

# Combat & Healing

September 2000

Issue Number 42

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Empty Force?

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Tom Jones?

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The Slowest Martial Art

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Being A Long Distance Student

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The Mind in the Martial Arts P.3

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Martial Arts Legends

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Spine Force

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WTBA News, New Videos etc.



# COMBAT & HEALING

The Magazine of the World Taiji Boxing Association

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## FRONT COVER

Our newest and youngest WTBA Member, Jade Dabrowska from Wales. She has been learning Taiji with Tony Court in Wales and is quite a diligent young lass.

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# The Mind in the Martial Arts: 3rd Part

## Part 3: Emptiness.

By Anthony Court

The late Joseph Campbell tells a wonderful story about the time he was in Japan for a conference on Religion. He overheard a conversation between one of his fellow delegates, a social philosopher from New York, and a Shinto Priest. The philosopher said to the priest "I have seen a good many of your practices and ceremonies now, but I just don't get your Ideology, or your Theology". The Shinto Priest shook his head slowly "Ideology! I don't think we have that" he replied "And theology! No, I don't think we have that either" then added quietly "We just dance"

The question was a product of the conditioned mind; the answer came from a realisation of emptiness. It is hard to pick up any book about Eastern Traditions without very soon seeing the word "Emptiness". Is this something we just skip over, writing it off as just something "Oriental"? Or is it, because of its repeated use, is it worth investigating, to see if it has any meaning for us, and our Martial Arts Practice?

Words are not the thing. Paradoxically, we can not really discuss "Emptiness", simply because it is beyond words. However, because an understanding is so important in

many ways, we will have to use language, which really is quite inadequate for our investigation, but which may trigger the reader to his or her own realisation. At this point it maybe as well to say what we mean by "Realisation" What for example is the difference between "Knowledge" and "Realisation"? Well, let me say that when I started training in Martial Arts many years ago, I was always told that the "Stances" were very important. Fine, we hear this day in and day out, and in the beginning our balance, timing and coordination probably leaves a lot to be desired. However, knowledge alone is not enough, practice alone is not enough, but it is where we have to start. Eventually armed with this knowledge and with constant practice, realisation will be born.

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**So lets look at Emptiness, what on earth does it mean? How can we begin to investigate something that is described in the books as.... having no inherent existence?**

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I remember many years ago, after I had been training for possibly some 10 to 12 years (It's now 23) I suddenly have this absolute and complete understanding regarding footwork, and stances, dawn on me. I was teaching a self defence class at a

local college, and in the class along with mainly raw beginners were many Judo, Karate and Tae Kwon-Do people, of course I was trying to teach internal methods. I say trying, because although I had this group of Martial Artists present, not one of them could move with any fluidity or power, in fact the raw beginners had more idea. Now all those from a martial background had been taught footwork etc, but none of them had built it into their subconscious mind/being, therefore they had to think about moving, resulting in mechanical, and uneconomical effort. So for me, the importance of stance now became a different kind of knowledge, something I would never need to learn again, because whatever I did from now on I would never consciously need to worry about moving correctly. Even learning new forms, the footwork falls into place in a faster and more natural way. And as we know, when our body/mind/energy and spirit moves as one unit, then our practice becomes powerful, but there is no way that it can happen by training the mind and body etc; in a way that is not totally integrated. So after many years of training, this wholeness will just be there. And you won't even notice, until one day when you realise that one of many steps has been reached.

As we have said, knowledge is out there (external), realisation

is knowledge internalised, instantly! So let's look at Emptiness, what on earth does it mean? How can we begin to investigate something that is described in the books as.... having no inherent existence? Let's start slowly, the conditioned mind is necessary, otherwise we couldn't function, we need to use our mind to run the business, make a living, look after our families and ourselves etc. But the conditioned mind is old, in fact thousands of years old. Full of ideas, ambitions, loves, hates, prejudices and self-importance. It is also full of fear. So how can a mind that is so exhausted with propping up its own self-image in the world, be open, spontaneous, and whole? Well if the conditioned, sometimes called grasping mind (a good description appears in the Bon Mother Tantra as "Active manifestation mind") is thought of as the prison, then the realisation of this emptiness (empty nature) may well be the key to our liberation.

Emptiness (Wu Chi in Chinese, Shunyata in Sanskrit, sTongpanyid in Tibetan) is the natural state of all things, according to Buddhism, Taoism, Bon and many others of the enlightenment schools. For example, the essence of famous Heart Sutra of Buddhism says, "form is emptiness, emptiness is form". So, what does that mean you may well ask? Well leaving aside for the moment modern Physics, with its inability to find anything "solid" in the Universe, we must try to understand it, simply by observation. As it

is said that nothing exists from its own side, in other words everything that arises is interdependent, that is, everything is dependent on causes, and therefore must be empty of any inherent existence. Also emptiness does not exist, as an object in its own right. For a moment, just consider this, go into the garden and look at a flower, then ask yourself "Where was this flower one hundred years ago? Now ask yourself where will this flower be in one hundred years from now?"

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### **Forexample the Bodhidharma, who took Buddhism to China and founded the Shaolin Temple, thought very little of studying philosophical texts**

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It has arisen from emptiness and returned to emptiness or as the Tao Te Ching states returns to the "one" You may say for example, that the flower appeared because of the natural cycle of nature, flowers growing, flowering, dying and seeding. O.k. good point, that is called dependent arising, now go back, millions of years to when the Earth was a molten rock. Now, where is that flower? How did it originate? Because it's here, now, right under your nose! Or as the say in Zen "Show me your original face before you were born, now speak"! O.K! So, if you haven't given up by now, and gone down the pub. Let's just look at why on earth we should bother with what to many peo-

ple will appear to be so much crazy Eastern mumbo-jumbo? What relationship has emptiness to Martial Arts? In our Internals Arts training, at some time, or other, certain questions will arise, certain states of consciousness will be encountered, and certain truths and realisations will come. We need to resolve these issues, and move on. So it is here that we should start to look at those warriors and sages of the past, and to see how even after many years of training they still progressed and developed.

For example the Bodhidharma, who took Buddhism to China and founded the Shaolin Temple, thought very little of studying philosophical texts, or worshipping images of the Buddha. His way was through deep meditation directly to the heart of the Buddha-nature that abides in each human being. He was absolutely fearless, and chastised the Emperor Wu in the following way: The Emperor told the Bodhidharma that he had built many temples, and had many of the scriptures translated.

*"And because I have introduced many of my people to Buddhism.... What is my merit?"*

*The Bodhidharma replied sharply, "None at all"*

*The Emperor continued, "Tell me then, what is the essence of Buddhism?"*

*"Vast Emptiness" said the Bodhidharma*

*The Emperor retorted, "If all is vast emptiness. Then who are you?"*

*"I don't know," said the Bodhidharma as he turned on his heels and left.*

The old sage was fearless because of his view of emptiness.

In a Martial conflict, what would be your greatest obstruction, your greatest barrier, even after years of training? You may well find it is the very thing that's been lurking in both your conscious mind, and also in the (so called) subconscious mind. Unless you have really worked on yourself, you will find fear is there, waiting for you. In a conflict, in an instant, you will freeze, stiffen, slow down and start to doubt your own ability.

Here we should ask why? Well, we will be looking at the conflict from a solid centre, the ego, and the self. We see this self as a separate entity, separate from all that now surrounds us. And in that separation from all that is, we become vulnerable. Whereas, if we see the confusion that we have created by this idea of me, of I, of a separate self, then even in a difficult situation we can remain calm. Why is this? Because there is no you, and therefore no enemy. Only appropriate action, unimpeded, spontaneous, and instant.

Ask yourself why the Samurai, (who, at the end of the day were no more than hired, professional killers), should adopt the Zen Buddhist techniques of meditation, which, are de-

signed help people to reach an enlighten states of wisdom and compassion, the very opposite the Samurai's goal. They knew that should they be able to achieve a state of emptiness in battle, they would become invincible. We have also to treat emptiness as an obtainable goal/state, and not just as some exotic theory. Reaching an understanding will bring about a totally new feeling of relaxation and mental well-being, which in turn, will release a great deal of energy. This new feeling of wholeness will reflect in your practice, which will cease to be something to be achieved, a goal to be reach, but instead you will find that you will practice for it's own sake.

## **The Base or Ground of all being:**

Lets go back to that flower, how did it arise, and where did it come from? First lets look at the three levels of existence as described by the Taoist and Buddhist systems, firstly we have Jing, Chi, and Shen and in the Buddhist, Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya or Body, Speech and Mind. Very simply these words relate to the Space, in which things manifest. The Energy by which they manifest, and the solid Manifestations themselves. So the empty space, in which the flower can manifest, is referred to as the Ground or Source in which all the impermanent (things) of the

Universe arise. According to Eastern thought this ground, although "Empty" has the quality of "Clarity" and "Luminosity". Also called "Clear" and "Light". In Tibetan Bon and Buddhism this is called Kunzhi, the Mother of all existence. In Chinese "The Tao" The essence of Kunzhi is emptiness. It is unlimited, absolute space; within it exist no concepts, no entities, no inherent existence of any kind, and it has no boundaries.

This empty space seems external to us, the empty space that objects inhabit, and the empty space of the mind. Even hard to comprehend is that this ground or Kunzhi has neither inside or outside, cannot be said to exist or not exist (because it is empty) for it is reality itself. It is not said to be limitless, nor can it be destroyed, because it has never been born. Language used to describe it is necessarily paradoxical, since this ground is beyond dualism and concept. Therefore, it is unconditioned and cannot be known by the conditioned (mind)

The clarity or light aspect of the ground is pure awareness, so we have the inseparable unity of emptiness and clarity.

Now I will quote from the book called "*The Tibetan Yoga's of Dream and Sleep*" by Tenzin Wangal Rinpoche, because this is such a brilliant explanation of a vital, but very difficult subject.

When the sun goes down in the evening, we say that darkness falls. This is darkness from

the perceiver's point of view. Space is always clear and pervasive, it does not change when the sun rises or sets; there is not dark space and light space. It is only dark or light for us the perceiver. The darkness takes place in space but does not affect the space. When the lamp of awareness is lit, the space of the ground, the base, is illuminated for us, but it was never dark. The darkness was the result of obscurations; our awareness was entangled in the darkness of the ignorant mind.

## **Mind and Matter:**

The essence of both mind and matter is the base, so why does matter lack awareness? Why can sentient beings become enlightened and matter cannot? In Dzogchen (Tibet's system of Metaphysics and Yoga, similar in many ways to Taoism, for example, the Yoga of Dzogchen resembles Qigong) we explain this with a crystal and a lump of coal. Where the crystal represents mind and coal represents matter.

When the sun shines, the coal, even though drenched in light, cannot radiate that light. It lacks the capacity, just as matter lacks the reflective capacity of innate awareness. But when the sunlight reaches the crystal, it reflects the light because it has the

Innate capacity to do so; that is its nature. This capacity manifests as displays of multi-hued light. Similarly, sentient beings have the capacity of innate awareness. The mind of a sen-

tient being reflects the light of primordial awareness and its potential is displayed in either the projections of the mind, or in the pure light of primordial awareness.

It is interesting to note the names of the last four Wudang Forms: Form number nine is called Wu-Qi (emptiness), form ten is called The Still form (only through stillness can emptiness be realised) form eleven The Prenatal Form (Prenatal is the inseparability of Emptiness and clarity) and finally The Finishing Form. Dzogchen is often called The Great Completion. Without doubt this has been the most difficult of all subjects to try and write about, I just hope it has not added too much to the confusion. So I'll leave you on a lighter note:

A seeker after truth trekked for many years through the jungles and mountains to try find a highly realised Yogi, so that he could seek his advice on life. On this journey he encountered many dangers, and hardships, almost lost his life several times. At last, he found the great yogi in a cave at the top of an almost inaccessible mountain. Weary and exhausted, he collapsed onto his hands and knees asking, "What is the meaning of life great yogi?" Without looking up the Yogi replied "Life my son is just a bowl of cherries" With exploding anger, the seeker jumped to his feet, and screamed "What!" as he kicked and punched the cave wall in his temper "What did you say?" Staring fiercely at the yogi he

continued, "Do you mean to tell me after coming all this way, all these hardships, and almost losing my life" then gathering his breath, he shouted "All you can tell me is that life is just a bowl of cherries?" The old yogi looked up, raised his eyebrows, and said, "Do you mean it is n't?"

## **Recommended Reading:**

The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep by Tenzin Wangal Rinpoche.  
The Bliss of Inner Fire by Lama Thubten Yeshe  
Doing Nothing by Steven Harrison  
Blackfoot Physics By F.David Peat  
The Awakening of Intelligence by J Krishnamurti  
Journey into Vastness by Ngakpa Chogyam  
Imagine all the People by The Dalai Lama  
Carefree Dignity by Tsoknyi Rinpoche  
Wholeness Lost and Wholeness Regained by Herbert V. Guenther  
Lord of the Dance by Chagud Tulku  
Natural Great Perfection by Nyoshul Khenpo  
Magic Dance by Thinley Norbu  
Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse

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# Chinese Martial Arts Legends?

By Alex Yeo: Singapore.

I just read Erle's article on Empty Force. I have never seen it before, on tape or in person. Whatever I do know comes from reading on this much hyped and debated subject. What Erle has written makes a lot of sense, and I agree with him. However, I am still inclined to believe that it actually exists.

Let me explain. I am Chinese, and I grew up in a Chinese society, complete with all its *gongfu* shows, novels, and bed-time stories. I have heard about all sorts of stories of old martial arts heroes who could fly through the air or blow up stones with a wave of their palms. Even right now, there is a local drama showing just that.

For years I had thought that these stories were true, and hey, almost every boy friend I had when I was young had fantasies about possessing this or that *shengong* (roughly translated as very special martial art skill), especially when we were bullied!

Our age is an age of 'revealing secrets'. Just take a look in the bookshops and you will find lots of books and magazines claiming to reveal secrets that have been closely guarded for generations, especially in martial arts. Actually, these 'secrets' just show that the legendary men of ages past who performed almost supernatural feats are nothing more than just or-

dinary humans who trained themselves very well, like the Japanese *ninja*.

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**Similarly, 'legends' such as *dianmai* (or dim-mak) are found to be really a science, a very intimate knowledge of the human body and how to manipulate it**

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Similarly, 'legends' such as *dianmai* (or dim-mak) are found to be really a science, a very intimate knowledge of the human body and how to manipulate it, and not some supernatural thing we once thought it was. However, a person still needs to train for decades before he can master it.

Even then, I still read about stories of masters who can perform amazing feats in modern times. For example, I have seen Jackie Chan somersaulted over a second storey balcony to the first floor, but an old man leaping over three storeys to land on the stone floor without a single sound?

Impossible, you say? Well, how about then leaping back *up* the same distance? Yup, he just stood there and leapt straight up, that is, according to the witnesses who swore they actually saw it happen with their own eyes.

Additionally, I have browsed through many Chinese martial arts books/manuals and there are some mention of those legendary skills.

These manuals have a common theme though, that such skills are fast becoming extinct. The last remaining masters who possess the knowledge are already dead, or are dying, and the skills are not passed on, mostly for the reason that there is no one worthy enough to pass the skills to.

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**the skills are not passed on, mostly for the reason that there is no one worthy enough to pass the skills to.**

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Some historical records have mentioned the loss of certain skills. I am not surprised that our generation is witnessing a repeat of history.

If such skills and masters do exist, why are they not publicising it? Well, during the Cultural Revolution, many masters were persecuted just for practising martial arts. It makes sense that they therefore kept their skills secret. Traditionally too, masters don't go around telling people how good they are.

Therefore, I believe that empty force, or whatever *shengong*, really do exist, but they could be on the path to becoming lost. However, I also believe that many so-called masters to day are, to put it simply, fakes. It takes a long time to master a skill, and true masters don't go on road shows to tell people how good they are and boost their egos!

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**However, I also believe that many so-called masters to day are, to put it simply, fakes.**

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Anyway, the Shaolin Temple is said to possess a library that has, over the centuries, collected martial arts manuals from all over the known world. Assuming that the library, and its contents, is still intact, after all the wars and revolutions in China, perhaps, just perhaps, those legendary skills are recorded somewhere in there?

OK, so I believe the legendary skills exist, so what am I doing about it? Nothing.

I have spent lots of time and money in my lifetime searching for the best martial art, the original style, the ultimate whatever. It took me a long time to realise that there is no point because what I have right now is more than enough. More than I can hope to master in my lifetime.

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**It took me a long time to realise that there is no point because what I have right now is more than enough. More than I can hope to master in my life time**

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There will always be new 'secrets' being revealed. A very comprehensive book on Yang Jianhou's style was finally available recently. I bought it, but it is unlikely that I'll try to learn his style in the near future, because if I keep changing styles, I'd only become a jack of all trades but master of none.

I agree with what Erle said (paraphrasing it) that what we have in our hands right now *is* magic, magic that *can* and *will* change our lives, if only we would just stick to it instead of wasting time running around looking for quick-fix magical solutions.

There is an old saying – “when the student is ready, the master will appear.” I believe in the martial arts stories I grew up with, and I believe too that if I am meant to learn it, it will cross my path without me having to look for it. Until then, my present art is good enough, and I'm sticking to it until my 'master' finds me.

The *Taijiquan* that we have is good enough, master it and it will serve you well. I don't care if the legends are proved to exist, or don't exist. The *Taijiquan* I practice right now is real, and it suits me fine. The legends can remain legends for all I care, although I certainly don't mind being able to leap right up to my sweetheart's apartment!

*Alex is working upon becoming our WTBA Representative in Singapore: Just as soon as he CAN leap up the 3 floors to his Lass's apartment!*



## NEW VIDEO TITLES:

### **MTG206:**

The 3 Energy Systems of the Human Body. How to Use them and How to Activate them.

### **MTG207:**

Yang Lu-ch'an Form Corrections: Volume 1.

### **MTG208:**

Yang Lu-ch'an Form Corrections Volume 2.

### **MTG209:**

Yang Lu-ch'an Form Corrections Volume 3.

### **MTG210:**

Yang Lu-ch'an Form Corrections Volume 4.

### **MTG211:**

Sudden Violence, Volume 8. Training Methods for Sudden Violence.

**Please Note:** For Australia only, there is an added G.S.T. To the price of the magazine subscription bringing the Australian Sub up to **\$Aust33.00 Total.**

# Empty Force

By Erle Montague

I received in my email box this week a message from some Shaolin based Martial Art system telling about some amazing video clips that I should see. The video clips were about a US based 'Martial Artist' who had just given a work shop in the UK.

So, tentatively, I spent some money to wait for these clips to download. They show a person standing there in a rather vulnerable position with another person standing some feet away pointing his hand at him. A couple of minutes and the person being pointed at begins to sway and then moves forward! Most of the video clips were of this type taking a couple of minutes for the so-called 'empty force' to work. However there was another clip of a so-called knife attack. I say 'so-called' because no self-respecting knifer would ever attack in that manner by running at the attackee with an outstretched knife from a distance of about 15 feet away! The attacker gets to where the empty force person is, the empty force person moves his body to the side thus avoiding the 'attack' and the knifer falls to the ground. The caption reads, "A Knife Attacker is thrown to the ground without touching him".

Well, I was disappointed as I have seen much better circus tricks and more professionally done. Only a few attending the demonstration were actually fooled by these demonstrations with most being very skeptical.

If you can not make a living by teaching people simply how to defend themselves, then don't! Why do people have to have some super-natural powers in order to make a living from martial arts? The martial arts are very special and magical as they are without all of the circus tricks.

---

**If you cannot make a living by teaching people simply how to defend themselves, then don't**

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I showed some of the clips to a friend of mine who is head of physiology at Sydney University. He came back with the answer that each time, the body language and muscles being used of the person being pulled forward or pushed backward or downward, indicated that he was using his own muscles either consciously or sub-consciously to make this happen. At one time, one of the clips claimed that the student was being lifted up by the throat by the empty force. However, when viewed, you actually see his head moving downward not up!

Most people who attend workshops and seminars go there be-

cause they WANT to believe! And people always 'see what they want to see'. There is so much emotional stuff happening in some one's body when another person tells them that something weird will happen to them when he waves his hand etc., that as soon as they DO feel something, ANYTHING, they deem it to be because of what the other person is doing to them!

There is another thing that just didn't ring true about this particular demonstration. In every clip, the 'doer' took around one to two minutes to have any empty force cause the student to move. However in the so-called knife attack, it was instant! So one would think that if some one could instantly use 'empty force' on an attacker, that he would do it all the time.

---

**In every instance, the person having empty force done on them, stands in the most vulnerable position possible so that, of course after a minute or so in that position, there will be some body movement.**

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In every instance, the person having empty force done on them, stands in the most vulnerable position possible so that, of course after a minute or so in that position, there will be some body movement. In order not to

make the visiting dignitary look stupid, the person having this done to him HAS to do something, so he uses this opportunity to add to his body momentum and literally either causes him self to fall forward or backward.

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**The Skeptical Society in the USA and indeed world wide have a standing invitation to anyone who is able to demonstrate under scientific conditions anything super-natural: It has never been taken!**

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The Skeptical Society in the USA and indeed worldwide have a standing invitation to anyone who is able to demonstrate under scientific conditions anything super-natural. They will give \$100,000 to anyone who can do this. Now, being able to move some one or throw them away or cause them to miss when they knife you would be classified as being super-natural! So why has no-one ever claimed their prize! And I also have a standing agreement for \$US1000.00 (which is all I can legally afford) that will be given to anyone who is able to move me so much as one inch without touching me using so-called empty force. This has to of course be done underscientific conditions so that the person doing it can not claim the prize because my body moved to or fro as one's body does standing in such a position for a log pe riod. The per son must stand there and al low me to at tack him with a

knife and must not touch me in any way! I will gladly give this money to any one who is able to demonstrate to me such ability on me! However, all that have tried so far have not even been able to move me one inch, they have often moved me to tears though!! And thank good ness I have such stu dents who are also skeptical and who never play the game as no-one has ever been able to move one of my stu dents with out touch ing them.

And even if such a person existed who could move some one in some way, what kind of a martial art asks someone to stand there for one min ute while the empty force works!

I have seen these things over and over again. I guess there are many millions of gullible people in the world who want to believe in something super natural in the mar tial arts. And this comes about by people not wishing to put in the hard work necessary to simply become good at a mar tial sys tem! Many people SEEM some what su per natural in their self-defence. But it is simply that they have worked for thirty or forty years train ing hard at the one mar tial art in or der to get to where they are. Newcomers want to get it all in a cou ple of years, so when some one comes along who tells them that they can also move people without touching them, almost instantly without hard training, they jump at it, hand ing over their hard earned money.

You cannot use Qi power to move some one from a dis tance! Humans were not made that way. And in most cases the so-called 'master' is over-weight, obviously unhealthy and has so much upper body tension that even if they could do such things, the Qi would be blocked in the upper body! An un healthy per son can not use Qi to move people. If you cannot use your own Qi to make you healthy, then what hope do you have of using any excess Qi to move people without touching them? And it must take a lot of Qi do to that! So if your own Qi is too busy trying to fix your own body, then what hope do you have?

Qi can be used to heal others and your self and you can af fect the way some one's body works by affecting the various elec tro-magnetic flows in the body to drain Qi etc. But you must be very close to the per son and you must touch their Magnetic flows. In order to do this you must wipe your hands as close to with out ac tu ally touch ing the body. So in order to do this of course you must first of all be able to fight to de fend your self!

To know if a teacher is true, firstly look at his eyes. Are they spar kling, healthy. Then look at his body, how he holds the body. Is his upper body tense, over-bulked. Is he overweight and ob vi ously out of con di tion. Is he calm and friendly, con fi dent but not overly. Look at the way he is bal anced or not. Is he bottom heavy (this is good). Does he have fa-jing (ex plosive energy) in his punches or

other attacks? Can he knock your arm off while punching a hand held mitt from only one inch away or even while touching the mitt with his finger-tips? How is his ego?

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**On national TV, I have burnt cotton wool at ten paces using my 'Qi', I have had a sharp sword thrust into my neck and it bent causing no harm, I have broken river stones with one finger and walked on eggs! And I have 'moved' people without touching them. All tricks!**

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On national TV, I have burnt cotton wool at ten paces using my 'Qi', I have had a sharp sword thrust into my neck and it bent causing no harm, I have broken river stones with one finger and walked on eggs! I can kick one of my students in the groin with a very hard groin kick and cause no damage and I have rubbed a piece of wood causing it to burn after one minute and I have put out candles using my 'Qi'. I have had people punching and using knife edge strikes to my neck and I have done the old chop-stick in the neck trick. I have had a Tae Kwon-do expert kick me full force into the solar plexus! However, at the end of it I always explain how the TRICK is done! Some require some training however, and also some expertise but in the end they are ALL tricks of physics, some are just circus tricks. Very convinc-

ing tricks where even the camera man did not believe me when I explained that the sword in the neck was only a trick. So I told him that I could also teach him how to do it in 30 seconds. He held his breath but trusted me to do it, and voila, the sword was bending like a fishing rod when I thrust it into his neck, not a mark! After one such demonstration and before I could explain that they were all tricks, one person in the audience asked that I do the sword in the neck up against a wall without any one holding the other end of the sword and simply thrust my own body forward onto it! So I did this with the same effect, the sword bending like a fishing rod! This last one takes some training and conditioning though and I would not advise anyone to try it! ALL TRICKS! Healing someone from a distance is however, a completely different story! I have done some wonderful healings on people by simply being there! Or by having someone simply phone me. Nothing special though, it's all in the training and every one has natural healing abilities. But God did not make us so weak that we could be pushed over from a distance! Nor can you ever use Qi for ego in demonstration. And after-all, that's all it comes down to when people do these tricks in public, just to show how good they are or that they have some kind of super-natural power over other people that mere mortals do not have! Any people who would have these powers, would not be known! They would not NEED to let it

be known as they would be above ego! And if you ever asked one of these people about it, he/she would tell you exactly what I am telling you now so that you would not waste most of your life trying for something that was unattainable! Like the story of Buddha when he came across a yogi sitting by the river. He asked where he could get a boat to go across. The yogi pointed to a boat and then said that he had spent 60 years of his life meditating and now he was able to walk on water! Buddha simply said that it might have been better to use the boat and not waste one's life when you could be doing more for people rather than a very selfish past-time!

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**These circus tricks are getting people away from the real meaning of the Martial Arts.**

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These circus tricks are getting people away from the real meaning of the Martial Arts. We do martial arts firstly to get ourselves healthy, then to be able to defend ourselves and family and lastly to be able to heal others of illness in mind and body. This takes lots of hard work. But along the way you gain so much from learning a real internal martial art rather than circus tricks! The quickest way to get circus tricks is to purchase them from a shop in Taiwan that specializes in such things.

# THE SPINE FORCE OF TAI CHI.

By Paul Brecher

I am a martial artist, not a fighter, when I teach Tai Chi I put the emphasis on making people's bodies stronger not on damaging other people's bodies. Fighters seem to me to be more concerned with taking other people apart and I am more concerned with fixing them. If someone has a weakness, illness or imbalance I try to make them stronger, healthier and more balanced.

So this article is for martial artists, people who through self defence training get self development, not fighters who are keen to destroy the opponent. Fighters practice fighting by fighting and they don't need to do martial arts training. Martial artists don't fight and they do need to train in the martial arts to be able to defend themselves against fighters.

We can split the martial arts up into two groups, the ones which concentrate more on wrestling, grappling and throwing and the ones which emphasise striking. Tai Chi Chuan is translated as The Yin Yang Fist and is one of the greatest striking systems ever invented.

We can further split the striking systems up into external and internal. An external stylist would hit the opponent with

their fist powered by their surface muscles in their upper body.

An internal stylist would have the muscles relaxed and be using the deep tendons, sinew and ligaments and would be using their hip bone rotation as the power behind the elbow that was moving the fist. Also they would be using Reverse Lower Abdominal Breathing and exhale as they hit to generate more chi for the punch.

So external stylists are using a power source close to the fist and internal stylists have the origin of their punch closer to the centre of their body.

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We have to train the deeper internal power of the body so that we can pack a punch that will stop a seasoned fighter. He will not care whether he kills you or gets killed, he does not mind being hit and is totally focused on repeatedly hitting you. He has no care for the consequences of his actions and to stop him we must make use of every possible resource at our disposal.

A martial artist may be good in training at a wide variety of

combat skills, punches, kicks etc but a fighter in a conflict will quite naturally thrust a broken bottle into your neck, smash a chair over your head or with a concealed blade, stab you through the heart. He will do these things because he has done them before and knows they work, so to survive an encounter with a fighter we have to make every one of our strikes count. We must put all the power we can get in to the strike, and the more internal you go the more power you get.

I would still like to believe that it is possible, even in a kill or be killed situation, to hold on to some higher moral ground. Wouldn't it be great if when a man tries to kill you by slashing your throat instead of killing him to try and survive, you could stun him, disarm him, restrain him, make a citizens arrest and then hand him over to the police to face justice in a court of law.

However in this worst case scenario, when you are fighting for your life and the lives of your family and friends then maybe you too need to grab a chair and do whatever is necessary to survive, protect and win.

Well if you cannot get your hands on a weapon, then your hands have to be a weapon. The bullet is powered by the gunpowder, the arrow is powered by the bow. In Tai Chi the fist is powered by the spine. There is

nothing more in the centre you can get than the spine, it is in the middle of the middle and the centre of the centre. The spine is where all our true spiritual power comes from. When the spine is full of chi we have power, when it is not we are 'spineless'.

Earlier in this article we got as internal as the punch coming from the hip and breathing from the belly, well the hip turn comes from the spine rotation and the deepest breathing one can do is spine breathing. So to be practising Tai Chi truly as the most internal martial art that it is we need to punch with our Spine Power.

Would Tai Chi Spine Power enable a martial artist to defeat a fighter, maybe, madly not, anyway at the end of the day its the person not the style that wins or loses. Ultimately the only way to defeat a fighter is to unleash from within oneself the same dormant animal madness that a fighter has easy access to.

This terrible in human potential is then expressed not through techniques but through the Tai Chi WAY of doing things, it is a WAY of moving and most importantly a WAY of being. You are there but not there, you did something but you don't know what it was, after you have done what you did, you know it was you who did it, but you weren't there when it happened.

True Tai Chi Fa jin should release the spirit power that lives in the spine when this happens

a strange disassociation from yourself takes place, something moves in the spine, like hot mercury rising up a thermometer, it rises up the spine and creates an almost unbearable pressure in the reptile brain at the top of the spine, it is this which then makes the hair on the back of your neck stand on end and your ears flatten against your skull, a grim smile appear on your face and a mad glare in your eyes. You want to leap at the opponent like a tiger impacting with its prey, your hands like claws want to rip his head off.

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**Your body is flooded with yang energy, you defend by attacking first, you want to follow up your attack with another attack, something primal and instinctive takes over.**

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Your body is flooded with yang energy, you defend by attacking first, you want to follow up your attack with another attack, something primal and instinctive takes over. Someone wanted to kill you so some kind of natural justice will now take place. Kill or be killed? how to justify this, well as they say, better to be taken in by two, rather than carried out by six.

So when is it ok to lose yourself to save yourself? well if some drugged up criminals armed with knives and crow bars looking to maim and kill to get cash for their next fix attack you. In this situation you need to re-

lease the primitive inhuman power of survival that is stored in your spine. Is it justifiable to be so extreme in your response? Well if they kill you who will look after your wife and kids?

And when the explosive shockwave flows through you remember the call of the wild, do what the animal do, GO FOR THE NECK. 90% of the strikes in Tai Chi are to the neck St 9, LI17, TW17, CV22, CV23, SI 16, GB 20, BL10, TW16, TW17, GV 15, GV 16, Cupped palm to side of neck and cupped palm to back of neck. These are the points that must be hit with Fa Jin. With Fa Jin from the Spine, Remember, TAI CHI IS FA JIN. All the sensations I have described so far are what should be happening to you when you do a series of continuous Fa Jin strikes.

When I say Tai Chi I am of course only referring to The Old Yang Style System of Yang Lu Chan and the Qi Disruption System of Chang San Feng. When you do the Mother Applications of the Small San Sau, the Advanced Large San Sau and the Hidden Applications of The Pauchui Form and put these into Peng Hinge Double Fa Jin Rebound Combat Push Hands, then you get what Tai Chi as a Martial Art is really all about and will have a chance in a fight at being the last one standing.

So here are the various ways we can tap in to the spine power in training.

First there is the Opening and Closing of the Spine on each posture, this begins as a visible movement but eventually becomes an internal energy movement that we feel but can not be seen, as if the whole body was breathing.

An other way is to have the C back ( this is a very aggressive posture), to begin with it is a physical shape but eventually one must have a straight vertical spine with just the feeling as if one were carrying a giant tortoise shell on ones back.

This straight vertical spine idea is essential to have for Fa jin, the spine must be as straight as the trunk of a pine tree so that when we shake it all the branches/leaves (arms/hands, legs/feet) will also shake.

Advanced spinal breathing can be done when practising The Old Yang Style Long Form or in the Three Circle Standing Chi Kung posture. What we do is to increase the distance between the vertebrae as we inhale and bring them closer together as we exhale, it feels like the spine is stretching to meet the ground and the sky and then compressing to its centre. As it does so a wave of sparkling chi rushes down the arms to the finger tips. The healing ability of this spinal breathing is incredible (all the nerves that control the whole body have their roots in the spine).

An other aspect of the spine is the disc/vertebrae couples, they are each like little batteries and we can join them all up to form

one large battery capable of releasing a very large charge. We do this by sinking into our lumbar vertebrae so that they all connect up together on certain moves in the Old Yang Form. Also we get a very powerful lumbar spine compression for energy release when we do 'The Sleeves Dancing Like Plumb Blossoms' series of movements, both the rear leg heel stomp and the front leg slap step cause a lumbar shock compression chi release. An other way of getting this spine power is in the advanced single and double Pushing hands, here it is your partner who compresses the lumbar area for you.

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### **This straight vertical spine idea is essential to have for Fa jin,**

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And finally we can do a thing that is a feeling, we imagine that the spine was a vertical straight steel bar which had been heated up till it was white hot and glowing, radiating heat out to the whole of the rest of the body and then cooling and the heat condenses into the core of the spine. This is synchronised with your inhaling and exhaling, the heat is not hot, it is bright, white, light chi.

All these are ways of tapping into the spirit in the spine, the original spirit lives in the coccyx, sacrum and lumbar (particularly in GV 4), as it is released it travels up the spine. Now if we release it in a fight situation then it will activate our reptile brain as described earlier.

If we release it with a healing feeling whilst in Three Circle Standing Chi Kung or in The Old Yang Style Long Form (Which is really a huge Chi Kung Movement, you are walking around holding the Three Circle Standing Chi Kung posture) then there will be a transformation of the spirit to a higher level as it ascends up the spine, the spine must be straight and vertical for the spirit to reach the head top.

One feels its presence on GV 20 and the whole body emits golden healing light energy. The transformation of the base spirit into a higher spirit is wonderful and most beneficial, it increases ones humanity and promotes the creation of constructive endeavours and correct behaviour. It also enables creative work to more easily evolve and also increases the flow of universal information through you. I feel that most of this article is information that came through me rather than from me.

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# Being a Long-Distance Video Student

by Michael Babin

**F**or those who were hoping that I had retired from writing about

different aspects of taiji on a permanent basis — and not just taken a short sabbatical — sorry.

There's been a real explosion in the last few years in the quantity and quality of videos available for self-instruction and this has been a blessing for those who can't find competent instruction in their geographical area. Bearing in mind that it is always preferable to learn in person from a qualified instructor, it has been my experience that Erle's videos are a valid way to learn if you approach them with some discipline.

I had been doing a traditional yang style of tai chi for ten years and teaching it for five when I first met Erle in 1990 and also had the benefit of a decade of experience in a variety of hard styles. Despite this, I still found it difficult to teach myself accurately from his videos as the forms and methods were very different and superior to those that I had been learned in the past. I would probably have

given-up if I hadn't had the opportunity to study with him in

person on an annual basis for the first few years after I began studying his curriculum.

Based on my experience as well as talking to many people, beginners as well as experienced martial artists; I would like to offer some advice on being a long-distance student:

I acknowledge that you may well be an incipient genius or perhaps the reincarnation of Yang Lu-Chan or Dong Hai Chuan. However, if you are a beginner, you should still buy a tape that is aimed at the basic level of the form or method you want to learn!

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**However, if you are a beginner, you should still buy a tape that is aimed at the basic level of the form or method you want to learn!**

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I recommend watching the whole tape through at least once before trying to copy any of the physical methods shown and then teach yourself only one posture per week until you have the whole form/training method.

Unless it is a very simple set, it may take months before you can struggle through the entire thing; much less do it well. As with any kind of training, it is

difficult to make progress unless you actually practice every day.

From what I have been able to see in discussions with people over the years, most of the beginners who buy such a tape will become discouraged with their progress or bored by having to motivate themselves to practice on their own and never finish learning the form.

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**Experienced martial artists tend to purchase a variety of advanced videos and watch them once or twice to compare styles or to get a superficial understanding of what is being taught; rarely will they practice what they see with any patience or discipline**

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Beginners with previous hard-style martial arts or yoga/dance experience can often learn the physical movements relatively quickly; but being able to do the postures on a technical level is only part of what the internal arts is all about. Your development is problematic if your attitude remains: "I can do this form all the way through now, what do I learn next!?"

Experienced martial artists tend to purchase a variety of advanced videos and watch them once or twice to compare

styles or to get a superficial understanding of what is being taught; rarely will they practice what they see with any patience or discipline — more often they will assume that the training method shown is “too easy” or “just like the deadly nos tril lock that I practised ten years ago when I was studying the art of Authentic Ninjitsu Karate Taiji Death Blows in which I was a 20th grade Plat i num Sash”.

More than once I have talked to someone who identified himself as an experienced martial artist who owned many of Erle’s videos and when discussing various aspects of the forms/methods, it became clear that they had never really studied the material discussed. It bears repeating that **HAVING A CABINET FULL OF VIDEOS IS USELESS IF YOU DON’T PLAY THEM REPEATEDLY AND PRACTICE WHAT YOU SEE AND THEN CORRECT WHAT YOU ALREADY THINK YOU KNOW!**

The Best, and rarest, approach is to pick one system, whether it be qigong, tai chi, pa-kua or qi disruption and then take your time over a number of years — actually daring to learn the basic forms first and then progress to the more advanced ways of approaching them; and, most important of all, actually visiting Erle or one of his accredited instructors periodically to improve your understanding of what that you have taught yourself. Speaking from bitter experience, it is easy to convince yourself that you are doing the posture or method exactly like

Erle on the video only to discover that you are “way-off” in your interpretation. If I had a dollar for every time that I have watched one of Erle’s videos after not looking at it for a few months and seen something that I missed on previous viewings — I’d have a lot of dollars!

It is also true that you quite often don’t observe details of movement and body mechanics until you have made enough progress to “see” the subtle as opposed to the gross details. Such progress is usually the fruit of years of hard work.

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**It is also true that you quite often don’t observe details of movement and body mechanics until you have made enough progress to “see” the subtle as opposed to the gross details**

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Oh, and by the way, if you are teaching yourself the martial stuff — it’s a good idea to have a training partner with the same amount of aptitude and interest as yourself. You can’t learn to make any self-defence method workable if you only ever practise by yourself — no matter how hard you punch a makiwara or heavy bag or how well or fast you can do a form.

I think that Erle has done the tai chi world a great service by putting out much “good oil” so that people like Al Krych in the USA, Tony Court in the UK

and John Kavanagh in the Irish Republic, among many others, can work to improve their already considerable skills and be deserving members of the WTBA. It is unfortunate that there are also just as many people out there buying a few videos and learning a form superficially who then go on to claim to be Erle’s equal or to have invented the forms/methods themselves. Like any other aspect of life, there is a good and a bad side to the wealth of material that Erle has made available to long-distance students like myself.

Good luck with your training.

*And Welcome Back Michael, I am sure that most of our readers will be chuffed that you are again using your considerable talents to enhance our lives through these pages.*

# WTBA NEWS

**T**he WTBA's annual week long camp was held again at MT Warning, NSW with around 100 attending again from all parts of the world.

This year we concentrated upon The Old Yang Style corrections as the backdrop and also managed to get through, roughly, the last three Qi Disruptive katas!

All who attended agreed that this was definitely the best camp ever. And those newcomers to the WTBA's way of doing things were all pleasantly surprised.

The food was excellent being provided by Mause, Rob, Vicky and Laurel. And again, Rob and Mause ran the whole 'show' flawlessly.

There were a few new instructors certificates given and upgrades handed out. Mike Kanewski from the UK received his first instructor's certificate.

And Morne Swanepoel became the WTBA's representative from Zimbabwe. Caitanya Nrsima-Das became our Representative for Venezuela while Andrain Inchauspe became our Representative for Argentina.

And Keith Brown was upgraded to Instructor 4th degree. Keith has worked so hard over the past 20 or so years to attain this high level.

A sad note though. Willie Blumears, our representative for Africa has just lost his son in a plane crash! I am sure that all of your thought will be with he and his family at this time.

And on another sad note, Kevin Brennan, the Editor of Australasian Fighting Arts Magazine, has also lost his son in a car crash. He was only 17!

Year 2001 we will be holding the annual camp back at our normal time of September with a cut-off date for enrolment of the 15th of June 2001. We will continue with the Yang Lu-ch'an corrections along with anything else that needs to be covered like push hands and Baguazhang circular form.

Our New Zealand lot have held a wonderful camp which I am told was the best ever with many new students attending. And Peter Jones in Wales has held his annual WTBA camp with a great response. I have received a number of emails and letters with glowing reports.

Our weekend camps are going well once per month. Rob and Mause have upgraded their facility to now include an Aussie outback loo and a large undercover area etc. These weekend camps are becoming more popular as people discover them.

## Some of the attendees of Camp 2000



# The Slowest Martial Arts

*Jim Marincic*

**I**t has been a month now since the camp 2000, a very interesting time I must say. Some people I knew from previous time in 1997 and we are good friends by now. It was a the most information packed time I have had in a long time. My old brain could not cope with all this new material so I will have to get the tapes from Erle later in the date. Needless to say, we all come back south and back to basics. It took a few weeks to wait for dust to settle so back to practice, push hands, Small San-Sau, Pau-Chui, Ta-Lu with the great est of joy to find out how little we knew about it.

The most interesting is a Small San-Sau where lots of people claim that one must practice in such a way, that at no time at all one should touch the De-Mak points whilst practicing with opponent. This surprised me the most, as we all know that accuracy and timing is the most important topic in De-Mak. We all know that by the first opening numbers, Rt. punch to the head, Lt. and Rt. again, one must practice the correct defending application.

Since it is up to defender to practice and become skillful in the course of repetition by punch thrower. This way of practice is however the only way know that "Tai-Chi" could be useful as a martial art. In due time one can increase the combination of punches at random and then of course it depends on the courage of defender to developed his or hers skills to a further levels. There is no easier way, I wish it would have been, but unfortunately as

I said in previous articles there must be a baptism of fire so to speak.

Violence is and always will be a part of our lives and if we would like to feel secure, now this is very nice and positive attitude to have, but does it work? I presume, and as lots of new age people thinks in this days is, think positively, wrap you self in white light and surround you self with a bubble for protection, then of course is the best way to stay where you are and practice a shadow boxing. But as we all know the shadows are getting longer for a most of us every day and the days to part with this world is getting nigh.

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**This surprised me the most, as we all know that accuracy and timing is the most important topic in De-Mak.**

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So what do you want from this formidable "skill" that you call "Tai-Chi"? Why we are here? Why do we practice a "De-Mak"? Why practice a "Small-San Sau"? Now, in my opinion, and I don't think it counts as much, if you happened to practice in a wrong way or a useful way, then you are wasting you time. If, by the opening number, by example the defender is not performing the right actions, that means to touch the points of "De-Mak", ST9 or caratussinus, then you missed your point so to speak. The instructor should have enough skills to pull back a striking hand not to injure or seriously harm the person, but the hand "Must" reach the target!! That happens only with long time of practice and understanding how the "Fa-Jing" works.

The very same thing is with a push hands, every movement "must" be executed, ex. "Pang ,Lu,Un,Ge" without this movements, push hands is useless, of course there is a many push hands techniques but this is one of them and it is a basic.

We all start from basics and that gives us a strong foundations in our further practice. The wonderful "Ta-Lu" that is where you find a positive stepping ,which are so important part of your martial training, I personally did not see any people at the camp training in "Ta-Lu". And of course, don't forget "Pau-Chui" to understand this art is to "Master" every technique in it the form single or double must "flow" and be jointed perfectly without any mishaps and applications must be spot on the "De-Mak" points and this of course is the pinnacle in "Tai-Chi-Chuan" ala Old Yang style. Look fellows, I am not a violent man, I am 61 years of age (still in a good shape) husband of 34 years to still my only loving wife and father of my two love liest daughters who are so soft and and lovely it would melt your heart and in no way able to protect themselves in any given violent situation and some times it worries me, how can you teach a person who has no violent streak in him, how to protect themselves hope that they would never had to and that is all that we can all hope for for everybody's sake. As I said, I upset few people in the camp and for that I am truly sorry, but it happened and there is no way that one can prove any fighting skills without action, even if "Tai-Chi" is the slow est of all martial arts. — Happy training Jim.

# Tom Jones and the fa-jing hip-swing

By Paul Dunbar

All the usual claims of unworthiness and apologies to those who know this stuff already should be taken for granted.

My taiji has taken me from a dull and unremarkable individual to a dull and unremarkable individual with something to talk about in about 4-5 years or so. I have taken it upon myself to write a book about how to get through the Yang Cheng-fu form without having to take the usual 2-3 years. The book is being written early in my taiji career so that I do not lose sight of how a beginner actually goes through the learning process. The book, currently without a title or prospective publisher, will contain detailed descriptions of how to get into each of the positions, tabulated descriptions to act as aide memoir's to the form and diagrams. But as we all know, there are some things you just can't get from a book. So I started writing down the descriptions I give to my students that appear to work best for them. My classes are full of this kind of thing.

Trying to get across to people the concept of fa-jing is like trying to eat porridge with a garden fork. I had almost given up on this when I found myself looking through a

book on anatomy. Nothing special, just a simple dictionary / encyclopaedia kind of thing, and it hit me that what we are dealing with is a bunch of elastic bands working in opposition to each other.

Let me explain. There are, basically, three tendons, or ligaments, that control the movement of the hip joint – that is the ball and socket of the femur (thigh bone) and pelvis (hip bone). These are the ischiofemoral, iliofemoral, and the pubofemoral ligaments. Keep reading, this is not a biology lesson; I stop the technobabble right here! These each attach between the thighbone and the pelvis in such a way as to control the movement of the joint and stop it from moving too far and so causing the joint to fail through dislocation.

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**It stands to reason then that if all these ligaments are working against each other to avoid excessive strain on the ball and socket joint, then at some point in the joint's movement the ligaments must be in equilibrium or in a balanced situation.**

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It stands to reason then that if all these ligaments are work-

ing against each other to avoid excessive strain on the ball and socket joint, then at some point in the joint's movement the ligaments must be in equilibrium or in a balanced situation. If this were not the case then the hip would continue to rotate or flex until the whole thing just un-screwed itself.

The trick now is to find that balance point. This is where we, as students, need to do a bit of work. Take up a natural bow stance and get comfortable. With the weight forward, the hips are more or less square on to the front. With the weight on the back foot and the rear knee bent correctly, the hips will rotate out to the outside angle. This is all basic stuff so far. Now take the weight forward and turn out the front toes as to make a brush-knee-twist-step movement. As the weight travels forward and the back foot begins to lift, the waist will want to turn outward. Allow the trailing foot to remain in contact with the floor for as long as possible, then as the rear foot is raised, the hips move out to become square with the supporting foot.

Clear as mud, yes? Right then. The hips, when relaxed, will always find a balance point which makes them dead square with the toes of the supporting foot. It

is like a 'sweet spot' where the hips are actually settled and no effort is needed to keep them there. Try it place one foot toward north. Imagine a steel rod pushed through the hips running left to right. This rod will be aligned west to east. Turn the supporting foot toward west. The imagined rod now runs south to north.

It only works if the body, and specifically the hips are relaxed.

While you are standing there on one foot with this bit of text in your hand, as you do, gently rotate the body over the hip and allow it to move back to it's square position again. Either way works so try both. If the leg gets sore, change the foot you are standing on. While doing this, you will notice a slight rebound from one side to the other. It feels like there is some kind of shock absorber working to avoid the hip just rolling around down there.

The fact is, the shock absorber is there and it is the tendons I was just talking about. They are acting as a group of elastic bands, trying to bring the hips back to a comfortable position.

As one tendon pulls the hip one way it will invariably pull just a little too far. So the corresponding tendon, which is now being extended, pulls the movement back. The rocking and rolling motion only lasts for one or two rebounds but it is there.

If you have both feet on the floor, the same thing happens. The tendons of both legs begin

working together and resolve the balance is sue by forming a kind of averaged out position where both hips have an equal amount of torsion, or rotational, strain. Try this as well, preferably with Tom Jones songs playing in the back ground. (You will see what I mean when you try it!)

The whole rebound thing was initially mentioned to me some time ago before I began training with Erle Montague and his merry little band, but I could not quite grasp the technique. The rebound also gives taijiquan its characteristic rolling movement where the body appears to be in constant change. I have read articles in past journals that mention 'closing the movement' or 'completing the move'. This seems to do it for me. I have found little extra positions within the standard form where I can comfortably fit that elusive missing breath which occasionally leaves you gasping for air or filling like a balloon.

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**The rebound also gives taijiquan its characteristic rolling movement where the body appears to be in constant change.**

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Now, this little rebound we have been cultivating for the past few minutes has some wondrous implications. When the body needs to change direction, we would expect to have to stop first, then get started again. Using the rebound we negate the need to exert any effort in stopping and then breaking the

inertia to get started again. The relaxed body will do the job for us. Secondly, with the inertia broken, we can bring about a more rapid acceleration of the following move. Acceleration is what we are looking for in fa-jing any thing which holds us back is to be avoided. Think, a car will accelerate faster from 0-30mph than it does from 30-60mph. It is the same differential; the difference is that in going from 30-60mph the object (the car) is already moving to start with.

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**In regular taiji training at that lovely slow pace that everyone 'knows' taiji to be about, use the rebound to add that extra bit of panache to the form. It should be there anyway so allow it to happen.**

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In regular taiji training at that lovely slow pace that everyone 'knows' taiji to be about, use the rebound to add that extra bit of panache to the form. It should be there anyway so allow it to happen. In fa-jing, use the rebound to produce the kind of speed that does not require any external sound effects... it makes itself heard all on it's own!

So to find that extra bit of advantage when releasing fa-jing, think relaxed hips, think rebound, think no inertia, think... Tom Jones!

