

Combat & Healing

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3 Ways of
Dim-Mak

Taking it Easy in Taiji

To Stick or Not to Stick

Kiwi Camp 2000

The Mind in the Martial
Arts P.4

Stuff

Dangerous Qigong
Teachers

WTBA News, New
Videos etc.



COMBAT & HEALING

The Magazine of the World Taiji Boxing Association

EDITOR

Bramsneed Blursnog

ART DIRECTOR

Ben, Eli & Katalenas Montaigne

INSPIRATION

Sandra Montaigne

USA

Al Krych

Canada

Josephine Anderson

England

Peter Smith

Tony Court

Singapore

Alex Yeo

Hong Kong

Ng Siu-wing

WTBA Secretary

Mause Eaglen

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POSTAL ADDRESS:

POB 792

Murwillumbah NSW 2484

Australia

+61-(0) 2 6679 7145

Fax: +61- (0) 2 6679 7028

E-mail: taiji@ozemail.com.au

<http://www.taijiworld.com>

FRONT COVER

Two Snakes: Soon, we will have a roof full of baby snakes as this is the way snakes do it!

And our newest WTBA Member. Little **Xing Yee Beatty**.

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The Three Ways of Dim-Mak

by Rick Blauer: USA.

Within the classical study of Dim Mak, there are three methods, or ways, or striking an opponent. These techniques are taught alongside one-another within the 36 chamber training sequences, and often there is an extremely fine line differentiating one from another. Specifically, they are Death Point Strikes (Dim Mak), Blood Gate Strikes (Dim Shao) and Incapacitation Strikes (Dim Su). In modern literature, several authors have attempted to cleave the three ways into distinctive sets of points. This has led to several published accounts of point lists, typically referring to 36 Dim Mak points, and varying numbers of Dim Shao and Dim Su points. Conceptually, this is incorrect, and provides the false structural view that the points are somehow inherently divisible into distinct sets. While there are some acupoints that are used exclusively in a given application, any can cross the lines, and be elevated (or sedated) to other uses. Additionally, there are others that are best suited for set-up strikes, rather than functioning as stand alone points or catalysts for a specific internal reaction. With few exceptions, most points have the capacity to create a number of effects (both benign and detrimental). Often, a subtle variation in technique is all that is needed to change one manner of strike into another.

That is also why there is an inherent danger in many of the point strikes.

The term Dim Mak properly refers to the method of attacking a single acupoint, or a combination of points, in which the body's internal processes (Ch'i energy centers), are being disrupted violently, resulting in death. Dim Mak, therefore, refers to the outcome, and not necessarily a type or class of point. The old masters often said that many of the 361 classic points could be Dim Mak points. Some just require fewer steps to get to the end result.

The term Dim Mak properly refers to the method of attacking a single acupoint, or a combination of points, in which the body's internal processes (Ch'i energy centers), are being disrupted violently, resulting in death.

For example, Liver 14 can be a Dim Mak strike with a single, focused blow, or it can be a Dim Mak strike following a sequential set of blows. The number of steps taken to get to the outcome can vary as widely as the intent of the strike. As such, in properly using the term, the manner in which a fatal blow is delivered is as significant as the outcome itself. Simply put, if death is produced by the strike,

then it is a Dim Mak strike. This inherent distinction can sometimes be masked or hidden entirely, since some Dim Mak strikes manifest themselves slowly over time.

The ancient masters knew that the body works on a series of regulated internal cycles. For example, blood takes a regulated amount of time to complete a journey through the entire body. If you specifically damage an internal process at a specific moment (such as weaken a blood vessel in the skull so it will begin to slowly hemorrhage), you can effectively induce death through a time-delayed cycle. The ancient masters recognized this particular facet of Dim Mak, and charted the course of these time-delayed strikes. Since the intent of the strike was to induce death (albeit, slowly over time, instead of instantaneously), the strike is a Dim Mak strike.

The term Dim Shao properly refers to the method of incapacitating an opponent by striking a "blood gate" within the body. Typically, the end result was a knockout, or severe pain shock induced by disrupting a internal blood-bearing center. The ancient Chinese classified Dim Shao strikes as attacks on acupoints which directly accessed or influenced the circulatory regions within the body (i.e., veins, arteries and heart), as well as specific organs associated with the cleaning and mi-

gration of blood (i.e., the kidneys and liver). Dim Shao strikes are often characterized as attacks in which blood flow is interrupted and/or stopped, or internal hemorrhaging is produced. A blood gate strike typically produces a knockout. Most blood gate strikes can easily be elevated to fatal strikes. If

The term Dim Su refers to the method of incapacitating an opponent by striking less sensitive acupoints, OR striking more reactive points in a variant manner and intent, in order to achieve a less severe outcome than death. Typically, this included knockouts. But it can also be immobilization of a re-

produce knockouts. The manner in which a knockout is achieved can, and will, vary greatly between sets of points. Some are very simple to achieve, others are not. The level of inherent danger also varies greatly. Typically, Dim Su strikes are targeting sensitive motor regions within the body,

TABLE NUMBER ONE: DIFFERENTIATING THE THREE WAYS of DIM-MAK

Dim Mak (Death Strike):	Dim Shao (Blood Gate Strike):	Dim Su (Incapacitation Strike):
1. The strike, or combination of strikes, always resulted in death.	1. The strike, or combination of strikes, always uses a “blood gate.”	1. The results are always instantaneous.
2. Normally, death will occur within a 24-hour durinnial cycle.	2. Almost always involves a knockout.	2. The strike, or combination of strikes, always incapacitates the opponent.
3. The acupoint targets involved in Dim Mak typically have a major role in the Ch'i distribution network.	3. The effects of the strike can take more than 24 hours to manifest.	3. The acupoint targets often contain nerve plexi, which help achieve the desired results.
4. A certain subset of Dim Mak strikes can be time delayed, with the end-results manifesting after a 24-hour durinnial cycle.	4. Many Dim Shao strikes can be augmented to cause death (at which point they become a Dim Mak strike).	4. Many Dim Su strikes can be augmented to cause death (at which point they become a Dim Mak strike).

a Dim Shao strike results in death, it becomes a Dim Mak strike. Again, the important conceptual distinction is the term applies to the process. There is considerable blending going on within the processes, and within the three ways.

gion of the body, or hyperactivity of an internal region (like the bladder or colon), in order to cause the recipient to withdraw from a fight. The manner in which incapacitation is achieved, and the physiological reaction produced, will vary along the body. In general, all 361 classical acupoints can

such as nerve plexi. This has lead some modern authors to assume that nerve strikes are somehow involved with all these types of strikes (and all Dim Mak type strikes, for that matter). This is anatomically incorrect. Again, it is the process outcome that makes the strike a Dim Su

strike, rather than a Dim Mak strike. But it is crucial to remember that in many places on the body, an inherent danger exists in the path taken to get there. This is particularly true with the highly reactive acupoints.

Classical Martial instruction in the 36 chambers was seen as crucial to learning the differences between the three forms of Dim Mak strikes, and to properly utilize them. The preceding table is provided to help summarize many of the traits that distinguish one set of strikes from another:

It is important to remember that with only slight variation in the type and/or amount of force, you can elevate many Dim Su and Dim Shao strikes to a Dim Mak strike, and visa versa. They are each intertwined in the internal regulatory system. That is why the ancient masters typically spent years with their students, training them to use this knowledge properly and responsibly. It is also why the instructional methods of the 36 chambers were used, to properly train an individual on the subtle distinctions. The ancient masters insisted that this training process could not be rushed. It had to be taught properly, in order to produce an outstanding martial artist who would know how to correctly use these types of strikes. In addition, they also trained their students how to correct many of the detrimental effects these attacks produced on the body's internal systems. This sentiment should be as true today as it was then.

New Video Titles From Moontagu

MTG212

Sudden Violence Volume 9

(The Chang Yiu-Chun Way of Dim-Mak Against Weapons)

This is definitely the last in the series of Sudden Violence. It was Chang's idea that if one could, sort of defend oneself against weapons then the empty hand defenses would come easier. And this is true. Chang taught me five methods against weapons. A short stick and a long stick which are indicative of just about any type of weapon. He would use his fingers as stabbing spears and his knife edge palm as well as his elbow in these methods. He said that one strike would stun, the second would knock out while the third would kill. Although these methods are not traditionally "Sudden Violence" methods, they still use Sudden Violence as the motor so I have included them here in this series.

MTG213

Yang Lu-chan Basic form Corrections Volume Five.

Erle carries on with this series from the end of the postures known as "Fair Lady Works Shuttles. Again, going into great detail as to exactly how to perform this pinnacle of all Taijiquan forms.

MTG214 (Sudden Violence Volume 10)

The Amazing Eye Attacks from the Internal Fighting Arts.

You virtually have a loaded gun in your hands when you know these methods. It does not matter how big, or strong or how well he knows martial arts, no-one can defend against these deadly finger and palm methods to the eyes. But you have to know how as the eyes have their own self-defense mechanism which comes in automatically. So we have to know ways of shutting down this mechanism first!

MTG215

Yang Lu-ch'an Form Corrections Volume Six:

Carries on from Volume Five and takes you through to the end of the form. This is the last in the series of corrections for Yang Lu-ch'an's form.

Taking it Easy in Taijiquan (How to Learn)

By Erle Montaigne

When other martial artists finally get on to how great the internal martial arts are, they usually wish to begin with Taijiquan. However, most are not willing to put in the hours necessary as they consider that they have already spent countless hours learning their current martial art.

So they usually make the mistake and want results too quickly with little effort. Many will purchase the Encyclopaedia of dim-mak and proceed to learn all of the points and what they do, forgetting that the most essential part of learning Dim-Mak is the engine of Dim-Mak, fa-jing. And fa-jing is an integral part of learning basic Taijiquan. Fa-jing does not come in a day or in months, it takes a long time along a steady learning curve which kicks up at the end sharply.

Others will take an acupuncture course in the hope that they will know about Dim-Mak. This will only give you a head start and not actually teach you about Dim-Mak as Dim-Mak is not acupuncture, it only uses the same points. Others will try to lay over their Karate system the methods of Dim-Mak but this also does not work because the movements of Karate are just not conducive to Dim-Mak. Sure, any beginner can learn the purely physical points like ST 9

and use them successfully in about 30 seconds. However, if you really wish to learn about Dim-Mak at a medium to advanced level, then you also have to have the way of moving that this art was originally designed to use. It's a bit like putting square wheels onto a Porsche! It just was not designed for square wheels.

It does not matter what you know and how well you know the theory about points and striking points, if you do not have the way of moving the body, then you ain't got nuttin!

People always ask me when and how I learnt such and such or they will ask me in an email to teach them how to do fa-jing! Or by the same method of communication, how to perform the Old Yang form correctly! My answer is always the same. I do not remember when I learnt a particular area of my training. Fa-jing for instance, I have no way of knowing when was that great day when I finally blew the hand held mitt away, hurting my practice partner's hand with the fa-jing punch. All of a sudden, it was there and once there will stay forever.

People are always looking for quick fixes, a word or two here a help there, a suggestion on how to move correctly. But when it all boils down, it always gets back to the amount of initial training time each individual puts into his or her basics. This is the beauty of all internal arts especially Taijiquan. All you have to do it to

do it! However, there is one very large catch and that is that doing it correctly is not that easy. Especially given the fact that there just aren't that many people out there teaching who actually KNOW Taijiquan. That may sound strange as there are literally tens of thousands of teachers out there. However, not many are teaching Taijiquan. They teach something that looks vaguely like a set of slow movements but it is not Taijiquan!

Another common question is "in what order to learn from my tapes". For those people I now have a sort of ordered progression listed on my web site. However, being Westerners, we always want things to be ordered and regimented. This is I believe where the Japanese went wrong with their martial arts. Martial Arts is NOT regimented! The way we learn is eclectic. Children do not say to themselves, "right, today I am only going to learnt to walk". The body and mind learns stuff by coming into contact with many hundreds of things during a day as we need change in order to keep it all alive. So everything we learn in our lives adds up to our total learning. And it's the same with any martial art.

People ask me how I learnt, in what order. Again I cannot tell them as I have learnt in the traditional manner, 'ordered chaos'. I would spend some time on form, then some time on push hands, then onto fighting

methods, some time on Qigong, Dim-Mak, Sudden Violence, Wudang forms, Bagua etc., That is how I learnt. There was no 'human' order to how I was taught. And that is how my video tapes tend to be. The best way to learn anything is to learn a little bit of everything (of the whole) each day. In that way you learn much quicker in the end as your mind gets the full picture right from the start. If you only learn one thing, that's all you know, a small portion of what you are supposed to learn. But if you take a chunk of the big picture and learn that each day, the whole system will just fall into place one day and you will be there.

I always tell my own students about the amount of time I put in doing push hands way back. I remember literally stopping and looking at my watch and realizing that we had been practicing for 6 hours straight! But again, there is a catch. There is push hands and there is "Push Hands"! If you only ever learn what 99% of all teachers teach in that they teach to push or pull using big wide low stances, then that is where you will stay forever more, not learning anything about self-defense or Qi development. Sure you might be able to push a car really easily, but you will never be able to use fa-jing or reflex attack/defensive methods. This is only learnt from doing real push hands where it is only used as an abstract way of learning how to fight. We stand in a normal fighting stance, one that we would normally stand in in the street. We do not push each other, but only ever find little 'holes' in be-

tween the attacker's yin and yang phase.

For the beginner (and that means most people), the absolute best advice that I can give is to throw your ego right out the door and expect defeat by someone whose ego is larger. Because with defeat comes winning eventually. Just go at a slow pace taking everything in and trying to get to that way of moving where you do not feel anything move! Your brain is neutral, you do not think about anything, your body is moving under the control of sub-conscious thought and an complete harmony with your own inner Qi flow. Only when you get to this stage in your slow movements will you ever be able to also move like this when you have to move quickly.

Our movements are now controlled by our Reptile Brain which moves in accordance with what is happening to us and not because we have ordered a particular part of the body to move. Our self-defense actions are totally sub-conscious and reflex. You may not 'look' like a martial artist, you may not even know how you look for looks are nothing where survival is concerned. This is the biggest difference between a martial artist and a fighter or self-defense person. The fighter reacts using the Reptile Brain (brain-stem) while the 'Martial Artist' moves because he has been taught to move in that manner and is still moving because his conscious brain is telling his limbs where to go.

Nowadays, I could not tell you what point is what. I used to know all of the theory etc., And it was helpful in telling others about the points and what they did. But there came a time when I had to forget about all of the theory and just rely solely upon my own sub-conscious brain. I always knew that my fingers would reach targets that I had not thought about striking and these were always the most lethal. So there also has to come a time in every 'martial artists' life when he or she must give up the theory in order to advance internally/physically. I always remember getting such a shock when my (the late) friend Chris Madden who was one of the world's leading acupuncturists, answered to my question, "what is this point Chris" or " what does this point do in acupuncture" he answered "F...ed if I know". And this is the true healer (or martial artist), one who just does it. Does not necessarily know the names of the points, or even what they do, just knows where to stick needles guided by his or her reptile brain.

There is no easy way, no quick way. The road is long but the getting there is just wonderful. In fact, I will not know what to do with myself when and if I actually ever get 'there'. I hope that I am still learning and on that great road of discovery when my time on this earth is finally over. But it would be nice to have just a short period of time when I did not have to think about martial arts or healing arts or writing or videoing so that I could just sit and play my guitar.

TO STICK OR NOT TO STICK

Michael Babin

There's a fascinating aspect of taiji as a martial system hinted at in the rhyming couplet quoted in "Yang Family Secret Transmissions" as translated by Thomas Wiley — "sticking is not good; not-sticking is not good" and there's a whole list of such contradictions as compiled by a senior student of Yang Ban-hou.

What does this one in particular mean? Well, for many years it meant nothing to me until I realised that it could be interpreted to mean that the ability to stick to an attacker could be a liability if that's all a practitioner could do; however, conversely this same statement also implied that ignoring the martial necessity to "stick-to and not let go" when such was necessary meant that one was no longer doing things in a taiji-like manner. How can it be essential to do both when they seem at cross-purposes?

Well, I think you can sum it up by paraphrasing an old Zen Buddhist teaching tale: "If your hand is always closed, it becomes a deformity and you can't do your daily tasks; if your hand is always open, it becomes a deformity and you can't do your daily tasks! Oh, oh, this sounds like yet another application of seeking a balance of yin and yang — and so it is! In self-defence terms, it is

essential to know where your opponent is — and not just with your eyes. Developing the ability to remain in controlled contact with your attacker is essential to being able to deliver your counter-attacks while neutralising what the other person is attempting to do to you.

In the beginning, you start to understand sticking by remaining in relatively gentle and structured contact with your partner's forearms, as in push-hands; eventually you learn to maintain the correct distance between yourself and your partner at all times without necessarily listening to his or her body movements with your own limbs, as in doing Large San-sau with a partner. This ability to move with your partner's body movement is an essential step in refining martial "timing".

However, sticking can easily become a liability if both partners allow their sticking exercises to become a mindless choreography and they are content to go through the motions.

As I said in the beginning, it is also easy to forget that being able to let-go is an essential element of sticking-to. For example, when doing attack-and-defend training (as opposed to basic push-hands) I have noticed many students are initially obsessed with sticking to my arms with their

hands even when it is the least useful thing to do. So, if I seek to distract them by throwing an arm up some distance away, they will quite often do their best to make contact with that limb rather than wait to see if they are in danger from it ("if my opponent doesn't move — neither do I") or simply attack me as their defensive measure ("if my opponent moves, then I get there first").

Being heavy and relatively relaxed, I am often quite happy to go along for the ride once they are kind enough to offer me an arm to stick to; especially when they circle that limb towards their own heads or torsos in an equally obliging manner.

Being heavy and relatively relaxed, I am often quite happy to go along for the ride once they are kind enough to offer me an arm to stick to; especially when they circle that limb towards their own heads or torsos in an equally obliging manner. As I like to tell them "at my age I don't get asked to a party very often so I'm liable to show-up, if invited!" And the answer isn't to not-stick as if I actually direct my hand towards a target on the head or torso then they can't just ignore it!

Here's where the most difficult application of "sticking" becomes essential — the ability to remain close enough to counter-attack without actually being hit while neutralising an attacking limb by "grinding" or "rubbing" through it as well as using the contact to affect the attacker's balance. Not the easiest thing to do; but more likely to succeed on a self-defense level than just attaching yourself to your opponent's arm and hoping that they get tired of attacking before you get disconnected.

Finally, I was watching a bullfight on television while writing this article and, for a moment, was distracted from the brutality of this ancient form of animal abuse by the beauty of the matador's ability to stay just out of reach of the bull's horns. Just for a moment I thought that this could be viewed as an example of the epitome of the Taiji concept of yielding and neutralising a larger opponent's frenzied attacks without having to resort to violence of any kind. ...

Then I realized that men on horseback, using big spears, and men on foot using little spears, were enraging the bull with thrusts to fleshy parts of its body that also weakened it from blood loss while it obsessed with trying to get the matador and his distracting cape. The blood loss probably doesn't help the bull's ability to attack effectively, neither does making it confused, angry and/or frightened. It's no wonder that the match usually ends with the bull's life-

less body being dragged from the arena.

Now, Erle is often castigated by modern Taiji people for being too direct and martial and seeming to discard the time-honoured concepts of sticking and yielding.

Now, Erle is often castigated by modern taiji people for being too direct and martial and seeming to discard the time-honoured concepts of sticking and yielding. However, it seems to me that the methods that he advocates, when done properly, are the purest forms of sticking and yielding as they depend on "timing", balance, sensitivity to movement and co-ordination; and, not just on reading telegraphed body movements because your hand or forearm is in contact with the other person's arm.

At its highest level, "sticking" doesn't require physical contact at all or relying on tricks of leverage that only work on a co-operative partner.

As with the Zen parable, the essential aspect of sticking may well lie in being able to maintain a controlling contact with an opponent when this is required and knowing when it is more likely to become a liability.

WTBA NEWS

Congratulations to Adi Asher and his wife (our representative in Israel) for the birth of their daughter, Noa.

Steve McDermott, WTBA senior from Brisbane is currently in China finishing off his Acupuncture training and loving it.

2001 may see myself and my family doing a lot more traveling both to hold workshops and also to play music. I will post any impending workshops and/or music venues on our site. Keep an eye on our site by the way as it is always being added to. The latest inclusion to the site is the free to download book, "Internal Gung-fu Volume Two".

The video series "Yang Lu-ch'an Form Corrections" is proving to be a big hit with WTBA members. 6 volumes in the series which shows the form at its basic level, correcting common faults that most people acquire over time.

And I will be scanning in my old book, "Power Taiji, Book 3" (Pauchui Form/Large San-Sau) and placing it up onto the site free to download. This should be done by the end of this year.

WTBA Instructor Sam Wiley has moved to Norcross, GA in the USA and is setting up a school there. We are receiving some requests for a school in GA, so Sam is the man!

KIWI CAMP 2000

In early June WTBA(NZ) members gathered at Piritahi Marae (For our overseas readers, a “Marae” is a Maori meeting house... Ed.) on Auckland’s Waiheke Island for the second of our annual camps. We had representatives from the mainland (or South Island, as we Northerners call it), Wellington and Auckland.

The theme of the camp was “The Bridge between Heaven and Earth – Mechanics and Energy”. The main sessions worked on sections of the Tai Chi and Bagua forms, with emphasis on the underlying principles of body structure and movement by which these martial arts work with qi and generate power.

Each time we train – we forge new friendships and learn from each other

As is our custom, instruction was shared and the pre-arranged programme adjusted to answer the needs and requests of participants. Petro, newly returned from Erle’s OZ camp passed on some of the new work Erle covered there. Eddie pre-

sented an inspired Bagua session which had absolute beginners and more advanced students asking for more. And as usual time was given to refining forms and taking the opportunity to do as much paired training as possible.

A highlight of the weekend was

The weekend got off to a great start when a mouse came and inspected us in the meeting-house (or Whare as it is known) while we were doing a group form on Friday evening after the opening ceremony. We learned (as you’ll see from the attached poem by Alan) a lot about how easy it is to create dis-



Karyn’s cooking which fueled conversations round the dinner table. We shared opinions, insights and experiences amidst a lot of laughing. Eddie and Karyn’s six week old son Andrew graced us with his presence, reminding us that our long term goal is to build a solid base for future generations of serious students to learn the Internal Arts. He behaved extremely well and got heaps of cuddles and attention.

ruption and chaos with just a little application of force.

Each time we train – we forge new friendships and learn from each other – this camp was no exception – and we look forward to many more.

The Ballad of Waiheke

By Alan Clarke

From near and far they travelled
for, their annual June retreat

Those mighty taiji warriors, Erle
Montaigue's Elite;

They gathered in the whare
there to show what they could
do

They twitched their hips and
waved their arms (arrangement
by Cheng Fu);

But as the yang turned into yin,
and day succumbed to night

Those mighty taiji warriors re-
ceived a mighty fright

With gnashing teeth and flash-
ing eyes it was a fearsome sight

Just like those dragon tales of
old? Well nearly, but not
quite...

It rushed at Captain Annie,
nearly lunging at her feet

Then shot back to its fortress, in
a tactical retreat

Those mighty taiji warriors
knew exactly what to do

And stormed the rodent fortress
to engage in mouse kungfu

The first stage of the battle was a
wonderful success

The fortress soon lay crumbled;
but where was that bloody pest?

It lunged at Eddie from behind,
who showed his bagwa speed

And leapt behind the barrier
(we all followed his lead)

The ninja rodent then fa-jinged
behind the nearest bed

And when we shifted that it
flew, behind the next instead

**It lunged at Eddie from
behind, who showed his
bagwa speed And leapt
behind the barrier (we all
followed his lead)**

A stalemate could have fol-
lowed, but it chose to make a
stand,

And ambled to a central post
and waved its furry hand

It lined up Stu and said "hey
you, you head-shaved
white-arsed maggot..."

You limp-wrist, soft-fist piece of
fluff, just try and take me, fag-
got;"

The gauntlet thrown, our Stu
replied and fearing not the least

He hurled a mattress to its back,
then body-slammed the beast

And so subdued, the rodent
knew, for now, he had no more

And let himself be herded care-
fully through the open door

But as he melted into the night,
though this might sound absurd

That brave and mighty ninja
mouse, he claimed the final
word

He shook his hairy, claw-hung
fist and in a strident squeak-ee

Said 'right you lot, two days
you've got, then fuck-off from
Waiheke'

The moral of this happy tale?
Well there are quite a few

Four furry ounces moved a
thousand pounds of us (plus
Stu)

And countless years of training
can go pouring down the drain

When you go ten-on-one
against a reptile (or rodent)
brain.

We have always had a very dedi-
cated following in the Land of
the long white cloud. It was my
first venue out of Australia way
back then. Over the past almost
two decades our New Zealand
team have grown in numbers
and knowledge so much so that
I would recommend anyone
from around the world going
there for a holiday and doing
some training. ... Erle.

The Mind in Martial Arts And Eastern Thought.

By Anthony Court

Part 4: Space:

We start with two quotations from two masters of the Dzogchen tradition of Tibet:

Resting the watcher in awareness, there is vivid emptiness.

Free from colour, free from material substance.

Not forming the thought “It is empty!”

That is the moment of seeing the nature of mind.

Chokyur Lingpa

Don't analyse! Don't analyse!

Don't analyse your mind!

Don't grasp! Don't grasp!

Don't grasp your mind!

Don't correct! Don't correct!

Trying to correct or modify just makes the mind contrived.

The fabricating mind obscures your essential nature.

Longchen Rabjam

The key words here are, “nature of mind” and “essential mind” The nature of mind is already

liberated, free, empty of the ten thousand things (to use the Taoist term) If we can have some realization of this, then it is possible that “all things” will fall into place, including the difficult subjects of Birth, Death and Rebirth (which we will cover soon) However, all ideas (creations of the conditioned mind) must be put to one-side, or we cannot look at the subject with new open and clear energy. The old mind wants to hold on to the familiar, the known, and the “comfortable”, the religions, the ideas, the theories; it does not want to step off the edge of the cliff. At sometime in our lives, we may see the short comings of all systems, philosophies, religions and ideas, then if the time is right we may just “give up” shake our heads and say “Do you want to know something? I know absolutely nothing” I have to say, believe it or not, this is a great place to get to. I mean genuinely get to. Why? Because once all the structures have been removed, and you don't have yet another “Spiritual” path to follow; you are back at the original place that you started from, your original mind, which, from the very beginning has always been free. So, you may ask, “What's the difference”? The difference is now you recognize your original mind. You see the blank canvas (metaphorically speaking) This base consciousness (Kunzhi in Tibetan) is said to be empty of all inherent existence, and also it is said to be aware of

it's own nature. Often described by teachers of Dzogchen, as a candle that not only illuminates its surroundings, but also illuminates itself. I know this is a difficult subject, but without a grasp of it, nothing, such as the possibility of continued existence (rebirth/reincarnation) will make sense. We will cover birth, death and rebirth in the next issue, but to trying to understand this cyclic process without recognizing that there may be something beyond the conditioned mind would be a waste of time. However, if we see that all condition things arise and fall in a base consciousness, that is beyond space, time, birth and death, then the possibility that nature of our minds, (which is said to be inseparable from the base consciousness) may also be beyond birth, death and all condition existence. And that death, rather being something to be avoided, becomes the very thing to add total meaning to our lives.

Teachers are guides, (all good teachers explain this) even the Buddha said “This is the way that I found enlightenment, but do not believe a word I say. You must know that, you yourselves must make the effort” So the next thing to look at is making space for ourselves, and becoming spacious. Becoming spacious is to take the attitude of a warrior, in as much as, no matter what is put in our path, we will deal with it. Buddhism points

out that our unenlightened attitude to things is either to grasp, or reject. In other words we try to move away from unpleasant things (that which we want to avoid) or we move towards the pleasant things (that which we want to possess), so can we reach a place of non-movement? That is, can we look at things without judgement? There are various approaches, for example to avoid the world we may join a monastery and become a monk, or give our lives over to some Guru, or Religion where we don't have to take any real responsibility. Or, we can try to change things by the use of Tantric methods, such as anger into clarity etc. Indeed, the Tantric system has a very rich and vast field of techniques, which can have been developed to this end. Then there are ways such as Dzgochen where the thoughts that arise are allowed to self-liberate. Whatever approach we take, should be suited to our mental make-up, and understanding. As the ultimate goal is total liberation of the mind, we cannot become slaves to any systems or ways, and that is scary. The Lamas' say, "What you must realize is that all the Deities, Gods, Demons, Visualizations, Meditations, spring from the mind, and return to the mind". The vast open, empty, luminous, mind whose centre is everywhere, and boundaries nowhere.

So how do we know if we are on the right track? Well, I have heard many of the Tibetan teachers say that we all have "innate wisdom", that is "com-

mon sense" to you and me. But, have you noticed that when it comes to spiritual paths or martial systems people are quite happy to totally believe the most outrageous claims? Our common sense, or innate wisdom flies quickly out of the window. Why is this? Well as the late Joseph Campbell said (with regards to religious studies) all the stories of all the great traditions of the world, are true only in as much as they are metaphors and point the way to a greater mystery. He went on to say we should not mistake the metaphor for the message. "The people that believe the metaphors to be true" he said, "we call theologians, and the people that realise these stories are just symbolic, we call atheists." We should not mistake the finger pointing at the moon, for the moon itself.

In martial arts, and especially the "new age movement" people are ready to believe almost anything. In fact it also brings a further problem, that, because of the nonsense talked about these subjects, we can also become too dismissive, and then we tend to throw the baby out with the bathwater. So we definitely need space, space to practice, space to study, and space for meditation. Watching less television might be a good place to start, and instead spend more time with nature. I met a Native American teacher once who told me that he thought many white people gave away their power, by talking too much. Lamas often stop talking in the middle of a teaching, and just

remain quiet. I also know of many martial arts practitioners, who constantly run from instructor to instructor, and system to system, and never seem satisfied with what they are offered. The same with books and videos, its always the next book or video that will reveal the "secret of all secrets" or the "answer to everything" It is simply not like that, today among Westerners there are a large number of seekers running around getting "high empowerment" from Tibetan Lamas, but once they receive these "empowerments" and realise the amount of effort and study required, the superficial attraction of these exotic practices soon wears off. It is the same with Taiji, and all the "Internal Arts" We need space for practice, and we need the **space that comes from practice**. I know many "students" say they have no time, but often this is simply the conditioned mind not wanting to move. A friend of mine in the W.T.B.A. recently told me that he wanted to learn meditation, and had signed up for a particular course, which I knew well. I told him it was a good idea, but said nothing about the course to him, as I knew it to be an exceptionally tough one. To be honest I wasn't sure that he would get through, as many don't. He rang me a few weeks later, saying that he had completed the course and that it was one of the hardest things he had ever done. Over ten days, participants would rise at 4 a.m., not be allowed to speak, or make eye contact with anyone. Have the only meal of the day at 11 a.m. meditate all day (under in-

struction) and be in bed by 9 p.m. each night. A tough routine by anyone's standard. But the whole point was, he made it, and had a breakthrough in conciseness at the end of the retreat. Now after such an initial effort it is much easier to get up, practice early, or tackle any thing that comes. He had made space for himself, and developed that mental toughness and discipline required by true martial artist. Relying on a teacher all the time is neither good for the practitioner, or the teacher.

Being spacious also means to watch our reaction to the world about us. Are we for instance, critical of others? Are we judgemental? Do we have to make a comment on everything? Because if we do, then all these mental efforts, which spring from a feeling of self-importance, become a disturbance (however subtle) to our natural state of mind. If we learn to accept whatever comes our way, then our confidence grows, as we find that we can detach from situations that before would have us running around like the proverbial headless chicken. Of course its one thing to talk of freedom, and liberation, yet another thing to understand what freedom is. Tsoknyi Rinpoche in his book *Carefree Dignity* says "There is no state of mind that can not be, released, liberated" He goes on to say, "The mind is not a computer that someone else has programmed. It is just that when habitual tendencies arise, you feel as if you have no control" Continuing he states, "Honestly, when difficulties arise, you are not totally

out of control. At this time we should consider our practice (spiritual). One way to deal with this is to realize that there is just one stream of mind, just one stream of consciousness. It's not like one consciousness or part of your mind is trying to control another part, which is so uncontrollable that the first has to give up. Really, there's just one stream of mind, and if that one stream of mind decides to practice- meaning relax and release the grip- then there is no other mind that can be out of control. The problem stops right there."

Try this simple experiment (both used in Taoist and Buddhist practice) find somewhere quiet, take up a meditation posture and try a method called "self forgetting" Focus on something simple, a stone, or a candle, but not a picture of a deity (too many connotations may be associated with gurus or saints) and purposefully forget who you are. It is not difficult! Once you have achieved this state, see how long you can sustain it before the neurotic mind wants to kick back in. By isolating the conditioned mind into a state, or place, where no attention is given to it, you will very quickly realize, how habitual, paranoid, and powerful the mind of attachment is. This conditioned, continually thinking, insecure, and fearful mind does not exist. It created it's self, through the arising of the condition world. Through our culture, our language, our parents, our education, environment etc. Now we must ask, if we can see

our conditioning, what then is the true nature of our minds? Or in Zen terms, what is our original face, the one before this one? We will not find an answer by reading books, asking other people, or finding Gurus. We will only begin to reveal our true nature when we, give up and release the need to **know**. Becoming spacious is the way to begin.

Leaning Tao or spiritual truth is different from learning other things, because it always presents itself as nothing. You need to look deeply to find the wonder of nothingness, at the same time that everything is present in front of you. Look to the place where everything returns. The same origin is shared by all differences.

In the depth of nature exists the subtle reality; in the subtle reality exists the most

subtle reality. In the subtlest reality exists the gate to the source of all. Therefore,

"To be" and "not to be" are different terms, but both come from the same origin.

Being and non-being are indescribable, yet in the depth of their indescribable reality,

one can find the gate to the source of all.

Therefore, you cannot hold the reality of the world as something you can see or feel.

It is much deeper than that. Tao Te Ching

By Brad Hankinson

Dear Mr. Montaigne, Thank you for your generous gift of literature. I will put it to good use, no doubt and am sure I will benefit from the wealth of unique information, judging no doubt from your other volumes.

No matter where you turn, there is some aspect of nature that is begging to be revealed, and some teacher willing to reveal it. Whether in the awesome sunsets in the Pacific sea or the incredible sight of a whole squadron of helicopters taking off from the flight deck, or in the Internet :). I think that the old proverb, when the student is ready the teacher will appear, is too modest.

The teachers of this world are omnipresent while only the student need do is open himself to truth. There is no secret but in the mind of the seeker...in other words. Perhaps I can share some other things, ones that are closer to my own mind and heart than the observations of others. I have no intention of ranting about rarified philosophy, but of disclosing a few secrets hidden in the fields of science given to me by my explorations in the myriad fields of human knowledge.

There are things tacit in the life we live, hidden debates that have been founded by the great geniuses before us, and passed

down through our civilization by forces of our culture.

One is the mind body problem, whether we are just body or just spirit or both. Again I have no intention of resolving this issue, it would be a travesty to eliminate for all one of the sweet struggles that human's must decide for themselves. But I can share a simple observation that Nobel Prizewinner Ilya Prigonine has put forward.

One is the mind body problem, whether we are just body or just spirit or both.

This Bulgarian chemist did work on the theory of life, specifically how life, in contrast to all of nature, does not degrade into chaos but in fact tends to move towards order... Now the Laws of Thermodynamics, specifically the second law, state that all matter in the universe will forever give off some of its energy in the form of heat, necessarily decreasing the order in the system. Consider a billiard table, every time a ball collides heat is generated so that the force imparted to the second ball is somewhat less. Also friction is generated so the initial energy of the system gradually decreases as the system generates heat gradually. This applies to mechanical systems.

Life on the other hand is not subject to this restraint, because

of its organization. It is more complicated than this, but let me give you the gist of it. The human body, and all life, is an open system, unlike a mechanical system, which is closed. Life dissipates the heat and waste energy to the environment; it does not grind to a halt like an infinitely complex billiard ball.

Now this is interesting because it has a practical application for us, for there is no difference between the systems that compose life, such as the circulatory system and muscular system. They all operate the same way. They all adapt to the environment the same way, when stress is applied to the body that will challenge the body's balance, think of running a marathon, the body is faced with a crisis. It can adapt in basically three ways; die or be seriously injured, move away from the stress, or adapt and overcome.

When it adapts it changes totally, hitting what's technically called a bifurcation point, and the new structure is totally independent of the old one, a biological equivalent of a quantum leap.

When it adapts it changes totally, hitting what's technically called a bifurcation point, and the new structure is totally independent of the old one, a biolog-

ical equivalent of a quantum leap. And this happens to every tissue, from skin adapting to sunburn, to the eye adapting to the changes in illumination, the stomach adapting to exotic food, or a runner or a college student studying chemistry. Or a martial artist.

Since it is a fundamental process of the human body, and there are well-researched methods of training change in the human body, in the world of sports, the same fundamentals can be adapted to different systems. And that is what is being applied in some circles, adapting well-known physiological principles to training neurophysiology, for instance. The length of this letter is already too great, but if you are interested, I could detail a few of the training methodologies that I believe may be important to both of us. Best wishes, Brad

Because the mysteries of biology have one specific avenue I know you might find interest in, how does the most basic molecule of sentient life function? Hemoglobin is a mystery to most scientists. Its power to attract a molecule of oxygen is a query, which falls on deaf ears among biochemists, for they do not know how to think out of the 'box'.

Now, fixate in your mind, two simple facts, that the molecule of haeme has at its center a molecule of iron, and that a given molecule of oxygen is slightly magnetic...now that makes you think, huh? Why does this, the

basic constituent of the oxygen transport system, have a molecule renowned for its magnetic properties as its centerpiece, to transport a molecule, which is also part and parcel to this force of nature? Why indeed? Because of the structure of haeme incorporates four molecular structures around the iron ferromagnetic core, which act as a coil, a natural biochemical electromagnet which will grasp the oxygen into itself, using a force no more complicated than the magic of a compass.

which will grasp the oxygen into itself, using a force no more complicated than the magic of a compass.

For specific reasoning, I turn you to a more reliable source than my own, a radical Dr. Plichta, a German chemist, has advanced this theory as an offshoot of other research. This theory can be found in his book, God's Secret Formula.

As for my own intuitions, I can state I have looked into the source through my college library references and can find no fault in his arguments, much less a better explanation of the function of something so basic to life than this, the riddle of the blood itself. I wish you good tidings,

It's Not What You Know

Erle Montaigue

It's not what you know.

It's not how much you have studied.

It's not how many books you have read.

It's not how many great teachers you have had.

It's not that you shave your head.

And it's not that you call yourself 'Sifu' and have your students bow to you.

It's how you do it that counts.

In everything we do, if you can not do it, then you ain't got it!

And on the other side of the coin, (to quote Babe Ruth), If you CAN do it, then it ain't braggin!

A lowly student who respects him or herself as well as everyone else is worth 5000 'sifu's' who respect no-one!

Are There Dangerous Qigong Teachers?

Martin Eisen

Unscrupulous Qigong teachers can be dangerous to your wealth, health, intellect and spirit.

Two examples of people donating large sums of money to organizations will be given. There are many other examples. The danger of these con men is their charm. They pretend to be your best friend, care about your welfare and “feel your pain”. Many victims, even after they know that they have been taken, still adore these con artists.

One well-known guru was driven around in a Rolls Royce. His followers donated money to him, while they lived in poverty in an ashram in Oregon. He did not impose a moral code on his followers and beatings were documented at the ashram. He died in prison.

Another famous story involves a prisoner who practiced breath control. Without being detected he could cause pages of a book to move by blowing. He pretended to be a born again Christian and converted many inmates by causing the pages of a bible to move and attributing this to the Holy Spirit. After being released, he opened a Kung Fu school and had a large following because of his mystical powers. He became famous and was even invited to Egypt to treat Anwar Sadat. One wealthy man had donated large

sums of money to this charlatan and began to spend hours meditating in his room. His sister became suspicious and hired Randi the magician to investigate this martial artist. One of his tricks was to cause a dollar bill under a fish tank to move by blowing in a small space between the tank and the table. Randi distracted him and turned the tank so there was no longer any space between the tank and the table. The Kung Fu artist could not make the dollar bill move. Randi made it move by blowing in the crack, which now faced him. The martial artist thought Randi was a Master and wanted to study with him. This con artist also persuaded some of his students to get guns for him. He was arrested and jailed on a weapons charge. He escaped from jail and still at large. This story appeared in a popular Kung Fu magazine. Even though this con artist had been exposed, it was hinted that some of his powers were real.

Both sleep paralysis and narcolepsy can induce vivid hallucinations since the sufferer is “awake” in a REM sleep state

Both sleep paralysis and narcolepsy can induce vivid hallucinations since the sufferer is “awake” in a REM sleep state. Some of these people can vividly describe being kidnapped by aliens and having operations performed on them. There are

even marks where the instruments used in the procedures were inserted. One explanation of these marks is that these people are in a hypnotic state due to sleep paralysis or narcolepsy. The mind influences the body, which causes the marks to appear. Not many people believe these stories. However, millions of people believe Qigong Masters when they describe their travels in other dimensions, new forms of Qigong, extraordinary powers, etc. Two masters can have entirely different methods and interpretations of reality. Both claim millions of followers. Can they both be right, each have part of the truth or are they delusional? Do you believe that any Qigong system has millions of followers?

Any Qigong teacher or long time practitioner will know that many students quit after a few lessons or don't practice regularly. Are such students followers?

Any Qigong teacher or long time practitioner will know that many students quit after a few lessons or don't practice regularly. Are such students followers?

The danger of belonging to such a cult is that it dulls the intellect. Some people become mindless robots and accept everything at face value instead of using logic, science or proper

statistical methods. For example, a common claim is that a Master can cure any disease. This fact has never been verified.

In spiritual Qigong most Masters warn their students not to use any esoteric powers that they gain - for example, don't spend time treating sick people. Some reasons given are that one can be injured by the evil that is causing the disease or that you really can't cure a sick person because it's his karma to be sick. Such advice will keep a disciple on the spiritual path, but is not conducive to the development of science.

There are many example of Qigong masters in China and elsewhere who used fake photos, chemically treated paper which catches fire and other carnival tricks to impress their followers. Other phenomena can be explained using Physics or Physiology. For instance, to convince a student that he was injecting Qi, the Master would push hard on the student's eyeballs. This would cause flashes of light, which were interpreted as Qi flow. Sometimes it was the students who used trickery to impress non-believers in the powers of their Master.

Improper and excessive practice of Qigong and meditation can cause psychoses. Such cases have been documented in a book on the Kundalini experience. Now there is even the medical term "Qigong psychotic reaction" listed in the diagnostic manual of the American Psychiatric Association. The dangers

of excessive practice are also known in China. Dr. Zhang Tongling of Beijing Medical University found in a study of 145 people that fanatical Qigong practice could bring out latent psychiatric problems and cause hallucinations. She runs a clinic for obsessive Qigong practitioners.

The proper practice of Qigong can also cause problems for certain students. The teacher should warn the students of these problems and not prescribe that type of Qigong if the student doesn't have the will power to resist temptations.

Preoccupation with Qigong can also cause ardent practitioners to become dysfunctional and neglect necessary daily tasks or dull ambition so that one does not reach his full potential.

Seizures can also result from improper or excessive practice of Qigong or meditation. These seizures become easier to induce with practice. Some Masters regard seizures as a form of religious ecstasy. This behavior should be investigated scientifically. It is more common in Indian meditation, since many teachers don't emphasize putting the tongue on the roof of the mouth to connect the Du and Ren channels so that excess energy does not get stuck in the head.

Improper practice or the wrong kind of Qigong can cause many physical problems such as hair loss, dizziness, headaches, nausea, difficult breathing, etc. Concentrating on acupoints can lead to Qi stagnation and other problems. Improper breathing can raise or lower the blood pressure.

Strenuous Qigong and low postures are contraindicated in pregnancy or during menstruation. People with arthritis or injured joints should not practice certain postures. Gentle movements are better than static movements for certain conditions such as hemorrhoids. Qigong that creates heat is not suitable for people who suffer from a hot, Yang condition such as inflammation. Improper posture can cause chronic pain in any part of the body.

Seizures can also result from improper or excessive practice of Qigong or meditation. These seizures become easier to induce with practice.

The proper practice of Qigong can also cause problems for certain students. The teacher should warn the students of these problems and not prescribe that type of Qigong if the student doesn't have the will power to resist temptations. For example certain forms of Qigong can increase one's appetite for food and/ or sex.

Energetic problems such as deranged flow of Qi and blood,

stagnation of Qi and blood. Leaking of genuine Qi and unchecked flow of pathogenic Qi can occur. A teacher should be able to recognize and treat such problems and any others which occur.

Claims of being able to treat diseases or producing spiritual enlightenment by projecting Qi or teaching people how to do this in a few lessons should be carefully investigated, especially if a large sum of money is demanded.

Claims of being able to treat diseases or producing spiritual enlightenment by projecting Qi or teaching people how to do this in a few lessons should be carefully investigated, especially if a large sum of money is demanded. Why don't all the Master's family or disciples have this power? Why aren't they all in perfect health and enlightened. Another telltale sign of a charlatan is that they claim to treat every imaginable disease. Most legitimate Qigong practitioners would agree that acute diseases or emergencies should not be treated by Qigong. For example, beware of anyone who claims to treat dislocations or poisoning by Qigong.

Being treated by someone who just intuitively your problem without physical contact can be dangerous. Patients with digestive problems, slipped disks etc. who were misdiagnosed by a local Qigong "Master" and not

cured have come to our clinic for treatment. Some studies in China on this type of diagnosis have shown that it is not reliable.

During lectures by Qigong Masters, there are people who exhibit spontaneous movements; others don't. Some people claim to have been cured of diseases

During lectures by Qigong Masters, there are people who exhibit spontaneous movements; others don't. Some people claim to have been cured of diseases. Similar phenomena occur with Christian and Russian faith healers. Are they using Qi? Why doesn't everyone move or be cured if the Master is so powerful? Studies in China have shown that there is no correlation between the movements of the patient and the Master. This seems logical because different people have different blockages to their Qi flow. The injected Qi breaking through these blockages probably causes the movement.

A large component of a legitimate healing at such an event may be belief. The mind can control the body. There are people with split personalities having one personality well while another has diabetes. An interesting experiment would be to publicize a non-healer as a Master and see how many people he could heal. These results could be compared to those obtained by a healer who is unknown to the audience.

Neither my teacher, Gin Foon Mark, nor I have ever met anyone that could push people without physical contact. Their technique works on their own students or others with a similar mind set who are suggestible or believe in such things.

Not all studies of treating animals and humans successfully by Qigong should be accepted. Some of these have been designed or analyzed inappropriately - for example the sample size is too small. People familiar with biological experiments know that some have been fudged. Even the results that seem legitimate need to be duplicated before they are accepted. The well-known biofeedback experiment in which rats learned to control the blood flow to their ears may negate the argument that animals can't be brainwashed and Qigong is not a matter of belief for animal experiments.

Most authorities estimate that it can take years to teach someone to project Qi for healing purposes. Dr. Y. Omura devised a new method and taught some children to project healing Qi in less than a week. This method was not tried on adults, so it is not certain if it is faster than conventional training. According to the Taoist's theory of aging, children should be able to learn Qi projection faster than adults. However, some of the children suffered side effects

and he is no longer teaching this method. Dr. Omura also detected abnormalities in the meridians of practitioners of certain forms of Qigong. It is not known if these abnormalities are permanent or harmful in the long run. He also devised methods to avoid certain side effects of Qigong practice. However, some people think that some side effects are a way for the body to cure itself and should not be stopped. For example, the body may be discharging toxins. They eventually stop on their own with practice. The interested reader can find further details in Dr. Omura's J. of Electroacupuncture.

Neither my teacher, Gin Foon Mark, nor I have ever met anyone that could push people without physical contact. Their technique works on their own students or others with a similar mind set who are suggestible or believe in such things. Most such Masters admit that they can't push some people because they are not open to absorbing Qi properly and will only become ill. Masters of empty force estimate that they can push from 3 to 6 out of 10 people without contact. Some students of such teachers said that they don't have to move but they just jump to show respect to their Master or because they feel his Qi and jump to rid themselves of this unpleasant sensation. The danger with this type of training is that some students believe that such techniques are good for self-defense. Even if such techniques worked on 9 out of 10 people you could be killed in a random encounter.

What is an empty force Master doing? If he is actually exerting a force, then he should be able to push a chair. So far no empty force Master has been able to do this. Another more plausible explanation is that his Qi contains some information, which influences some control system in the body, which in turn causes the movement. This is how a minute current can cause a crane to lift tremendous loads.

To test this last hypothesis is not simple. You must find subjects who are not familiar with Qi. They should have no idea what the experiment involves and should be placed behind a large screen so that they cannot see what the empty force Master is doing and when he is going to exert the force. The empty force Master should be instructed to push the subject in a randomly chosen direction, say North, West or East, by using a random number generator. Then, his successes and failures should be recorded in a few thousand trials and the results analyzed by a statistician.

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Some teachers say you can learn Qigong from a video and it is

safe, provided that you listen to your body and remember the motto "pain no gain". The Qi will know where to go; so don't force it. This is probably true for videos designed for general health maintenance. A person may even get good results from a bad video or book because he believes the person is an expert or because it is a mild form of exercise. The only danger is that the student may believe that he knows something when he doesn't. For example, there are books on Qigong massage written by people who are ignorant of one or both of these topics. After reading such a book you will know hardly anything about either subject.

However, in some forms of Qigong, such as standing on the stake, unpleasant sensations and pain are quite common. You must have guidance on how to overcome these sensations.

However, in some forms of Qigong, such as standing on the stake, unpleasant sensations and pain are quite common. You must have guidance on how to overcome these sensations. Man is distinguished from other animals by his intelligence. Thus, the ultimate authority should be your brain and not your feelings.