

# COMBAT & HEALING

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# COMBAT & HEALING

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## ABOUT THE COVER

Stuart Le Marseny, chief instructor for the W.T.B.A. Australia, and main student of Erle Montague doing what he loves second best, building. Well, actually, third best!

The other photo comes from the all American Push Hands Tournament 1992! well, this is how they do it isn't it?

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# INVESTING IN LOSS

by Michael Babin

Any serious student of T'ai Chi Ch'uan who has bothered to take workshops with different instructors and/or view the videos now available should be aware that the Yang style has changed a great deal since the days of Yang Ch'eng-fu and even more so when compared to the forms created by his grandfather, Yang Lu-ch'an.

Sadly, in most cases, the changes have not been for the better. Since the death of Ch'eng-fu in 1936, the majority of subsequent interpretations of the Yang slow and fast forms have lost much, if not all, of their health-giving and combat benefits.

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*the majority of subsequent interpretations of the Yang slow and fast forms have lost much, if not all, of their health-giving and combat benefits.*

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While "older is not necessarily better"; it remains true that many of the variations developed in the last forty years are lesser versions of their Yang Family ancestors. While many of the newer forms/styles are suitable for beginners or those with a minimal interest in T'ai Chi; they don't have enough depth to sustain those whose interest and effort goes beyond a superficial understanding of the art.

When you compare the forms taught by instructors like Erle Montague, Liang Shouyu, Fu Zhongwen and Yang Zhen-duo to the majority of Yang styles being practised around the world; it should be obvious to the experienced that something has gone wrong in the process of transmission.

Sometimes this is deliberate as when an expert changes the form to

conceal its essence from the unworthy; however, more often the problem lies in the number and quality of the intermediaries between the student and whoever created the form/style being learning.

In general, the fewer people involved the less chance there is of serious errors being introduced. Think of it like this — would you rather own the master recording of a symphony done with professional equipment or the copy you made from the bootleg copy somebody else made with amateur recording equipment!

Even with the highest skill and best intentions, some changes occur every time a form is learned by a teacher and subsequently passed on to his or her disciples for further transmission.

For example, I am learning the Yang Lu-ch'an Form which Erle Montague learned from Chang Yiu-chun who learned it from Yang Shao-hou who learned it from Yang Chien-hou who learned it from his father Yang Lu-ch'an.

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*On a subconscious level, each has no-doubt modified it in subtle ways to suit their individual variations of physique and temperament.*

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That's four interpretations between myself and the originator and all those instructors were/are committed, ON A CONSCIOUS LEVEL, to preserving the form as each learned it. On a subconscious level, each has no-doubt modified it in subtle ways to suit their individual variations of physique and temperament. That is to be expected and

when I teach it someday I can't avoid doing the same.

Consequently, despite all this effort and commitment, it is quite probable that Yang Lu-ch'an would see a lot of differences if he were alive today to watch this form being done. However, he would probably at least recognize the attempt!

What would he think if he could see any of the North American New Age interpretations of the Yang style or many of the forms being taught in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan? Would he even recognize that they were doing an internal martial art much less a derivative of what he taught?

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*Yang Lu-ch'an would see a lot of differences if he were alive today to watch this form being done.*

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To make it worse, Yang T'ai chi is burdened with endless bad copies of bad copies. A student learns from a reputable instructor for a few months/years and then, without his/her blessing, goes off to teach students who do the same after an inadequate apprenticeship. The original form becomes riddled with errors or changes are made for all the wrong reasons.

## Moving On

So what do you do if you discover that the form(s) you have loved and sweated over is not what you had hoped for? Accepting the necessity for change is not that easy even for students of an art that talks freely of embracing the necessity of change.

Look at it this way, I recently held a garage sale and one of the items I sold was a tricycle that my four-year-old had outgrown. He seemed to understand when a woman bought it for her grandson. However, after she left with it he broke into tears over his loss and wanted me to get it back, even though he had been happily sitting on the newer, bigger bicycle which had replaced it.

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*Forms and tactics that were suitable for your development when you were "young" have less relevance as you mature*

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It seems to me that his experience is one that many internal martial artists can empathize with if they stick with their training for any length of time.

Forms and tactics that were suitable for your development when you were "young" have less relevance as you mature as a practitioner; but can be hard to give up.

As I am in the process of switching to the forms taught by Erle Montague, I would like to share my experience in "investing in loss" in terms of giving up old forms in case it can assist those of you who find themselves at a similar cross-roads in their training.

I had been doing the same Yang-style long form (from the Chen Weiming line) for ten years. However, when I started learning Erle Montague's Original Yang Ch'eng-fu Form, I could immediately appreciate how different and superior it was to the form I was used to.

Unfortunately, it soon became almost impossible to practice the old form because, in comparison, it felt empty and flawed. Despite this realization, deciding to "give-it-up" was a difficult one that I struggled with for almost a year.

More recently, I have started learning the Yang Lu-ch'an Form as taught by Erle. I find myself faced with much the same emotions except that the comparison is less severe as they are obviously the same form —

the Ch'eng-fu variation being a good condensed version of the original.

## Factors to Consider

Changing over will involve several areas of decision-making:

- If, as I am, you are trying to learn from videos with only occasional personal correction; do you have the determination to constantly review the tapes to ensure that you are really doing something different/better as opposed to just laying a new veneer over your old forms.

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*More recently, I have started learning the Yang Lu-ch'an Form as taught by Erle. I find myself faced with much the same emotions except that the comparison is less severe as they are obviously the same form*

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Learning from videos is far from easy, especially if you don't already have considerable experience in T'ai Chi, but it is certainly better than NO instruction.

- Can I handle the new material on a physical level? The older forms tend to be more athletic/martial and can be difficult for the older practitioner, especially those who suffer from "T'ai Chi knee" or are unused to fast forms or those which emphasize faching.

- If I decide to switch will my old instructor end our relationship on a personal or professional level? I was lucky, my former main instructor, Allan Weiss, is quite opened-minded and respects what Erle teaches so we are still on good terms.

I suspect that the majority of instructors would not be so forgiving. In fact, I don't know how forgiving I would be if one of my senior students was to say to me "Well, Mike, it's been five years; but ..."

- If I continue to teach the old style, how will my switching styles affect my students? It is possible to practice two completely different long forms and to teach that way and some students will have little problem keeping the two distinct. However; the majority will just end up being confused.

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*- If I continue to teach the old style, how will my switching styles affect my students?*

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- Will I cease teaching the old form(s) and force or encourage them to start over or will I make the new forms/methods the next step in their progress when they complete the old?

## Conclusion

I guess what it comes down to for the serious practitioner of Yang T'ai Chi is you should be prepared for that point in your development when they outgrow the forms/methods that have served them well to that point.

A good form/style should provide the material for a lifetime of research and practice. A mediocre/beginner's form should be discarded when the time is right to do so!

It is in your best interest to make a serious effort to search for an original T'ai Chi "document" that suits your physique and temperament. Leave the badly-abridged or mutilated texts where they belong — on the shelf.

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Michael asked me when I last visited Ottawa to give workshops, who I thought to be "good" at Yang Style Taiji in the U.S.A. apart from my obvious students. I thought for a while and could only come up with one name and he lives in Canada, Allan Weiss, he sure can punch, I told him.... Erle.

Michael babin can be contacted in Ottawa on (613)739 7805

# Fa-jing: The Power

By Erle Montaigue

**F**ads come and go. But fa-jing has been out there for a long time and utilized by many famous martial artists. The old one inch punch was the flavour of the day back in the 70's and was glorified and mystified. People would study photos of Bruce Lee using mathematical equations and geometrical calculations to try and gain his secrets, especially that of the one inch punch. All they needed to do was to have someone tell them about fa-jing which is what all of these people were using to gain such immense power over such short distances. Most people would study the hands of the exponents, claiming that it was this angle or this direction that caused this supernatural power. Others would call it qi, others would just give up trying.

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*The old one inch punch was the flavour of the day back in the 70's and was glorified and mystified.*

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They all missed the boat though as it is the body that one must watch in order to find out how one gains fa-jing. The attacking peripheral is only secondary to what the body is doing. There is an old saying, one that not many people use nowadays as it is not in vogue. It is not in vogue because people simply got the real meaning wrong. The whole body is a weapon. Everyone who has been around a bit has heard of that saying. Now we all understand this to mean that the elbow is a weapon, the knee is a weapon, the fists, head, back, shoulders etc. No, this is wrong, what this saying means is literally, the whole body is the weapon while the parts are only secondary and happen as an adjunct to what the body is doing, this is real fa-jing. The fist does not punch, the whole body

punches, the elbow does not strike, the whole body strikes etc.

The technique of fa-jing lies in what the body does to cause the peripheral to be thrust out at great speed and power. It is not the strength of the triceps, or the laterals that cause the power, but rather the whole body. So it stands to reason, that a smaller person is able to generate much more power than a body builder who is only using his triceps to generate the power for the punch, by using his whole body. There is simply much more power in a whole body than in one triceps muscle.

If one could utilize the power generated from a sneeze, this would be perfect fa-jing. When we sneeze, the whole body reacts violently, not just one part, but the whole. We are unable even to keep our eyes open upon the act of sneezing. It is the same with fa-jing. Upon impact, the eyes are closed for that split second and the body shakes violently at high frequency, throwing out a very deadly fist, or palm or elbow.

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*If one could utilize the power generated from a sneeze, this would be perfect fa-jing.*

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But not only is the whole body used as an initiator of such power for the peripherals, the whole body can be used, physically as a weapon. For instance, when someone grabs you, or is trying to take you down, grapple you etc. The whole body will perform a fa-jing movement, anywhere. This immense power is enough to cause even the strongest grapple to loosen his grip. The beauty of fa-jing is however, that in order for even the smallest part of the body to do fa-jing,

every other portion must also be doing fa-jing, otherwise it is not fa-jing and only a muscular strike. And so, the grappler would not only find himself being shaken violently, some other peripheral would also be striking to points on his body.

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*Using fa-jing and dim-mak in this way, we are able to systematically cause the opponent's body to react in a known way. We are able to drain energy from the spleen to cause him to simply fall down,*

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Fa-jing and dim-mak are inseparable. There is dim-mak at a base level where someone is able to strike for instance to a point called 'stomach 9' just over the carotid sinus to cause a knock out. This by the way is the classic KO point used by an increasing number of karateka to show how good they are. Or one uses "Liver 13" to cause KO and great internal damage using finger strikes. These points can be used by anyone at a base level using pure physical force and not fa-jing. But if one wishes to rise to the highest level of dim-mak, then one must understand real fa-jing. This is where we use four different body shakes in order to 'put in the adverse qi' and not just strike at physical dim-mak points.

Using fa-jing and dim-mak in this way, we are able to systematically cause the opponent's body to react in a known way. We are able to drain energy from the spleen to cause him to simply fall down, still conscious but not able to do anything about it. We are able to add qi to certain points to cause an organ to explode from within. We are even able to cause

certain disease states to happen instantaneously by striking certain points. For instance, most will know that sunstroke is not nice. It makes us feel really crook and totally unable to do anything but sit down, let alone fight. Using dim-mak and fa-jing we are able to cause someone to have a bad case of sunstroke. We also know how to cure this sunstroke using the dim-mak antidote points. In this way, dim-mak and fa-jing are also used for healing. So we have a death art used to heal people. These points can actually be used to cure a real case of sunstroke.

We are able to cause someone's right or left leg to shake so violently that he falls down, for this we use certain spleen points on the upper arm and shoulder. But striking at these points without fa-jing will only cause the physical damage caused by the physical power of the strike. This is not fa-jing.

So we learn a few body shakes and think that we know all about fa-jing. No, then we have to learn all about the 'C' back and the rising qi. Look at Bruce Lee when he is fighting, what do you see. Most people look at the physical movements and try to emulate what he was doing. Not many look at what was in his eyes or what the whole of his body was doing. In his own way, Bruce Lee was making use of a primordial posture called 'C' back. Or changing his human brain for the reptilian brain. We all of us still have bits in our brains that go back to prehistory and this part of the brain can be utilized by using certain body postures to bring out this fighting energy.

'C' back? Look at the great silver back (Gorilla to those who are not animal inclined), see what his back is doing naturally. It is not an 'S' shape like ours, but rather makes a 'C' shape. The Gorilla, although a placid calm animal, is also one of the greatest fighters of the animal world when protection of his family is concerned. He is a constant state of readiness, due to his 'C' back. The qi is constantly ready to defend and attack. The eyes tell the story. When we cause our body to be in this state, the eyes change and we are ready to defend. It was the same way with

Bruce Lee, he would go into that little stance of his alone and so bring up the fighting qi. This is the difference between a martial artist and one who knows how to fight.

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*Bruce Lee was making use of a primordial posture called 'C' back. Or changing his human brain for the reptilian brain.*

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The 'C' back and the reptilian brain etc. are all scientific, based upon Western science. So where does all of this fit in with the ancient Chinese martial artists? All one has to do to find out that our current scientific knowledge about the human body is all there in the Chinese classics written hundreds of years ago. It states in the Taiji classics that we must round the shoulders and hollow the chest. 'C' back! It also states that we must see with the eye of the eagle, using the middle peripheral vision or 'Eagle Vision'. When we go into the 'C' back posture, the whole attitude changes and we are ready to fight. The arms, legs, back, chest, feet head, are all energized ready for action and release of energy. Couple this with the fa-jing and we have the classic animal way of self defence. Simply put, hit him with as much power and speed before he has even attacked. This is stated in the Chinese classic of; 'if he attacks you, attack him first'.

## The Types Of Fa-jing:

There are four kinds of fa-jing, all generated from the whole body but having different ways to generate the power. The most common of the fa-jings is the 'closed shaking fa-jing'. This is where we are using the natural stance and punch using the same fist as the foot that is forward. The body shakes violently from left (if using a right fist) to right and then snaps back to the right to 'close' the movement. This final closing happens just upon impact and causes a wave of energy to be thrust into the target. The voice also plays an important

part in all fa-jing. The voice is an intermediary between the physical movement and the internal action. Once again it gets back to the classics which say that the breath must be natural. Now most people interpret this as being that the breath must be slow and constant, but this is wrong. Only if you are performing a slow and constant movement must the breath be that. However, if we are performing a sudden fa-jing movement then the breath must also act accordingly with an explosive sound emanating from the voice box. This is what is meant by natural breathing, when the breath is in harmony with the movement. So with a fa-jing movement, we cannot use a slow haaa sound for instance, we must use an explosive sound which can be anything as long as it is explosive, like 'ba' or 'pa'.

The next fa-jing is the 'open' fa-jing shake. This is where in Taiji we use the posture known as single whip to strike to no less than four dim-mak points on the neck. This time, the body is (assuming that the right palm is doing the work with the right foot forward) shook firstly to the left, then to the right and finally with this final attack upon St.9 & SI16, back to the left, leaving an 'open' posture. This type of fa-jing move is said to suck energy away from the opponent.

The third fa-jing action is called 'closed up shaking fa-jing' and is used to put qi into the points to cause sunstroke or to cause the associated organ to explode. This time the body shakes in the closed way, but also there is a spiralling of the body upwards upon impact.

The fourth way of fa-jing is the 'open down fa-jing shake' and is used to drain energy from the lower heating space, thus draining energy from the body. It is the same as the open fa-jing but with a downward spiralling shake.

Many martial artists have the fa-jing naturally and would never have to learn it, but for the most of us it's a matter of hard slog to gain this great power.

# BaGua Zhang and Spanish Sword Fighting.

by Miles Henderson

**B**aGua Zhang (eight triagrams boxing) is a Chinese martial art that is growing in popularity. As a boxing style it is markedly different from other Chinese martial arts because of its peculiar solo and partner training methods based on "walking the circle". In fact, the original name of BaGuaZhang was ZhuanZhang (circling boxing).

Most readers will be unaware that in Renaissance Europe there existed a school of fighting that used the principle of "walking the circle" to teach footwork and the methods of defence and attack. This was the school of sword fighting as practiced in sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain. The remarkable similarities between this western martial art and BaGuaZhang are the focus of this article.

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*Most readers will be unaware that in Renaissance Europe there existed a school of fighting that used the principle of "walking the circle" to teach footwork and the methods of defence and attack.*

---

Sword fighting of the renaissance era bore little relation to modern sport fencing. Schools of defence taught a curriculum that started with the single sword, and included double swords, polearms and empty hands fighting. Mastery of these weapons was considered a matter of life and death as the skills taught were used in duels, for self defence and in warfare.

The most popular sword at this time was the rapier which was a long heavy

weapon designed primarily for thrusting but also for cutting. The parry and riposte of modern fencing were unknown then because the swords were too heavy for the subtle wrist work required for these manoeuvres. The primary method for defence was called "passing", a cross step designed to remove the body from the line of an incoming attack and put the defender into a position that allowed for instantaneous counter attack. A dagger in the left hand was often used to assist in warding off an attack in conjunction with a "pass". The spirit of this method is captured in Romeo and Juliet "... with one hand beats cold death aside, and with the other sends it back."

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*When "walking the circle" students would assume the Spanish guard and would walk opposite each other on an imagined circle on the ground. The stance and guard of the Spanish school was to stand with the body erect, with the heart not directly opposite the opponent's sword;*

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To use a "pass" effectively necessitated an understanding of footwork combined with an innate grasp of distance and timing (or measure and time as these terms were then known). The method used by the Spanish school of sword fighting to develop its exponents' "passing" skills was "walking the circle". This was in contrast to the emphasis on linear movement in the Italian schools, in which the "passes" were

often more like dodges than side-steps.

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*Just like BaGuaZhang, footwork was regarded as the most important skill. A student was taught how to step different lengths combined with different timings, and to keep the "feet moving continuously as if in a dance".*

---

When "walking the circle" students would assume the Spanish guard and would walk opposite each other on an imagined circle on the ground. The stance and guard of the Spanish school was to stand with the body erect, with the heart not directly opposite the opponent's sword; with the feet a short distance apart; with the sword arm straightened and the point of the weapon menacing the opponent. This guard is very similar to the extended arm posture of BaGuaZhang and served the same purpose of keeping the opponent at bay, and as a "feeler" to monitor any incoming attacks.

Just like BaGuaZhang, footwork was regarded as the most important skill. A student was taught how to step different lengths combined with different timings, and to keep the "feet moving continuously as if in a dance". By doing this he learnt how to "gain advantage by taking successive steps around the adversary". A very good understanding of the subtleties of distance and timing was gained because the method taught that as long as the combatants stayed on opposite sides of the circle they could not hit each other, but as soon as any one of them crossed the space in between he could be attacked.



In regards to actual technique only five basic thrusts and cuts were taught but a student had to learn how to apply them in conjunction with different "passes" and how to take into account an opponent's physical stature and emotional state. As in BaGuaZhang, a student was taught to never over commit the body when striking, and never to use excessive, violent or tense movements. The thrust for example, used a type of power reminiscent of fajing. It was performed with a explosive, jerking motion of the arm so as not to compromise the "rapid performance of the complicated series of steps."

The Spanish School, like BaGuaZhang, also included sensitivity training. Students were taught how to exploit the different angles resulting from the engaging of blades, either in defence or when forcibly engaging an opponent's blade upon an attack. A student was also taught trips and disarms and how to use the guard and pommel as weapons in close range. However, the preferred tactic of the school was to dispose of an adversary without engaging his sword.

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*The Spanish School, like BaGuaZhang, also included sensitivity training. Students were taught how to exploit the different angles resulting from the engaging of blades, either in defence or when forcibly engaging an opponent's blade upon an attack*

---

Swordsmen of all European schools realised that training in martial arts also served the purpose of improving and maintaining good health. The benefits attributed to the exercising of weapons are remarkably similar to the claims of internal styles, like BaGuaZhang, although without the mention of qi. The exercising of weapons was said to put away "aches, griefs and diseases, to increase strength and to sharpen the wits, to give perfect judgement, to

compel melancholy, choleric and evil conceits, and to keep a man in breath, perfect health and long life."

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*The Spanish School suffered the same fate of mystification. It was said of Spanish fencing that it "required for its practice a knowledge of geometry and natural philosophy", and that its "principles were only explicable on metaphysical grounds.*

---

In addition to these physical similarities another aspect of Spanish fencing is similar to that of BaGuaZhang. This is the obsession some practitioners have with the philosophy that is supposedly an integral part of the art.

BaGuaZhang is a highly effective system of self defence but at some stage in its history it got mixed up with the Book of Changes (YIJING). In addition to being boxers it seems that BaGuaZhang exponents had to be masters of esoteric philosophy as well. Most books on the subject try to relate not only the basic eight palms to the eight trigrams but each movement to one of the sixty four hexagrams as well. Adam Hsu, a BaGuaZhang master, sums up the artificial nonsense this is: "Having eight palm changes merely fits the components of the style into a super imposed structure that is not directly related to martial arts."

The Spanish School suffered the same fate of mystification. It was said of Spanish fencing that it "required for its practice a knowledge of geometry and natural philosophy", and that its "principles were only explicable on metaphysical grounds." Masters devoted chapters of their books to the explanation of their art in terms of principles based on the "mathematical relation of angles to their subtending arcs, of tangents and chords to their circle", and threw in as many references to Euclid and Aristotle as possible. All of this in order to "demonstrate that a perfect theoretical knowledge must infallibly lead to victory."

By the seventeenth century, the philosophy and theory side of their art became more important than the actual application. The Spanish school, once so feared and respected, became obsolete and a bit of a laughing stock. Other schools in Europe, by keeping their emphasis on application and survival, maintained the vitality and flexibility necessary to evolve and adapt to new ideas and weapons technology. Hopefully practitioners of BaGuaZhang will keep this in mind and not allow their style to become irrelevant as a science of self defence as its western counterpart did.

## Some notes on Sticking Hands.

*Translated and adapted by Miles Henderson*

Sticking Hands (nianshou) is an integral part of Taijiquan. This article outlines some of the important points from a chapter on sticking hands in a book called "Questions and Answers on Pushhands". The name sticking hands is derived from the fact that in this exercise the wrists of the practitioners must "stick to and not let go". Sticking hands is also called "chaotic bracelets" (luan huan) because of way the wrists circle around each other continuously in no set pattern.

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*Sticking hands is more akin to sparring than normal push hands, being the final step in one's training before sparring without first making contact.*

---

Sticking hands is more akin to sparring than normal push hands, being the final step in one's training before sparring without first making contact. However, without a solid background in the formalised exercises of push hands, sticking hands cannot be practiced in the correct spirit.



Push hands depends upon a set number of postures performed in a particular order, but sticking hands is not constrained by any form. Training in push hands teaches the important principles of zhan (to touch lightly), nian (to stick), lian (to link or join), and sui (to follow). Training in sticking hands teaches one to apply these tactics in a situation with infinite changes.

A student who practices sticking hands without a strong foundation in push hands cannot hope to practice with the same flexibility, relaxation or sensitivity as someone with the proper basics. Without good basics a student's movements will be predictable, and because his energy is stagnant and constrained by internal and external tension he won't be able to exert the correct form of fajing (explosive power).

*A student who practices sticking hands without a strong foundation in push hands cannot hope to practice with the same flexibility, relaxation or sensitivity as someone with the proper basics.*

Although it is important to link wrists when practicing sticking hands, priority must be given to using the whole body to "stick". This means you must be able to neutralise attacks from your opponent's middle joints (elbow, knee) and basic joints (shoulder, hip), and not just attacks from the hands. If the sense of "whole body sticking" is used not only will you be able to neutralise any attack but you will be able to follow up with strength as well.

*If only the wrists are linked, you will only stay at one distance from your opponent and you won't be able to apply the full range of techniques from the Taiji boxing system. Mastery of sticking hands is not a goal in its self,*

If only the wrists are linked, you will only stay at one distance from your opponent and you won't be able to apply the full range of techniques from the Taiji boxing system. Mastery of sticking hands is not a goal in its self, but the idea is to teach the meaning of attack and defence by conditioning the correct reflexes.

*Practicing sticking hands teaches that circular movements are superior to all other types of movements,*

When practicing sticking hands, all movements must be continuous and circular with no gaps or hard angles. Students should start with large circles and progress to small circles. Eventually changing the size of the circle at will. It is imperative that students must continually use the mind to direct all the actions. If a student does not maintain the principle of the superiority of the will and intention over pure physical force his skills will not progress.

Practicing sticking hands teaches that circular movements are superior to all other types of movements, but understanding this principle can only come from hard practice. By rounding off the angular defects in defence not only is one's self defence ability improved but qi can permeate the bones, and the central nervous system is benefited as well.

Ultimately practitioners seek to recreate the Taiji diagram (yin and yang) in their practice, thereby conditioning their minds and bodies to understand martial strategy as outlined in the following passage from "The Art of War by Sunzi". "The numbers and confusions and comings and goings make the contest seem disordered - and yet there is no disorder. The blending and merging and chaos and tumult make the position seem encircled - and yet there is no losing."\*

\*R. L Wing, THE ART OF STRATEGY, Aquarian Press, 1988

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# The Gang Attack

By Edward Hiles Star (New Mexico)

A serious and persistent question asked of an instructor, and discussed widely among students themselves, is how to handle and attack by several (four or more) thugs at one time. Unless someone pulls a knife or gun on you at very close range, there are few things more frightening than a bunch of crazed idiots suddenly trying to attack you for the pure macho thrill of it. There is no time, nor the space appreciation to whip out as spinning back kick, or any of those interesting, but street silly techniques and quickly dispatch the opponents.

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*There is no time, nor the space appreciation to whip out as spinning back kick, or any of those interesting, but street silly techniques and quickly dispatch the opponents.*

---

Please note that in the movies and a good proportion of martial arts magazine photos demos, the jerks only approach one at a time while the others stand around waiting for him to come to them. Wouldn't it be convenient for us, and considerate of them!

People learn by doing (repetition), so expect your attackers to have some rudimentary ability for teamwork. Why attack one by one, when it's easier to attack two or three at a time?

Their procedures vary little, they will either start slow with taunts and obscenities, then begin the charge or charge immediately. Then they will push or knock you to the ground or back you up against a wall, fence, auto etc., and club, hit and kick you to a bloody pulp. Pretty grim stuff. My

best all around answer is, don't be there in the first place. No, I'm not trying to pull your chain, cousins, what I mean is that all of us generally get into trouble by not following our own best advice. We sometimes frequent bad areas of town, we allow ourselves to form less than desirable acquaintances that can pull us into trouble, we sometimes can't resist firing back and equally bad obscenity to that passing vehicle (the one we didn't notice was packed with geeks from hell), and some of us walk around like an advertisement for victims anonymous just waiting to be assaulted.

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*To go blindly into combat by choice, without knowing anything about your opponent is stupid.*

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My second best answer, is swallow your pride and run like hell. Provided you have enough initial distance between you and them, and can recognise the seriousness ahead of time. Escaping is the most rational sane option to attempt. After all, vehicles don't come to a screeching halt just ahead of you, with all its occupants getting out, talking trash, just to ask you a street address. You should have at least taken four large steps back\wards as their auto came to a halt in such a manner. because it shows poor and dangerous driving ability. Of course there are a lot of "ifs" involved in having such understanding to clearly see a given incident as it is about to happen. It generally does not happen that way. Our world is highly interesting and beautiful, but very dangerous, our watch word should be "caution" (not paranoia) of the unfamiliar, the unknown and the apparently bad (which fits all the street criminal).

To go blindly into combat by choice, without knowing anything about your opponent is stupid. Any skinny 14 year old can pull a knife or shoot you with a cheap handgun. Guess what? You'd be just as dead as if they were some gnarly veteran thug.

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*To tell the absolute truth, all serious street fighting is foolish, immature, stupid. It might however, win or lose, be necessary in the worst of times.*

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To tell the absolute truth, all serious street fighting is foolish, immature, stupid. It might however, win or lose, be necessary in the worst of times. Again, escaping is the smartest thing to do, but has major problems. Would you consider seeking help by running up onto someone's front porch and banging on their door? If the occupants don't or won't let you in (provided they're even home), you are now stuck with your back up against a wall and have made the situation worse.

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*Escaping is the most rational sane option to attempt. After all, vehicles don't come to a screeching halt just ahead of you, with all its occupants getting out, talking trash, just to ask you a street address.*

---

If your assailants are willing to chase you to the stranger's house, they're willing to do you harm, there as well. If you do get a good lead on them, you must be prepared to scale fences, bushes, dogs and gates in a mind ex-

plosion of frantic scurrying that most of us haven't experienced since we were small children. Or we run down the centre of a busy street against the flow of traffic to make it harder for them to run us over with their pick up truck.

---

*I know, as a kid (11 to 23 yrs) I frequently had close personal relationships to a few yards of dirt at a time.*

---

Are you initially far enough away to make a good run for it? If not, don't bother, you'd be ganged up on without a chance to even fight back, and be in so much pain that it would even hurt to blink, and still have these raging idiots kicking the crap out of you. The would be te ultimate in being defenceless, I know, as a kid (11 to 23 yrs) I frequently had close personal relationships to a few yards of dirt at a time. These close encounters with the unbearable kind took place in the Central Valley an in the East Los Angeles California, some of the more interesting areas for learning about aggressive human behaviour.

So, what are the alternatives, besides not going out, moving each time the neighbourhood turns, buying a gun to carry concealed, or walking with a dog the size of a Mack-Truck?

## Other Alternatives

Yes, well, sort of, they are unfortunately a matter of luck and timing, or the solution is possible as painful as the problem itself. Hey, you might bluff them with your supreme self-confidence, or your unique spiritual awareness! Actually, more than likely, yon may have to attack them! Yes, you're right, I'm not totally nuts, crazy in the head out of my tree, wacko, etc., but I am serious. They will probably kick your butt anyway, why give them a free go of it? The less a person fights back against one or several of these geeks, the less they feel the target (you, me, us) to be human. The less we are human to an

attacker, the more we are a stranger, one of those people, an outsider, and someone that can be harmed ort killed with little remorse attached to their actions. We are currently raising across all national boundaries, a rash of such individuals in the form of dysfunctional sociopathic children, who might even view their own family members as strangers.

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*you might bluff them with your supreme self-confidence, or your unique spiritual awareness! Actually, more than likely, yon may have to attack them!*

---

I think we all understand how impossible it sounds to attack groups of 4, 5 or more, those twice our size and those with weapons. If they are your size and don't have weapons, it's hard enough. Regardless, I suggest that yon attack if you can't run. A typical gang attack is usually 3 to 5 butt-heads between 15 & 27 years of age. They are under-educated to average intelligence, but no scholars! They are also worried about their masculinity and feel the need to compensate for the lack of maturity by destroying something (you). This is their need to prove that they are not closet homosexuals, to compensate for their feelings of inferiority, or the need to beat on something as they were beaten as children. Racism and bigotries also are factors, but the first three examples are better cues to their behaviour.

## Why & How

Why? Because you'll be hammered dog-shit anyway. And they might only be tough in numbers, so when they see you willing to attack the biggest one with a quick acu-shut down, their cowardice may begin to show ("Oh, wait, say you're not the guy we were after!"). Or as you are recuperating in the hospital (\*provided you lived through it), bandaged from head to toe, you can at least know you stood your ground, fought back and have experienced

little loss of self esteem. The loss of self esteem is shattering to your sense of your own well-being. This can be far more harmful in the long run to your life, than a busted jaw and cracked ribs. The body can repair itself quicker than the mind can repair its psychological damage.

## How To Attack

Hell, your guess is as good as mine! Actually, I do have some suggestions, but I would like to encourage debate, and your ideas on this subject. If any one writes, I promise to try and get back to you as soon as I can.

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*The loss of self esteem is shattering to your sense of your own well-being. This can be far more harmful in the long run to your life, than a busted jaw and cracked ribs.*

---

This is a very serious issue, gang violence is common place in many cities and areas in the U.S.A. I don't know how it is in Europe & Australia, but it isn't in your neck of the woods yet, it could be coming. My approaches (as to tactics to employ), come directly out of the soft (yin) sets of Taiji, and are movements in sympathy to Bagwa, H'sin-I, Aikido and Da Cheng-quan. Specifically, I'd emphasise expansions and contractions in the main, and a jab here and there a-la- Montaigne as a parting( in moving forwards or past the opponent) shot. A contraction in the way I'm viewing it, is a body massing technique, an arm-circling motion (a ward; apparent close; ting wang hold statue, into a bear/hinge; wild geese leaves the flock) that will allow you to make brief arm contact and give you enough leverage to quickly fold the attacker's motion or arm back against their torso. An expansion technique, is amotion that allows you to side step using or missing the impact of their on-coming energy (Aikido's) Tenkan and Randori; how some wu stylists use their brush knee twist step; bagwa palm release; methods of da cheng-quan taikiken).

In other words, don't duke it out, even if you're quick and accurate, you don't have time. By body massing you can not only nullify the in-coming punch, but push them aside using your entire body as a fist, attacking to a large vulnerable area of the body (hip ribs). Provided you have a second or two more, hit them with a brief shot to the eyes, neck, sternum, because what I've been suggesting will only temporarily re-direct them away from you or let them fall into each other's way (Aikido's Randori).

*By body massing you can not only nullify the in-coming punch, but push them aside using your entire body as a fist, attacking to a large vulnerable area of the body*

Unlike the movies, I doubt if I can afford to take the time to hurt any of them, but I just might be able to effectively confuse their energy and escape.

## Conclusion

I realise that I probably could have made this a more clear methodology, but then I would just be rehashing my own techniques, which is fine for me, but possibly not for you. I am really on about general body and movement principles that are common to any of the internal forms. Please take me up on my offer of a further discussion via letters about this subject. I don't expect anyone to necessarily agree with me, but would appreciate input on other methods/techniques that someone else might find of use. Thank-you and take care.

Ed Star has been a member of the W.T.B.A. since the beginning and can be contacted at;  
309 N. Lake Carlsbad NM 88220 U.S.A.



Qigong, Sigman Style: But Where Are The Girls Tying Theirs?

## NEW VIDEOS FROM ERLE MONTAIGUE

### MTG50

Street Survival Using Internal Methods  
The Erle Montague System Vol 9

Erle Montague is well versed in street survival having come through a number of attacks out in the streets. Here, Erle shares with you what he believes to be the ways to give yourself the best possible chance, given that you are a novice at this. Nothing fancy, but easier methods taken from the internal arts to give you that edge.

Duration: 1.35minutes Approx: \$US50.00 £30.00

### MTG51

COMBAT PUSH HANDS  
Volume one. The Erle Montague System Vol 10

Not your normal push hands but how to use this training method to gain self defence. Not actually using the movements from push hands but a completely different way of doing it to gain self defence.

DURATION APPROX:  
1.5 Hours. \$US50.00 £30.00

### MTG52

Montague's Filopastry (Philosophy)  
THE ERLE MONTAIGUE SYSTEM VOL 11

Is Taiji or Bagwa really based upon Taoism? Or some other "mind work". Here, Erle tries to "show" his philosophy for the martial arts based upon experience and not upon someone else's book! He shows that taiji is a whole lifestyle and not just a martial art to be practiced once a day.

DURATION: APPROX:  
1.5 Hours

### MTG53

ADVANCED SMALL SAN-SAU:  
THE ERLE MONTAIGUE SYSTEM VOL 12

First we had video No 3 which showed the small san-sau at its basic level. Then we had small san-sau corrections which corrected this to a high level. Now, on this video Erle shows the final level of small san-sau and how to gain the most out of it for street self defence.

DURATION: 1 Hr. Approx. \$US 50.00 £30.00

# Chang Yiu-chun, Bits & Pieces

By Erle Montaigue

Chang Yiu-chun was my main teacher in the internal arts. I met him down by the docks in Sydney when I was a chauffer and would see this old man practising something that looked like taiji. Eventually, I plucked up enough courage to get out of the limo and watch, he would not even acknowledge that I was there, not even when I did my own taiji form in my chauffer's outfit would he even look. After many months I was able to gain his attention by performing some faster forms and this aroused the ego that was still left in him.

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*Chang gave me much more than just the physical movements, he let me watch him doing 'nothing'.*

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I then discovered that he was one of only three students of the Grandson of the founder of the Yang style taiji, Yang Shou-hou, the style that was never changed from what yang Luch'an had invented way back then. I had already been investigating this style and was not too far off at that stage. But Chang gave me much more than just the physical movements, he let me watch him doing 'nothing'.

*Again taken from my now fading but readable notes, taken from my brief but greatly informative time with Chang.*

Not having the modern day knowledge that we now have from modern science, the old Chinese masters could only say what they felt of were told about. This is how the 'Classics' of Taiji were written, a lot of feeling but not much scientific evidence for what they spoke about.

Nowadays, we have access to a plethora of scientific information and when one thinks back to what that old master told us 20 or 30 years back, we are now able to correlate what he said with what is being discovered now.

---

*Everything that Chang said to me then, I am now able to relate both to the 'classics' and to modern science.*

---

It's the same with what Chang Yiu-chun told me, sometimes he would speak in what I thought then to be riddles, but what now translates as hard scientific evidence. So we can take what they were talking about then and juxtapose that knowledge with modern science to come up with reasons for being.

Everything that Chang said to me then, I am now able to relate both to the 'classics' and to modern science. I would ask Chang continuously about the self defence areas of taiji and follows are some of his answers. You wish to know about self defence, do not look at much movement and flashy techniques, look at this; (he would just stand there, seeming not to change from the position that he was just in), I would say, "Yes?" and he would laugh, "You did not see it?" he would continue, "No, show me again", "I will not, you are not ready yet to see". Nowadays, I know exactly what it was that Chang was trying to show me because I now also show it to my students and they too do not see anything.

Chang was doing exactly what it said to do in the classics, but at a true internal level which is the only level at which to do the classics. If for

instance, the classics say that you must 'raise the back' and you actually raise your back physically, then you do not know this classic. If it says that we must 'round the shoulders', and we round the shoulders greatly, physically, then we do not know what this means. If it tells us to 'concave the chest' and we greatly concave the chest physically, then we also do not know what this means. One of Chang's expressions was that we should be like a monkey, "No, like the big monkey" he would say, meaning a gorilla. At that time, I had no idea of what he meant other than to walk around like a monkey! "No, inside", he would say. Modern science now tells us that this is what is meant by the 'C' back and the 'getting of the reptilian brain. Chang would talk of this area as;

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*One of Chang's expressions was that we should be like a monkey, "No, like the big monkey" he would say, meaning a gorilla.*

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"You must become like an animal, not like the movements of the animal, but inside you must be like an animal (remember, the is answering questions that I have asked regarding self defence), you cannot defend yourself, only as an animal can you properly defend yourself. We do not have claws, we do not have big sharp teeth, we do not have strong beaks, it must come from within. Humans are weak, animals are strong".

Chang knew about the reptilian brain, but could not relay this information in speaking terms, not even in Chinese as it is an internal thing that is very difficult to transmit to others, when I feel the 'back rising' or rather

'the qi rising up the back', I say to people, "see that", "no" they reply. Of course they cannot see it, it is happening internally, Chang could feel something great, but it did not manifest physically, bar only a slight change in body posture, his back would become slightly curved 'C' back, his eyes would become slightly crazed like a crazy man, at these times I would not go near him because I knew what the consequences would be.

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*I asked Chang on many occasions who he thought 'had it', ie; who knew the real fighting art of taiji, not just on a physical level, but something else, nor on a bullshit, knock them down without touching them level etc.,*

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I asked Chang on many occasions who he thought 'had it', ie; who knew the real fighting art of taiji, not just on a physical level, but something else, nor on a bullshit, knock them down without touching them level etc., I meant who else had his ability which I knew at this stage to be great. His answer was always the same, he would say that he did not have ability, but the animal within did. "Look at me" he would say, "can this old body fight!" "Yes, I have seen it fight" I would answer. "Did you see my eyes" he would reply, "It is not me"

This gets back to the fact that it was always his body and internal mind that did the damage and not his conscious mind, Chang was not actually harming anyone, it was his sub-conscious mind that did the dirty work. Chang told me that after Yang Shou-hou, no-one knew real taiji, many schools were all physical and would pretend that muscular force and body alignment were internal power. Others would teach no more than a dance and would not wish to get their hands dirty so to speak by actually making contact with an attacker. "What would happen to taiji in years to come", I would ask. His answer was not good.

"In the years to follow, there will be no taiji, only a shell of movement with many saying that they are the real masters only to gain fortune. I have seen my art grow smaller and smaller so that now there are only three that I know of who know the real taiji from Yang Shou-hou. I am teaching you, but I will never know if you will teach yourself from what I have given you".

"How can I teach myself".

"By just doing it and seeing how I do it, this is the only way. When I was younger, I would see things and would think that I would never know this. My teacher told me that there is no possible way that he could ever teach me the final steps, take me through that final door, and so I thought that I would never know. Now, I am in the same position as my teacher and I feel helpless to show you. I can only hope that what I have shown you already will grow inside and some day you too will know".

Now, I am trying to relay that final knowledge to others, trying to find a way where Chang and Yang could not. And I am having some little success with a superior knowledge of the english language and basic communicating skills. I think that I learnt more from Chang by his just being there, and allowing me to 'feel' sub-consciously, that internal strength and how he caused it to come out.

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*Because we are not animals, and do not have animal weapons, we must use certain techniques and points on the human body as our weapons. Once we have learnt this, we then allow the inner mind to take over and do the rest.*

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Chang knew that the self defence art of taiji was not a physical art but rather a mind art. We learn all of the physical things which take many years themselves, so that we are able to have the body requirements of a sure footed animal, then our reptilian brain takes over and does all the rest for us.

Because we are not animals, and do not have animal weapons, we must use certain techniques and points on the human body as our weapons. Once we have learnt this, we then allow the inner mind to take over and do the rest. We have certain body postures to help us to get into this mode and we have the learned 'way of doing things' from our forms, katas, kumite and other two person training methods to give us the physical requirements to keep up with what our reptilian brain is trying to have our body do.

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*"If you try to use techniques, then you are being human, and humans cannot fight. Techniques are human things, dogs do not have techniques,*

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"If you try to use techniques, then you are being human, and humans cannot fight. Techniques are human things, dogs do not have techniques, a shark does not have technique, an eagle does not have technique, only humans have technique and so we are beaten when we have technique. Animals just be. They are just doing what they have been told to do, we, do what we think we should do, we try to use techniques and then we lose the ability to adjust our body to what is happening to it. If we are attacked to the face, we immediately try to cover up using our hands. A dog does not have hands and so it bites our nose. We should make our hands be like the dog's mouth, they should bite the attacker's nose off, but we cover up, we do not wish to fight, we are not animals. When we become like an animal, we do what has to be done and don't even think about it after. Things happen too fast for technique."

"Are there any techniques that you like", I would ask.

"No, we should not use technique, have you not been listening? When we use technique, the foot does this, the hand does this, the legs do that and the body never really moves as a whole. When a dog is attacked by

another dog, it does not use its paw to block the oncoming attack, but rather moves its body, not to get away from the attack but to get into a better position to attack the neck! It causes the attack to tell it what to do. If we are continually thinking of doing techniques, then we are only using portions of our body and not the whole body as an animal does. Look at the snake, one form whom I have learnt much, you touch it and it does not move only that portion of its body, the whole body from head to tail moves together, before you know it, it has wrapped itself around your arm, then around your other arm then it bites you. We should also do this. When we are attacked, the attacker should see that we are there, but when his fist reaches us, we are not there but we have attacked him instead."

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*If we are continually thinking of doing techniques, then we are only using portions of our body and not the whole body as an animal does.*

---

Erle "But how do I get to there".

Chang "You do everything that I have shown you and if you are egoless enough, then it will just come."

Erle. What then is the most important part of my training?

Chang. It is all important but at some time, you will find that some parts become more important to you. When you 'know' the forms, the fa-jing forms then become more important to you because you do not know them as well. Then as the inner part of you becomes to be more prominent, you will not wish to practice any more the physical, but you must, at this time you must.

Erle. But I see you practice hardly any movements, is this because you know it all?

Chang. I do not know the internal and you cannot see the internal, it is much more difficult to train than the mere physical. I hear people saying that their teacher practices the pure

taiji because he learnt it from the son of Yang Cheng-fu and he must know the correct movements, I hear others say that the posture of 'brush the knee' must be done with the hand in such and such a position. These people do not know taiji, they cannot, if they did then they would not be talking like this as they would know that the ultimate is to become almost purely internal when there is none or little external movement. At this stage you cannot say if he is doing it better than him, because you cannot see what they are doing.

---

*I do not know the internal and you cannot see the internal, it is much more difficult to train than the mere physical.*

---

Erle. But surely there is a correct way to do the forms in the beginning?

Chang. Yes, you do it the way that Yang Lu-ch'an did it, like Yang Shou-hou did it, this way you have a better chance of obtaining the internal. There are some people who do not even need any training, they are already internal.

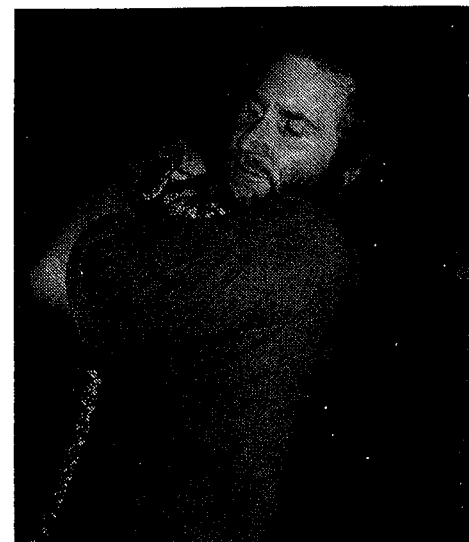
Erle. Who!

Chang. Lao Tse, Budda, Jesus, and that man I saw yesterday with the hammer.

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## CHANG CONTINUES NEXT ISSUE

In our next issue of Combat & Healing, I will be dragging out some of what Chang thought about Philosophy, or rather what he thought about non-philosophy. He would say, "See this rock, that is philosophy".



If In Doubt, Ask A Friend

## WTBA TRAINING CAMP SEPTEMBER 1993

The next World Taiji Boxing training Camp will again be held at "Midginbil Hill" in Northern N.S.W. of Australia.

The camp will take place over seven days with the first two days again being informal with people looking after themselves, food wise. Beginning on Wednesday the 29th of September 1993.

The camp will begin proper on Friday the first of October and end on the afternoon of Tuesday the 5th.

### What To Bring:

Eating utensiles, sleeping, etc. Food, Training and Accom, are covered in the fee.

### COST:

\$250.00

### TRAVEL:

By train or plane, we can pick you up at either. Train to Murrumbidgee Station or plane to Coolangatta.



# "KADAITJA"

## The W.T.B.A.'s Permanent Home

**T**he World Taiji Boxing Association now has a permanent physical home in the Northern Rivers District of NSW Australia. Although the property is physically owned by Stuart and Sheila Le Marseny, it is essentially for members and students to come and train in an atmosphere that will benefit one's training.

There are many different types of classes at Kadaitja and many different ways of paying for tuition. As the centre was being built, students would come and train and then work at building the place in return for their tuition. There is full time live in training as well as workshops held by Erle Montague from time to time and then there are the normal two hourly sessions per week. Something to suit everyone.

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*As the centre was being built, students would come and train and then work at building the place in return for their tuition.*

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As of this date April 1993, we have the two bunks suitable for up to ten people and the amenities block where people will also sleep. The whole complex is made of the ground upon which it stands, mud bricks actually made on site by Stuart and the students.

There are currently four full time students at Kadaitja, and they, along with the many people coming and going are involved in the training and building.

Training is done early in the morning and early in the afternoon as well as regular classes in Murwillumbah (the nearest town 10 minutes away) with a Sunday class at the centre.

This gives people a wide area to work with and many new people to meet and to train with.

Stuart and Sheila are away in Europe at present but the Murwillumbah classes are being kept going by the students and Erle is holding a once per month class at kadaitja to keep the students together for when Stuart returns in September.

All aspects of Taiji are covered, both meditative and healing and combat. Beginners and advanced are welcome and those somewhere in between. There is also training specifically for instructors and also for those wishing to one day become instructors to carry on the tradition set by Erle Montague when he finally decided to "give us his all" and teach everything including the "Old Yang Style Of Yang Lu-Ch'an". The large and small san-sau are covered, bagwa, stick forms, push hands, single and double as well as combat push hands and fighting techniques and training methods to enhance one's reflexes for self defence. Qigong is also covered in the training areas and the healing side of things.

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*The centre represents a wonderful atmosphere of togetherness and friendship as the work provided by the students and visitors enables the place to function and exist.*

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Kadaitja is situated ten minutes from Murwillumbah at Nobby's Creek. All meals provided are vegetarian and wholesome. The training centre is totally drug free, with no hard alcohol except for the occasional Fosters.

The centre represents a wonderful atmosphere of togetherness and friendship as the work provided by the students and visitors enables the place to function and exist. Without all the willing workers, it would not be where it is now.

After a good day's work, there is always a good evening's training and then dinner and a few laughs and a chat on the verandah.

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*These workshops attracted many people from all over and also other martial artists from different styles interested in the Montague System of Fighting.*

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Erle had held two workshops here to date, one in September 1992 and the other more recently in February. Both were excellent days and very well received. All aspects of Taiji were covered, healing and combat as well as the "internal art" of fighting. These workshops attracted many people from all over and also other martial artists from different styles interested in the Montague System of Fighting.

The training ground is situated by the creek and under the camphor laurel trees so it remains cool throughout the day. We are also working on a training hall which will be ready by January 1994. Lunch and Afternoon tea are included in the cost, so it is always a friendly social gathering as well as an informative day.

Erle is available for private tuition with students staying at Kadaitja. They are able to make their own ar-

rangements with Erle depending upon his schedule and willingness!

We have had a few visitors from overseas, Mario from Malta, Sasha from Germany and Kenny Johnson from Norway. Kenny helped dig the foundations for the first concrete slab. Next year we anticipate a group from France, the U.K. and Italy.

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*Covered will be all aspects of the internal arts and Taiji qigong, Bagwa, Iron Shirt Qigong, Weapons, their use and defence against and the healing, meditative and combat side of all these arts.*

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Also available from Kadaitja are treatments from Dr Pain himself, Wally Simpson (featured in the last C&H), acupuncturist and Masseur extraordinaire. Wall will help iron out any sore muscles and aches and pains you may have.

Stuart will be overseas helping out with Erle's busy workshop schedule and doing some of his own from April 1993 until September 1993 giving workshops in Wales France and Russia. He will also be telling everyone about the training centre and hopefully encourage more overseas visitors. Peter Dawkins, Stuart's senior student will be here looking after things and will be available for training.

### **Three Months Full Time At Kadaitja**

We are now also offering in conjunction with Erle Montague a full time live in training camp for the serious martial artist. It will run from the 1st of February 1994 until 30th April 1994. The cost will include all food, accommodation and tuition with both Stuart Le Marseny and Erle.

A minimum of six hours training each day plus five hours each week

with Erle for any intricate corrections, and additional one on one training in your specific area of interest. You have one day pre week free to recharge and Stuart and Sheila will organise optional sight seeing tours around the area, Byron Bay, Surfers Paradise, Mount Warning etc.

The course is limited to 12 students, to ensure each one receives as much attention as is possible and to preserve a family type atmosphere for the group.

Covered will be all aspects of the internal arts and Taiji qigong, Bagwa, Iron Shirt Qigong, Weapons, their use and defence against and the healing, meditative and combat side of all these arts.

Also available at the centre are all of Erle's videos (53 at this time), and books. There is also an extensive library of martial arts books and magazines which can be enjoyed at the communal lounge room.

The centre is central to Murwillumbah and only 20 minutes to the nearest beach, 45 minutes to Surfers Paradise and one hour to Brisbane. Coolangatta Airport is situated 30 minutes away and all the students will be met at the airport or at Brisbane airport if this is more suitable for overseas visitors.

The cost of the three months will be US\$3000.00 or the equivalent in other currencies. For anyone wishing to participate in this excellent way to take in huge amounts of information, please be in touch with the same address for the magazine and the same phone number. A 10% deposit is required to ensure placement, payable to S Le Marseny.

### **"KADAITJA DAYS"**

*By Chris Scott*

As the rain drizzles down here in the wilds of the upper Pakenham (a town in the State of Victoria, Southern/Eastern Australia), I am fondly recalling the seven days in

January that I spent with Stuart and Sheila Le Marseny at the W.T.B.A. training Centre at Nobby's Creek in Northern New South Wales.

Living where I do, I'm constrained to extend my skills with the aid of videos, and, where I can, by attending one of Erle's annual "Gathering of the Clans". However, Erle's workshops often occur at difficult times with respect to my job as a teacher. ( I know, Erle, you can't please everyone ). So the coming of Kadaitja, where training is available on a year round basis is a Godsend. The W.T.B.A. centre allows me to attend at a time of my own choosing and this choice aspect cannot be overvalued.

Sheila and Stuart keep costs down by requiring resident students to mix in a little physical work (towards the centre's completion) with their daily training.

In my case, the work involved "mud, glorious mud!" — a few hours daily of enjoyable construction work on a mud brick cottage. The only difficulty presented by this work was keeping up with the seemingly inexhaustible energy of Stuart who seems to entirely lack a "I'm totally stuffed" button, or, for that matter a, "let's have an early lunch" one! "What?" (I muttered to myself) "is the source of his boundless vim and vigour?" Surely it wasn't the delicious and filling vegetarian meals prepared by Sheila? (Perish the thought that he's ten or so years younger!) As a dedicated meat eater, this insight was somewhat shattering and I manfully tried to ignore my nightly dreams which were increasingly taken up with images of Kadaitja's two dogs revolving on a spit before my drooling visage! (The shame of it all).

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*In my case, the work involved "mud, glorious mud!" — a few hours daily of enjoyable construction work on a mud brick cottage.*

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As for the training, in a word it was expert. Both Stuart and Sheila en-

couraged me to branch out and learn as many aspects of taiji, bagwa etc., as I could comfortably cope with.

Sheila gave me such a thorough work out on womens' self defence techniques that I have had no hesitation in teaching them to my women students. Stuart's one to one training not only corrected my mistakes, it advanced me considerably in both the quality of my practice and in what I was prepared to tackle. (Tackle means to do for our American readers).

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*Sheila gave me such a thorough work out on womens' self defence techniques that I have had no hesitation in teaching them to my women students.*

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Perhaps the most enlightening aspect of my stay came about through attending a class conducted by Stuart in Murwillumbah. Several things characterised Stuart's approach. Firstly, he had students training in a variety of activities. While some worked on the form, others practised "Long Har-chuan" while "Pauchui and San-Sau" were practised by still others. Secondly, Stuart encouraged students to teach each other — to cross train each other — while he moved amongst them demonstrating here, giving a word of advice there. This approach is quite familiar to those people who've attended Erle's workshops, however, I had not envisaged an ordinary class run this way.

When I first started teaching the Yang CHeng-fu form last year, I was loathe to do anything else **but** teach the form. Stuart's class showed me that it is unnecessary to restrict oneself to such a careful and conservative approach.

Since returning home, my classes have tended, where possible, to imitate Stuart's approach, to the benefit and enjoyment of all of us.

In concluding, I must mention the only "Cloud" to cast a momentary shadow across my time at Kadaitja.

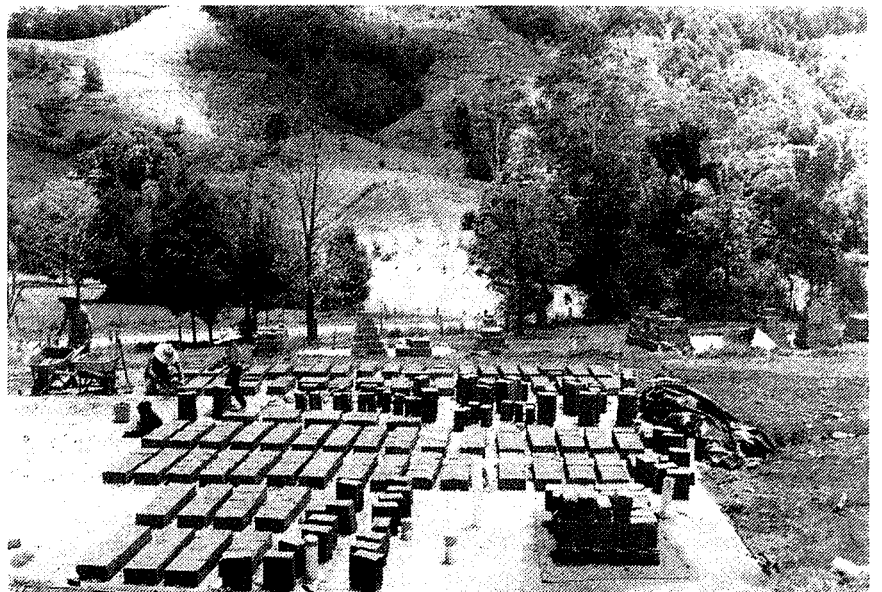
A small but chilling silence ensued with, in the presence of Sheila, Stuart proved his bravery (or foolhardiness) by failing to remember his wedding anniversary!

By the end of the seven days, all my expectations had been more than

met and I boarded the flight home with the strong impression that the Kadaitja man had taken good care of me! As Douglas MacArthur said, "I shall return".



One Of The Completed Mud Brick Huts At Kadaitja



The Making Of The Mud Bricks For The Amenities Block

# Bagwazhang

By Li Yiu-wen (China)

**I**n China today there are hundreds of different wushu styles. However, these can be broken down into two types of wushu. Those which are called "Government Styles" and those that are called "Folk Styles". For the most part, those of us who are serious about our martial arts training, do not study those styles known as "Government Styles" as these are usually standardised versions made up by a wushu coach at the request of the Chinese Government so that tournaments will be easily judged. These "Government" styles are frowned upon by the people who study the "Folk Styles". We believe that the "Folk Styles" are the original styles and that the "Government" Styles are inferior for the martial art. The reason for this is that in order to win at tournaments, one must show acrobatic ability and look good and move to the way of certain constraints put upon us by the governing athletic body. I personally do not know how anyone wins at these tournaments as they keep changing the rules for each tournament. I think that one day there will be a standard set of rules but by then, the real martial arts will be lost as far as self defence is concerned.

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*Many I saw were wearing old Chinese dress! Some were wearing clothes that were in fashion in China even long before Bagwa was invented!*

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The "Folk" Styles usually come from one family for each particular system and are handed down from Father to son or from Father to favoured student. We (I am one of the folk style people) are told never to reveal our system to others outside of the "family" and only to teach the final chap-

ters of our particular art when a student has been with us for many years.

My reason for writing this now is that I am concerned that some of the "Folk" Styles will be lost even in China as more and more children are leaving to study the "Government" wushu. Some, when they become champions are offered much money to travel to places like the U.S.A. or the Philippines or Australia to teach wushu. But what they are teaching is only the "Government system". People from far off places never see the real martial arts of China and think that what they see our wushu champions performing is the real thing.

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*A bit like the cows I saw in the country in the U.S.A. when someone told me that they are only like that for we tourists.*

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Recently I was luck to have a trip to the U.S.A. The Philippines and Australia. In the U.S.A. I saw many Bagwazhang schools. (Bagwazhang is my own "Folk Style") All of these schools were different versions of the "Government" style of Bagwazhang with only one school in Nevada even showing any real martial arts application. Even then it was not as good as it could have been because it was not the real thing. Many I saw were wearing old Chinese dress! Some were wearing clothes that were in fashion in China even long before Bagwazhang was invented! I was quite shocked to see this and a little amused. In the wushu tournaments in China they wear standard uniforms, those which are indicative of the region of the competitors, some wear sashes so that they can be easily recognised. But no-one wears old Chinese dress! Nowadays we

wear what we wear in normal day life. As far back as history has been written, the Chinese martial artists have not worn a uniform to do their martial arts. We learn about the martial arts so that we will improve our minds and body and for self defence and we are not wearing an old dress when we are attacked! Perhaps those who wear such old Chinese dress think that even today, we in China dress like this and only put on "western" clothes when we travel? A bit like the cows I saw in the country in the U.S.A. when someone told me that they are only like that for we tourists. When we pass, they go back to smoking a cigarette behind a bush. I did not believe that one. But given the things that I did see, I might have believed it.

## Incredible Feats Of Strength

At most schools I visited, the main instructor was trying to perform great feats of strength with his students. Like his student lightly touching him and then the student flies off without the teacher even moving! I have been studying bagwazhang for over thirty years now and I cannot do that! Perhaps I should go and study in the United States? I was trying to work out some logical reason for why these instructors try to fool us into believing that they have some super natural strength. I think that they do this because they have learnt an inferior version of bagwazhang to begin with and they feel inferior inside and so they must try and show off using trickery. If they had learnt the real bagwazhang from the beginning, they would know that they do not need these tricks because the original art is almost miraculous as it is! Not with any super-natural

strength but in its ability in self defence using only what is there to see and not some super force that cannot be seen. In Australia they have a much more realistic view of their bagwazhang, the people there actually tried to hit me! Never once was I hit in the U.S.A. They did not even try. I found this attitude of trying to hit me during practice quite healthy as this is what we do in China. Australia was also the only country where I saw the "Folk" styles being practised. A little known bagwazhang form called the "straight form" was being practised and I knew that they knew the "Folk" styles because of this.

## The Difference

I know that I will be held responsible for this when I return but I think that it has to be said now so that the real art of bagwazhang will not die. I will explain the difference by telling you about bagwazhang.

Most people who know anything about martial arts know that in bagwazhang we walk a circle. This to many is the total knowledge of bagwazhang. Most schools take this walking and try to use it for the self defence art. This is like trying to use a childrens' tricycle to win a grand prix race! There is much more to bagwazhang than just the circle walking. Firstly, there is also a form of eight sections that goes with the walking, this teaches us the necessary footwork that bagwazhang is famous for. The hand work is only there to make it interesting for us to learn the footwork. This is only in the beginning though. later we come back after having learnt all of the forms and learnt that the circle forms have much more to offer in the way of very deadly attacking and defensive movements. Then, there is the "straight" form. This is the main fighting form from bagwazhang and only one school I saw on my travels was teaching this in Australia. This is the least known of all the bagwazhang forms and even in China in the "Folk" schools, few people ever get to learn this form. Only those who stay with a teacher for many years

ever learn this form. This is the form that teaches us the internal use of energy or qi so that our body will become strong and swift. It is said that if one is able to perform this form at full power once only per day then that person is full of "yang". This form is the longest and most arduous of all the wushu forms in China especially when it is done at full power and speed. The movements can be seen to be real self defence applications and when one has learnt this form, then we put it together with a partner, step by step to learn about the footwork and hand work of bagwazhang.

## Push Hands

I use the words push Hands because this is recognisable to westerners. We call this exercise "evading arms". Unlike the push hands from the taijiquan school, we also do this while walking around the edge of a circle. The two people have their wrists touching as they walk, and to put it simply, we then try to attack each other as we walk. The object is that the person being attacked must use superior skills of evasion and attacking to defeat that attack and then immediately reverse the walking. All forms of attack are used in this exercise, grappling, striking, pulling, kicking, throwing, even hair pulling and biting are acceptable as this is the way that we are attacked for real. The defence however, must be from what we have learnt as this is understood to be the best possible way of defence.

## The Internal Way

After many years of practise, one begins to feel something different. We are not actually taught how to gain what is termed the "internal way", it just happens slowly. When we know that this is happening, our teacher then takes us right back to the beginning, to the circle walking form. The reason for this is that we now learn that the most deadly type of strikes come from this form and

are termed "Dim Hsieh" or Dim-Mak, the death striking of points. We are taught that the circular form has techniques that are basic without dim-mak and also has dim-mak applications. These are only taught to those who are ready and who have a proven "good mind" as these techniques are extremely dangerous, something like a loaded gun. It is at this stage also, that we learn that there is another way of performing the circular forms. Not so much a completely different way, but one can see that there is something else there. And this is where we learn about the "Open And The Close" of bagwazhang. Only by doing the form in this way do we learn about the internal part of bagwazhang. We will spend many more years learning about each tiny part of the forms. Only one movement can take up to three months to learn properly. Then we are told the reason for doing this form this way. Many people who are of a 'soft nature' leave bagwazhang at this point because they find out how dangerous it is.

## Conclusion

I have tried to give you some idea of what bagwazhang is really all about so that you will not boast of how good your own art is while wearing a dress. Please do not make a mockery of this most deadly of all arts by wearing funny clothes. It is my desire to take the "folk" style of bagwazhang out of China when my teacher dies. I will be quite old then myself but hopefully it will survive, because something that you have in the west that we for the most part do not have here in China is an extreme desire to learn.



Li Yiu-wen With Erle Montaigue In China In 1985