa-Kua. Unless you have a deep understanding of how your primary art is both similar to and different from Pa-Kua, it can be difficult to keep one experience from colouring the other. You don't want the Pa-Kua to become, at best a superficial copy without internal depth; or, at worst, T'ai Chi (or whatever art) done with a circular pattern.

It is extremely helpful to have had some actual training with the instructor whose home study material you hope to follow. For example, I received a copy of Erle Montague's first Pa-Kua video years ago and watched it several times, then decided against trying to teach myself anything from it because I couldn't get a "feel" for what he was demonstrating. After the seminar, the same video seemed relatively easy to understand and copy.

Having the incentive of anticipating future seminars and correction of what you have taught yourself is also very useful in terms of motivation. If you know that no-one with a deep understanding of what you have learned will ever review or criticize your efforts, it is easy to become lackadaisical about your training.

Whether you use Erle's videos or any of those commercially available from North America or Europe, follow the material as presented and don't skip ahead if some of the details seem easy. Especially if you have years of unrelated training, it is all-too easy to convince yourself that you're learning superbly when you're really not!

- *Do the material as presented: One step at a time and make sure you have mastered the previous step before you go on to the next.*

Proper study goes hand in hand with frequent review of the tape(s), especially of material that you already think you know. I have found errors in my efforts every time that I have reviewed material that I thought had been understood. It's not making mistakes that is problematic — we all make errors with new material — the real error lies in failing to correct those mistakes out of arrogance or plain laziness.

When learning Pa-Kua, whose true depth lies in principles or internal/external movement, you really should use videos as your primary learning tool. Books, no matter how well illustrated, are best used to absorb history and theory, not form and tactics.

"let-go" of material that you have outgrown.

Only a moving "picture is worth a thousand words" when learning an internal art.

Especially if Pa-Kua is your second martial discipline, make sure that you allow it enough practice time on a regular basis. I had to stop training in other forms that I had been doing for years to make room in my schedule for this art. Learning when to "let-go" of material that you have outgrown is a difficult lesson and one that is often necessary, especially for those with families and other commitments.

Try to find a partner to share the cost of the video(s) and the training itself. Some of the material is impossible to really learn unless you have a partner and even the solo aspects are more pleasurable when shared.

It is also harder to ignore your own mistakes if you have someone else saying "that's not the way that's done!" Human nature being what it is, you're more likely to catch your

partner's errors than he or she is and vice-versa.

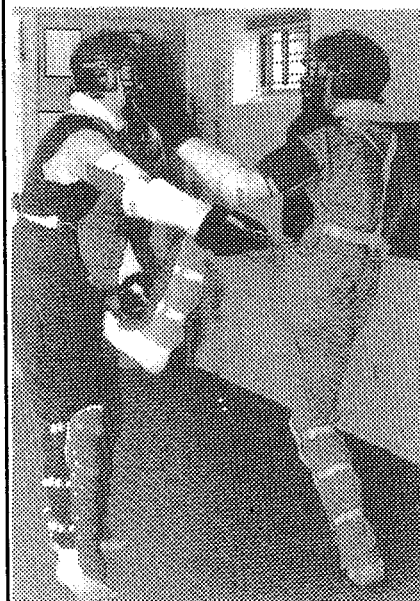
Finally, don't be ashamed if you are largely self-taught in pa-Kua (or any other martial art). Good instruction is rare, the Montaignes of this world even rarer and it is better to learn a little than not to train at all.

If a graying, overweight, middle-aged beginner like myself can enjoy his training and make a little progress at Pa-Kua through video instruction: think what you can accomplish if you apply yourself!

Michael Babin is an accredited and graded black belt instructor with the World Taiji Boxing Association and is the Chief Instructor in Canada for the Association. His articles have been read worldwide with his personality and happy nature being as big as he is. Having met and trained with Michael, I will add here that he severely understates his martial ability in the above article. But then, he is a modest lad.

Michael is a professional instructor and teaches in Ottawa Canada. He can be contacted at:

613-739-7805



Michael Babin, Left, Weapons Sparring

Chang Yiu-chun

On Form

by Erle Montaigue

There are many things in taiji that just cannot be taught. One has to experience them for oneself. We can understand what someone is saying and nod our heads in agreement. But to actually 'know' is only to do. To experience taiji in its internal form, is simple on one hand and very difficult on the other. However, once this internal level has been experienced, there is no turning back, you can do no other martial art, nor can you do any other meditation. Because once you have experienced this level of taiji, you will need nothing else and more importantly, want nothing else. People who leave taiji for either other martial arts or for other meditative practices, have never really done taiji. Similarly, those who leave one style for another at regular intervals also do not understand taiji. Different if one has learnt a 'not so perfect style' and leaves to find a better one.

Chang Yiu-chun had risen above the physical level and in his final years, it became increasingly difficult to slice information from his mind. He would sometimes speak in riddles and other times just look into space and say "hmm". It was very difficult to be taught in this way, at that time in my own training. Now that he has gone, and I am much further down the track, I can see that this way of teaching has taught me more than if I had been led by the nose, step by step. Everything that Chang ever said to me, I wrote down and I can now look back and see what it was that he meant, now that I can fully understand what it is, this taiji.

So, some words of wisdom from my old notes from Chang to you:

About Form:

Chang:

"You should not feel anything, you are like the big nothing, you float but you are as heavy as lead. Not one part moves without the other, like you are glued together. Your arms should not touch, your fingers should not touch, you cannot touch them, the force is too great. The bridge (qua) is open and then you can see yourself from without, he is doing it for you".

Not one part moves without the other, like you are glued together. Your arms should not touch, your fingers should not touch, you cannot touch them, the force is too great.

Erle:

What Chang meant here was that once you finally find the internal level, you will have no feeling other than a sort of buzz internally, your eyes see, but they are focused within. Not one part of your body moves without the whole of your body moving. This is one of the 'simple' things to understand but greatly difficult to execute. the wrists must remain virtually in the same place for the whole form, only moving up and down the centre line. Taiji is an illusion, it looks like the peripherals are moving to and fro', but it is actual-

ly the body moving with the arms stuck to it (like glue), only when you experience this level will you understand what Chang means when he says, "you see yourself from without and he does it for you". This means that when you are learning, you only feel and see yourself doing the form. When you come to the internal level, it is no longer you (physically) who is doing the form but rather, you finally see who you really are, someone else is in there! And you can then look with two different sets of eyes. The one set sees you doing the form while the other set sees the other person doing the form.

Now, most of you now know that I hate bullshit and mystical garbage and I would be the last to admit that another identity has entered my body, but that's what it feels like when you finally reach the internal level.

"Your arms do not touch, your fingers do not touch, the force is too great".

This means that when you perform movements like, "Chee" when the left palm touches onto the right wrist, they should not actually touch, you cannot touch them together because they are in a state of opposites and repel each other. This applies to the fingers in single whip, you cannot actually join them

Taiji is an illusion, it looks like the peripherals are moving to and fro', but it is actually the body moving with the arms stuck to it (like glue),

together because each finger is opposite, you do not want to join them together. This is probably what Cheng Man-ching said when asked, why he did not bend his wrist as much as Yang Ceng-fu. he said that he cannot do it without causing tension. But Yang could. I rather think that Cheng came across something special all by himself but it was Yang who did not want others to gain this knowledge and so he did it with greatly bent wrists, my theory no-one else's.

"The force is too great"

This means that when the qua is open (underarm, under groin, fingers, palm etc.) there is a great force built up, call it qi, call it electricity, but something is going on when this is done and some 'flow' is happening, but this will not happen if all of the rest of it is not done.

Chang:

"When you do form perfectly ... I know what you will ask now. You will say that just before, I told you that everyone does the form differently so how can it be perfect, ... perfect form means at the internal level when the conscious mind is no longer needed, nothing to do with postures or movements. This is why it is so silly when I hear this one and that saying that his posture is better than his or that his

"Now, people use food like some sort of cosmetic, something that we take pleasure in doing, different tastes, different feelings from the food."

teacher teaches the original postures so they must be the best. When we come to the final level, it does not matter one rabbit pellet about the form and the postures because at this stage, you cannot reach without having done the postures correctly in the first place. But when we reach

this level, the form is no longer important, because we do it in our mind. When your mind has done the movement, so too has your body and so there is no need to do any more movement of that posture, you have already caused the internal work to happen by using your mind. The movement is only secondary at this stage to what the mind does and we only use that small amount of movement to cause the mind to work with this small movement. But why am I telling you this, it is impossible for anyone to explain what is happening in one's mind, you must reach it for yourself."

On Push Hands

"Push hands, push hands! Why does everyone want to know about this small method of practice? Once it was not too important, but now, everyone wants to be the expert in push hands. As if it is a status symbol of that person's ability in taiji. Ability in taiji, again, now I am doing it. What is ability in taiji, does it mean that one does the solo form well, does it mean that we can push someone else over in push hands? Does it mean that we are some sort of king above all other men? Or should it reflect our own personality and state of good health? Or the fact that we are able to defend our families in times of need? Yes, I think so and not the former. One person once asked me if I could beat so and so in a fight. I just laughed. I told him that all I needed to do was my taiji and I would probably out live him and in doing so defeat him anyway!

The push hands is nothing, only a way of learning how to strike. I do not talk about the learning and basic push hands that most people call push hands but the more advanced methods, like I have shown you. I someone attacks, boom, he is gone and you walk on. You have not used technique to defeat him, but something that is basic to your body and

natural to your movement. This is what the mindless push hands teaches us."

Chang On Food & Diet

When asked what he eats.

"Now, people use food like some sort of cosmetic, something that we take pleasure in doing, different tastes, different feelings from the food. But in my family, the food was our medicine. My mother would look at

"Push hands, push hands! Why does everyone want to know about this small method of practice? Once it was not too important, but now, everyone wants to be the expert in push hands."

the sun and know that we had to eat some special food for that time in the day. Or if one of my family was sick, it would be diagnosed and then my mother would again work out what foods would heal that particular ailment. Sometimes we would not eat because we would have the 'eating disease'. Yes, even eating the wrong foods and too much of them can cause disease. But now we have places to go and eat, we rely upon others to cook our food, not knowing what has gone into it or who has touched it. The person cooking does not come and ask us how we feel, or do a diagnosis on the spot to find out what we should be eating at that time. We look at a piece of paper and choose the food that will please our tongue the best. We do not feel what we should eat anymore, we have lost this ability. And so we have a world full of over eating sick people who have to rely upon doctors to help them."

TAIJI and T.E.A.C.H.

By Randell Waddell (Brisbane Australia)

SCENARIO:

I shall put in a typical "Stone's Corner Pub" scene here!

(For those of our international readers, "Stone's Corner Pub" is an hotel in Brisbane of the particularly rough variety where fights are concerned...Editor)

You are off work this evening and you are relaxing at the bar with some of the patrons that you would not normally have the time to have a word to as there is often too much to do.

You have been talking to Paula, a new lady at this pub who has been coming in with Dave, one of the solid drinkers. She and Dave have become involved but she has become increasingly distressed with his drinking habits and the aggravation that it often creates. The warm glow of their initial encounter is starting to wear off and she is becoming increasingly concerned with his loud behavior after he has had a few drinks.

The police, military and emergency services are all very aware that there is often a very great difference between what people think they will do in an emergency and what they actually do.

A situation breaks out at the bar, it is Dave, he is giving the barmaid an earful because she has served somebody else before she has served him. Dave gets louder so a bouncer comes over and whispers in his ear. He gets louder again and Paula gets more upset. A couple of the regulars drag Dave away from the bar to try to calm him down. They bring him over to where you and Paula are standing.

Why does a very capable, highly trained person suddenly freeze in a threatening situation? It is a fact that many people do just this- their minds over loaded and their bodies assume the role of uncoordinated jelly?

Paula explodes and tells him off, then struts out telling him that she is disgusted. Dave now turns on you as you have been talking to her. "You have never done this before, you have obviously said something to make her upset with me". Says Dave as he gives you a shove. He wants to punch you, he is about to punch you.

REACTION:

What Would You Do?

- Run like crazy?
- Try to defuse the situation somehow? faint?

- Just break a couple of bones, rearrange his facial features, and then leap over five tall buildings in a single bound?

DISCUSSION:

The police, military and emergency services are all very aware that there is often a very great difference between what people think they will do in an emergency and what they actually do. Stories continually surface about the person of near deity status in some fighting systems who has the proverbial "clappers beaten out of him" in a real situation in the street". (*Clappers: Oz slang for "shit beaten out of him" .. Ed*).

What is happening? Why does a very capable, highly trained person suddenly freeze in a threatening situation? It is a fact that many people do just this- their minds over loaded and their bodies assume the role of uncoordinated jelly?

Further, why is it that a person, with no recognized skills, may function superbly and unknowingly in the same situation? It appears that one can only expect that the unexpected, could and will occur in high stress situations.

Thus, this author proposes that it is totally irresponsible for any martial arts instructor to promote their particular fighting system as panic-proof. Further, it is imperative that

leaders in the martial arts arena recognize and respect that “in the high stress situation”:

- The dynamics operating are very complex,
- They should actively seek out and strive to understand as much of the psychology operating as possible, and;
- The training program that they develop and utilize within their fighting system caters for this psychology.

The strategies presented in the first part of this article have been adapted directly from T.E.A.C.H. (*Teacher Effectiveness and Classroom Handling*). This program was developed by J.K. Hasenstab and a development

People behave in certain ways for what they believe to be good reasons — their AGENDA. They will change their behavior for their own good reasons and when they feel they are ready to change.

team which included leading education researchers, psychologists, lecturers, and teachers in the U.S.A. Contact your local education authority for details on seminars. although the course is mainly designed for classroom teachers, it is open to any “educator committed to excellence”. These strategies compliment a “Defuse The Situation” option.

People behave in certain ways for what they believe to be good reasons — their AGENDA. They will change their behavior for their own good reasons and when they feel they are ready to change. When one more clearly understands that particular

person’s agenda, then a strategy may be developed that will be concurrent with that person’s self-interest. One strives to defuse any ugly situation by encouraging that person to first slow up, to verbalize and to rationalize their behavior. One listens and responds to their agenda to resolve differences in a non-argumentative and non-confrontational way.

The tone of your voice and your body language has a major impact on the aggressor, as well as how you phrase what you say. Learning to have positive, congruent intonation and body language aids in good communication.

Several verbal techniques from T.E.A.C.H. may prove useful to determine an aggressive person’s agenda and help to defuse a bad situation. Those considered most appropriate for such a bad situation are;

- Open ended Questions [OEQ’s].
- Close Ended Questions [CEQ’s].
- Confirmatory Paraphrases [CP’s]
- Leading Paraphrases [LP’s]

It must be reemphasized before proceeding that it is of the utmost importance that one remains calm and detached, with a facial expression of stunned disbelief if possible. Although the adrenaline may be pumping excessively because of the situation, it is important that one’s body language convey the message of;

“I am surprised- this has all blown up way out of proportion- I am a nice person and you are normally a nice person- this is all just something that has come to a head because of the strong feelings involved and given

opportunity will settle down naturally”.

The Open ended Question:

This encourages the aggressor to express what is on his/her mind. (In terms of *TRIUNE BRAIN* model, it is drawing the aggressor up and away from *Reptilian or Mammalian* mode and its ready availability to aggression, to the higher Cortex mode where some degree of processing and synthesizing of logic may occur more readily. *More on the TRIUNE BRAIN in the next part of this article next issue.*)

The response drawn would normally be several sentences long. It normally opens up discussion and encourages the aggressor maximum latitude to speak freely and at length. Many alternate choices may be broached.

Examples:

- “Why are you doing this”?
- “What did you base that conclusion upon”?
- “Why do you think that”?
- “Why would I be discussing you”?

The Close Ended Question:

The CEQ, on the other hand, limits the length of a response to just a few words. It is used to focus directly on a specific point.

Examples:

- “Did you hear me say that?”

- “How long have I been talking to her?”

The Confirmatory Paraphrase:

The CP is a statement that tests whether one correctly interprets what the aggressor intended to say. One can get more clarity of what an aggressor means or intends by confirming any of three things. It strives to confirm:

- an attitude of feeling
- a fact
- an implied or expressed intention

In most discussions, one might normally wish to confirm feeling first, get the facts straight second, and then finally establish intent. Feelings can often be determined by looking at the body language and listening for voice intonation. The aggressor that is ranting and raving is possibly putting on a show of bluff and desiring that situation will defuse far better beware the aggressor who is 'deathly quiet and focused'.

Choosing whether to confirm fact or just intent is also based on the context of the situation. If the behavior is unusual for a particular person, we would most likely confirm that fact because it would appear that something has changed for that person. If it is usual behavior, one might just move directly to intent.

Examples:

- CP of Feeling: “You are really angry at me.”
- CP of Fact: “He has stomped of because she is angry with

your drinking and you believe it is my fault because he was talking with me and you think we were discussing you”.

- CP of intent: “Now you would like to take a swing at me”.

The Leading Paraphrase:

The LP is particularly useful when a person makes a generalization that is 'out of sync' with common sense. It confirms an incongruity or inconsistency in the person's thinking. Its purpose is to encourage that person to rethink his/her position.

Examples:

- “You are sure the only way you can get back close to your girlfriend is to take a swing at me”.

The incongruity highlighted was that somehow that aggressive behavior will somehow negate the anger of the other inappropriate behavior.

The leading paraphrase is stated in absolutes, leaving little room for misinterpretation. This paraphrase would normally begin with statements like “it is always...”. “it is better to risk...”. “the only option...”.

Again, let the user beware! If one utilized this technique and any misinterpretation of body language or voice tone gives a hint of sarcasm, the situation could escalate at a far greater rate.

Randell Waddell is an accredited member of the WTBA and teaches in Brisbane Queensland Australia. He is a high school teacher and has been practicing taiji and teaching for many years.

NEW VIDEOS From Erle Montague

MTG30 Taiji Intricacies Vol.1

Yang Cheng-Fu Form:

This is where Erle takes you through the untakable. The level at which you must aspire but that which you will never be taught...until now!

The “Small Frame Taiji” is shown here for the very first time. Each movement is gone through showing which hand is yin & which is yang.

2 Hours:

U.S.A. \$50.00: Post, \$5.00
EUROPE. £25.00: Post, £3.50
AUST. \$55.00: Post, \$3.00

MTG35 Taiji Intricacies Vol.2

Yang Lu-Ch'an Form:

Same as Vol.1 but going through the “Old Yang Style” Form at its highest level. Duration & Price, Same As For Vol.1

MTG31 Old Yang Style Sword & Sword With Knife.

The Yang Shou-hou sword form is taught here. This form like the older Yang style is more martial with many fa-jing movements. This form was always meant to be the beginners form. The reason for the “knife fingers” in the sword form is that at an advanced stage, a small dagger was carried in the other hand and brought out at certain times. This form is also shown along with some training methods to gain the dexterity needed to wield the knife and sword simultaneously.

1.75 hours

U.S.A. \$50.00: Post, \$5.00
EUROPE: £25.00: Post, £3.50
AUST: \$60.00: Post, \$3.00

Ritual, Fighting, & Taijiquan

By Georges Saby, Nantes France

Older people say that it is easier to uproot the bad grass when it is young and short. This saying can help us to understand one another; spirit comes before force.

When studying boxing or self defence closely, one must first be careful with some points such as techniques, training, strength and flexibility. The novice does not realize the importance of strategy which is often learned later when the above points are sufficiently mastered.

To develop a winning strategy we have to know and use the ritual. Ritual includes politeness, and politeness can become strategy. Strategy is useful in commerce, in martial arts and in many other activities. Follows an example.

Some years ago, a meeting between the 7 most industrialized nations of the world took place in France. French cooking is renowned all over the world, and for us, it is a reason of national pride. The Japanese delegation didn't miss the opportunity to highly congratulate their hosts for the good cooking and the marvelous French wines. The following day all french newspapers asked only about meals. But once more, the Japanese were the great winners of this economic meeting.

The Japanese people are very numerous on a narrow island. All human contacts follow ritual attitudes and the leaders in such a country are really champions in using rituals for their benefit.

But What is Ritual?

Rituals concern animals, therefore, human beings as well.

It's a practice, sometimes a ceremony. It is repeated in circumstances and has a particular significance for his actors and possible spectators.

To develop a winning strategy we have to know and use the ritual.

When the repetition has gone through centuries, sometimes changes appear which make it something completely different from what it was originally. In that case the ritual creates an emotion, often religious. Because Taiji is an old practice, there are now some branches shooting off from the trunk of the tree. The repetition of the forms during training led some followers to a ritual

All sorts of animals adjust their group lives with rituals: for reproduction, for self defence, the free disposal of a space, the conquest of a territory, or to getting power.

practice that ignores the martial aspect of the art. These practitioners favored an attitude of devotion and often developed a mystical sense of their experience of Taijiquan. It's a way but really out of the way of the

warrior. An other branch of the trunk emphasizes health training. this branch is divided at its extremities into two: a realistic branch and a magical branch. In the first, the repetition of the ritual form is considered as sport and so is good for health. In the second branch, the follower thinks that energies (he doesn't master) help him. It's not a mistake because this practice favors the placebo effect.

The ritual often has its origin in a mythical or extraordinary event, but sometimes its reason of being only helps people to live or to survive. Thus in the past, shaking hands would show that the other one had no weapon in his right hand. — incense lets out a nice perfume, but originally herbs were put on a wooden fire at the door of a cave to take wild beasts away during the night. — to take off one's hat shows politeness and also submission, so, originally it was practiced by the losing knight in a tournament. — the greeting used in many martial arts is a ritual, its meaning may change from one school to the other, but generally it is to remind the partners that they should remain humans and dignified, and also to show that partners want to keep their self control, not fighting for their survival.

All sorts of animals adjust their group lives with rituals: for reproduction, for self defence, the free disposal of a space, the conquest of a territory, or to getting power. It always implies a ritual to be observed. From one aspect to another, rituals are different and aren't always understood. Therefore using a ritual

with a predator of your species leads to death.

The ritual use the symbol, whose function is to harmonize animals' communities. Symbols change from one species to another. So when a wolf dog (German Shepherd) is ready to jump at you, you will know only a second before, because his tail will be in a straight line with his spine. Most humans don't know these details of the dog's life, because we haven't this sort of attitude in our list of aggressive gestures. To be efficient, the symbol must be understood.

When the male looks for power or reproduction, each specie develops specific movements that indicate challenge for the two opponents or the end of the challenge by giving up or the submission of one of them. These rules in the life of the collectivity, in one specie helps to avoid that combat should become too dangerous and end with the death of one opponent. Ritual favors the continuity of the species, by avoiding death, but also by selecting the best males for reproduction. Human beings do not escape this rule. So the ritual can be used by the martial artist to manoeuvre his opponent, because it allows you to influence his sociability.

It is possible to attack his intentions, or to guide him on an unfavorable position.

The slow forms of the basic training of taijiquan are really "the top level" about rituals. Only followers can understand. Those who practice another martial art, don't guess the correct significance of the movements.

Because, it doesn't seem to be a fighting system, for the spectator who knows nothing, slowness, particularly in the group gives the sensation of a religious ceremony, in spite of closed fists which look like a ritual.

The spectator can not know that each part of the movement isn't a symbol but rather a special method of training when a real adept of the art of the fist is practicing.

IMPORTANT IDEA:

The creation of a martial art has only fighting or defensive intentions. It does not imply spirituality. We can be sure that mystical ideas had no importance in the earlier

When the male looks for power or reproduction, each specie develops specific movements that indicate challenge for the two opponents or the end of the challenge by giving up or the submission of one of them.

times of taijiquan, certainly they had, because the founders were not beasts but rather adept of the Chinese medicine and taoists. On one hand, taijiquan was created and practiced for self defence. On the other hand the inventors certainly had humanistic and spiritual tendencies.

Among the numerous masters of the history of the taijiquan, some have only given an incomplete or modified teaching. They had their reasons, and we can think that they weren't all open hearted. Still today, it is usually to keep the flower of the master's teaching for his family or for making more money. This sort of use favoring real power isn't approached by a stranger and is greatly profitable. It is also right that such methods help to enhance the motivation of the disciples, so leading them further along. In fighting, the ritual can hide the real intention of the user. Dissimulating in teaching leads little by little to changes and to the degradation of

the art, and sometimes straight to religion and sect organizations. After generations of these habits, the art can even be so modified that it becomes like an empty shell or like an engine whose parts are put upside down, it can't work.

TODAY:

Taijiquan inherits from the ritual habits developed over centuries. — some people used these rituals for a mystical purpose. Certainly such a practice suits the human soul and can be a great emotion or a great illusion. — Others take an avid interest in martial situations. Sometimes they denigrate ritual attitudes. But ritual is a part of a fighting situation and is really a good card to play with.

SOME FICTION: (How To Win Without Violence)

But if for you, victory is to be achieved with the breaking of your opponent, don't read further.

Several men, armed, are getting ready to attack you in a narrow space. If you are sure that their intentions aren't to kill you, if they aren't predators, you can defeat them by losing.

For that used of the submissive attitude of the monkey. Physically put you lower and smaller than your aggressors, if they are standing straight, sit on the floor (but with the possibility of quick get up grasping an object as a weapon or any strategic profit). Speak gently and calmly to lower their rhythm through lesser aggression. If you can gain one, then two or three minutes, many cries of rage will follow but no blow. Later your group of aggressors will get a good reason to give up because they believe they are the winners.

It is said that the great Japanese warrior Musashi, once killed an enemy, specialist of iado, and better technician than himself, after saying he

was the loser. Musashi caught then a moment of empty attention to cut the guy.

By the way, the fiction story mentioned above really happened! So when you sit, choose a strategic position in the space to move quickly with advantage if your strategy doesn't stop your opponent. It doesn't work if you make a mistake with the ritual. You must be a perfect actor and be ready for any other eventuality, even if this attitude is not successful, it gives you advantage in guiding the combat.

Be careful though, don't play with ritual with a predator, it is suicidal when the animal's survival is concerned. When you come across a killer, really decide, only the flight or the victory are the possible ways out. In that case to use the trick of monkey's submission is securing a short time of survival. When your life is threatened, you must flight and use the technique you have learned to surmount this situation.

In a film by Steven Spielberg, in which the hero, Indiana Jones in an Arabic market comes across a big and strong opponent who tries to impress him by manipulating a heavy sabre with sweeping gestures. The spectators wonder how he will come out of this horrible situation. He takes his revolver from under his clothes and shoots the guy. It's really funny and shows very well that ritual (in this case) is useless, when we are faced with a predator.

If a combat is not carried out according to a ritual like in a competition, but when it happens spontaneously, it practically always begins with a ritualized defiance. It isn't a polite ritual like in the dojo, but pulling faces, insults, railing against, gestures about physical and sexual weakness of the opponent and final verbal exchange before attacking, like disgraceful insults about members of

the family of the enemy, that start the fight.

Often first physical exchanges are pushings, then grappling and striking. It is a ritual chain.

A good psychologist manoeuvre easily his opponent not a predator, when this one begins with a great defiance without coming quickly to action. The more longer he waits, the more defiance risks to lead him to an unfavorable position.

Generally, with human beings in a fight, the man who is going to lose, when he hadn't learned how to fight, spontaneously tries to bend his back, to hide his head under his shoulders, acting like a tortoise with its shell. Imagine that nature has used as a part of this protective reaction an unconscious human motion of submission.

In many boxing schools, people are recommended to stay as straight as most possible. The explanation often is to have a good vision, or easier movements, or more energy. But strategically it is not always the best way (see the Chinese schools of the drunkard or of falling boxing).

I rather think that standing straight shows your (external) will, and is bending shows that your mind has less will power and tends to recognize defeat. It is so, because in a school, ritual is always over present, and is essential to avoid that atmosphere should turn to a dangerous brawl without rules. Opposed to this, throwing out one's chest is a sign of defiance or a symbol of great self-confidence. Tarzan and gorillas are often shown taking this posture.

The posture advised by Taijiquan masters is to sink the chest and to stretch the back. It protects the body better than taking the opposite posture. This attitude suggests to your opponent the information that you do not want aggress and defy him

(unless you show your teeth and glowing eyes) and even can hide the attitude of a predator. It can be relax the atmosphere. But if the opponent is suspicious of a trick, he can also observe your whole posture and discover that you are going to jump because your legs and hips are tensed like springs

There are masters that know when and how you will attack. It's not a mysterious sense that informs them. The most funny man I came across, was an old Indian yogi. He had never practiced martial arts, but was able to lead any person gently like a puppet, where he wanted. He avoided all tricks with skill. This is not learnt only with boxing.

If your attitude speaks, a real master knows what you are going to do. It's by studying the human rituals in detail, that they have discovered the little signs letting them know how, where and when, they can easily manipulate you.

May be, the ritual understanding helps to dilute the fear, that give a better knowledge of the reality that occurs under our noses.

When we see old masters, sometimes their taiji doesn't look like a war art. The ritual posture of the taiji practitioner doesn't seem aggressive. And it is not, because force is pulled in, but can burst out.

RITUALS COVER FORCE AND AGGRESSIVENESS

It is the way used by nature with all species. It's a reason more to raise taijiquan to the level of a great martial art.

No great martial art can do without human ritual habits.

RITUAL IS A LAW OF NATURE

There is almost always ritual in human beings fighting. But human beings can be also his own predator, and in that case we leave the field of the ritual.

In a situation of fighting, we have not systematically the right reaction at the right moment. Standing back and looking calmly is not always easy, and we have not always the time to calculate our strategy. It is why we must respect ritual uses, when training, and not only practice some bending without understanding. For sociability you must practice greeting and other rituals with the consciousness of a human being.

For fighting we must use rituals as an important part of strategy, and not be the prisoner of an habit. Be careful, a big mistake studying ritual is to become more devout than natural, more sleepy than awake.

Bonjour de France.

Georges Saby is the representative of the WTBA in France and teaches in Nantes.

5 New Videos From Erle Montaigue

MTG36:

The Erle Montaigue System Vol.2

Dim-Mak Intricacies Vol.2

Here, Erle takes you further into the advanced world of Dim-Mak, including training methods and techniques on how to use dim-mak. Multiple strikes are shown as well as female self defense and using dim-mak against kicks.

1.25 hours.

USA. \$45.00: Post, \$5.00

EUROPE. £25.00: Post, £3.50

AUST. \$55.00: Post \$3.00

MTG37:

The Erle Montaigue System Vol.3

Techniques, Training Methods & Dim-Mak Intricacies Vol.3 Including a typical Montaigue class where some important self defence issues are shown.

1.5 Hours.

USA. \$50.00: Post, \$5.00

EUROPE. £25.00: Post, £3.50

AUST. \$55.00: Post, \$3.00

See Elsewhere For The Other 3.

The Physical Side Of Qi.

By Mike Sigman Colorado U.S.A.

(First published by **Qi Magazine U.S.A.**, reprinted here with author's permission), well, he is a friend of ours)

For those wishing to subscribe to Qi Magazine, write to;

Insight Graphics inc. 13341 Foxhole Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22033 U.S.A.

"We have corrected Thy work and have found it upon miracle, mystery, and authority. And men rejoiced that they were again led like sheep, and that the terrible gift that brought them such suffering, was, at last, lifted from their hearts." The Brothers Karamazov, bk.V, ch.5.

Looking back through the years at my martial arts hobbies, one of the acquired pleasures has always been that, no matter how satisfying my current achievement seems, there will always be the time, six months hence when my current knowledge will seem paltry in comparison. In fact, without the promise of more to learn, I'd probably lose interest.

Age, experience in other martial arts, and several good teachers pointed out to me early on that there were aspects of Qi which were inarguably in the physical realm.

After a long stint of purely martial interest, my interest for the last fifteen years has been trying to pin down Qi (Ch'i) in terms of the actual use and acquired ancillary knowledge about the other aspects of Qi, but still, I haven't exhausted the knowledge and skills that are available in the physical side of the chase. With the caveat I allowed myself in

the first paragraph, let me share some of the views I have developed over time.

What Is Qi?

Perhaps the major hurdle to acquiring Qi is in finding out what Qi really is. Even knowing what Qi really is could present some problems that are akin to heresy and The emperor's new clothes it disagrees with the religious connotations Qi has taken on. To attribute the worldly to "Qi" could bring on scorn and ostracism in some circles.

Age, experience in other martial arts, and several good teachers pointed out to me early on that there were aspects of Qi which were inarguably in the physical realm. My inclination was to blame the available translations alone for the inaccuracies which seem to have led so many after the pied piper intangible "classics" of some arts, have used the generic term "Qi" when the original script referred to other, more specific usage. Lately, I've come to realize that it is not just the translations which are sometimes to blame, it's the basic differences in the language frames of reference (Chinese to English) which have forced the misunderstanding... there is Qi, but it has aspects which are knowable and describable in purely Western terms.

Ted Kaptchuk's book, *"THE WEB THAT HAS NO WEAVER"*, has a very comprehensive treatment on defining Qi and including physical manifestations within the realm of Qi. I recommend that all internal stylists read those few pages of explanation.

In that "Qi" is a broad term, like the word "life", we need to focus our goals on what we can functionally achieve through our pursuit of "Qi". We don't muse about the various aspects of "life" by wandering about muttering, "Why is a microbe?"... similarly, we need to restrict our questioning and pursuit of "Qi" to the satisfyingly attainable.

"Jing" & "Fa-jing"

Almost invariably, classical Chinese translations about internal martial arts will discuss "Qi, Jing and Shen". Elsewhere in the book will be discussions about "jing" and perhaps "fa-jing". These two "jings" (sometimes spelled, "chin") are entirely different from each other. The "Qi" "Jing" & "Shen" discussion, I won't get into other than to say they are on an intangible plane; the other "jing" can be thought of as a force vector coming from the ground, through the relaxed body, and applied through the hands, shoulder, chest, etc... this is "peng", the ward off energy. Using this force vector in an attack ("fa" in Chinese) impulse is termed as "fa-jing". Since this force-vector skill falls into general definition of the attributes of Qi, it is correct to say that you strike with your Qi.

A lot of what has been pursued as "Qi" in internal martial arts has been the unique set of physical skills which uses the body as a relaxed, coordinated unit. "Peng" strength, which is a jing, and "Pulling Silk" are the two major building blocks that lead to "internal strength" and the issuance of "short power", the defining characteristics of the internal or "soft" martial arts. These skills can be acquired without having to practice additive Qi exercises. The acquisition of these skills will, however, allow you more fully through the door into some of the unusual phenomena associated with actual qi.

In relation to the skills of the various internal arts, understanding the definition of Qi as including physical

components, like jing, allows a clearer understanding of some of the classical directives of the different styles. As always, that understanding is really helped by having someone show you how to do it.

Guidelines From The Classics

Although many admonitions from the classical literature of the various internal arts can have several meanings, I always look for the simplest and most useable because

- (1.) I feel that the most oriental directives lean toward the simple and
- (2.) the factors involved in the physical aspects of Qi, as related to internal arts, are not that complex that convoluted directions are needed. More often extensive directives are used to clarify and refine the basic system of the internal

Since this force-vector skill falls into general definition of the attributes of Qi, it is correct to say that you strike with your Qi.

- strength as it applies to various parts of the body etc. Here are a few instances of re-interpretation, with the understanding that the body is manipulated as a unit, with "peng" jing from the ground to the fingers:

Sink The Qi; Don't Let The Qi Rise:

Maintain the control of the body as a unit for the lower torso/abdominal-muscle area; controlling from the shoulders and arms requires local tension and control... it should be avoided.

Keep The Heavy Side Down; Extend Qi (from Aikido): Keep the body relaxed and connected as a unit with

peng strength (jing) through the body at all times. These are the two basic criteria for internal strength.

Full & Empty; Substantial & Insubstantial: The limb or part of the body through which you are maintaining peng strength is "full" or "substantial".

Directing The Qi Is like Threading A Pearl With Nine bends In the Hole:

This is a reference to the ability to remain relaxed and yet direct peng jing where you will... even with someone pushing against your peng, your joints should still be loose and flexible, whether you're moving or still. The skeletal frame is represented by the metaphorical pearls.

Move The Body Naturally: To move the body as a unit involves using peng strength and connection throughout the relaxed body structure. Twists and turns, ups & downs all make use of the natural body articulations caused by the arrangement of muscles, tendons, & joints.

In all Movements, to & Fro, the Qi Adheres To The Back Of The Body And Gathers Into The Spine: the path of the ground strength from the Dantien to the arms is through the back. Which is why the shoulders are slightly hyper-extended ("round the back"). One of the major storage areas of energy for the strikes is in the large back muscles surrounding the spine.

Relax: There is a relaxed, barely discernable tension connecting the body as a unit ("pulling silk strength"). The correct, relaxed connective strength is similar to the amount of tension needed to whip a wave through a rope tied to a tree.. too tight and you can't induce a wave, too loose, and the rope slacks onto the ground.

This is not a complete treatment of Qi. there's hard Qi and soft Qi, there are discussions which closely interchange "real Qi" with physical Qi... but you should get an idea of the

unseen obstacle which translation and definition can interpose, both in conversation and literature about Qi.

The Lower Dantien

The physical and etheric aspects of Qi are immutably intertwined. "Real" Qi and the physical aspects both have a "home" in the lower Dantien. In a discussion of the physical aspects of Qi, it is quite literally true that movement comes from the Dantien, the lower abdominal area, in that this area of the torso directs the ground strength ("peng" jing) through the back ("the qi adheres to the back and permeates the spine"). However, don't forget that the energy which is directed by the dantien comes from the ground ("the root is in the feet, energy issues up through the legs, is controlled by the waist, and is expressed in the hands and fingers")

I have encountered several internal artists over the last ten years who have unusual control and marked development of the abdominal area. These developments were from controlling the "peng" and full body connection over long periods of time... however, doing tricks with the abdomen does not necessarily imply internal strength or a reservoir of Qi. because the waist functions as a controlling fulcrum which directs the ground strength (peng), the abdominal muscles actually can become an almost isolated "ball" of muscles, with enough work. All movements in practitioners at this level are "from the centre".

Qi & Internal Strength

A person who has acquired the whole-body skills of "internal strength" and who has exercised them through his martial arts practice is strong but in a way that feels different from the regular strength since you can feel the ground power

and waist control coming through. A village of weaklings did not invent Taiji, Xing-I, Bagwa, or Aikido. However, it is easy for an experienced observer to spot the difference between a user of internal strength and someone using local, or "external" power.

Until you do build up a reasonably strong ability to use your internal strength, your particular style of "internal" martial arts may not be too effective... i.e., you have to build up your qi, not just have an academic acquaintance with it. Effort is involved in internal strength, not daydreams.

Traditionally, developing tangible Qi, or internal strength, takes place over a long period of time. Western ideas of strength such as "high weights, low repetitions" are

Until you do build up a reasonably strong ability to use your internal strength, your particular style of "internal" martial arts may not be too effective

replaced by "low weights, high repetitions". Mild isometric extension-under-restraint, as in standing post exercise (basic qigong posture...editor) or slow forms practice, builds the desirable basic strengths of the internal styles... there is a saying that it is stronger to stretch a muscle one-half an inch than to increase its diameter by three inches. Don't forget that developing the attendant strengths of the internal martial arts is not the whole picture. "real" qi is developed, along with a nurturing of the central nervous system through relaxation, awareness, and slow movements.

Perceptions of Qi

After a lot of travel and a number of tournaments, I've decided that developing Qi and internal strength is a lot like going to heaven... everyone wants to, but, not yet.

Within the internal arts styles you see the same human foibles that you see in other martial arts groups. However, the interesting thing I notice is that very few internal stylists, teachers and students, can display the physical traits that are the hallmark of the soft styles, i.e., relaxed, whole body strengths. Indeed, most internalists seem to be satisfied with displays of forms and techniques, discussions of how long they've been involved in their style, who their teacher was, whether they really know the "secrets", and emphasizing that they do the "traditional" stuff.

Even more interesting is the loss of desire to improve once someone has achieved a certain amount of status within the martial arts community. I've noticed that even an academic acknowledgement of poor basics is often not enough to overcome the fear of the imagined loss of status he study of basics represents. It's puzzling that someone would rather be seen for the rest of their martial arts practice as an amateur than to take the time to correct their basics.

My suggestion is to bear in mind the real goals of internal martial arts and forsake the politics and pecking orders. It sometimes feels awkward for me to seek and accept instruction, but I learn by doing it. You can too. Find people who can really demonstrate and use the styles and relaxed strengths you want... ask them to show you. *Practice.*

Mike Sigman is a member of the WTBA and teaches in Colorado. One of the only teachers I know of who practices as much as he says!
303-2789894