

T'ai Chi

COMBAT & HEALING



Taiji, Qigong, Pa-Kua, H'sin-I, Aikido

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T'AI CHI

COMBAT & HEALING

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ABOUT THE COVER

Master Fu Cheng-yuan is the son of Grandmaster Fu Zhongwen. Sheng-yuan learnt from a small child the style of Taiji now made famous by his Father who originally learnt directly from Yang Cheng-fu, being his nephew.

Master Fu Sheng-yuan places importance upon pushing hands as did his Father before him and who earned the name of "Mr Push Hands".

Fu Sheng-yuan is now living and teaching in Australia and carrying on the tradition of the famous Yang Cheng-fu style of Taijiquan.

CONTENTS

2 NEWS!

Accreditation for all internal stylists in Australia up to level 2 at a government level.

3 CHEN FU-KONG:

A revealing article on the fighting art of Taijiquan by one of the great masters of our time and son of a disciple of the famous Yang Family teacher, Yang Ban-Hou, Chen Fu-Wing.

5 PA-KUA CHANG:

We continue the excellent articles by Uri Slomonski from Poland. This time he speaks about the rather unique method of Pa-Kua Pushing Hands for which master Slomonski is world renowned.

7 FU SHENG-YUAN:

The Son of the famous Yang Style inheritor, Fu Zhongwen, Fu Sheng-yuan speaks about his inherited style with great authority having studied with his great Father from a small child and who is now the inheritor himself of the Yang Style of Taijiquan.

MICHAEL BABIN:

11 One of our most respected writers, Michael Babin talks about Taiji Forms and Self Defence an interesting article discussing the importance and relationship of both.

THE PRACTICAL SECTION:

13 Another of our well respected writers for his practical views on taiji writes this time about his logical ideas on using taiji for self defence and of his favourite techniques.

WHAT'S IN A NAME:

14 Miles Henderson continues his interesting articles, this time on Chinese words etc.

CHONG KWOK:

15 One of our technical advisors on the healing side of the internal arts has his say about taiji as a healing art. Some revelations here as Chong Kwong is one of the most well respected masters of taiji healing in China.

MARTIN EISEN:

16 So, what is an American maths Professor doing writing about fighting? Martin Eisen is writing for T'ai Chi, Combat & Healing and is a well respected martial artist in his own right. His very practical ideas about fighting will help many to evolve out of the magical and mystical and super-natural notions that many have held desperately on to for years.

NEWS

The big news is that from now onward there will be no news section! Only if the news is so great that it warrants us including it we will do a special smaller section. So if you have any ground shaking gossip let us know. The reason is that we have received such an amazing response from around the world to just the great articles in the Magazine, that we have to conserve space for such articles. And if you all liked the first two editions then you aint seen nothing yet! We have articles going back some 70 years from masters who only ever gave one interview! We have much information from Chang Yiu-Chun who's article was greatly received in the first and second editions and so we will be continuing those articles and ideas from him (as Erle Montague studied with him) in future editions.

VIDEOS IN THE NTSC SYSTEM

Until now, those people wishing to learn from the Erle Montague videos, of which there are now 20! Had to rely upon Wayfarer Publications. And for reasons only known to them, many of these videos were not stocked. So now, Moon Ta-Gu Books are selling those videos direct to the USA and other NTSC countries. So far they are;

- **No.3 Pauchui San-Sau.** Including small and large san-sau, the two person sets from both systems and solo fast explosive taiji forms. This san-sau is not the normal run of the mill Yang Cheng-Fu version but the more explosive Chang Yiu-Chun version he learnt from Yang Shou-hou.
- **No.15 Combat Wrestling And Dim-Mak.** This video contains the best from the West And East. Many believe that Dim-Mak was the first Taiji. Taiji was a form created by Chang Sang-feng to cover up the most deadly dim-mak (death touch) strikes that he invented.
- **No.16 Advanced Qigong.** This is a carry on from our No.10 Video (from Wayfarer). It covers the sexual energy transformations and many other qigong practices.
- **No.20 Advanced Pushing Hands.** This video covers the advanced pushing hands methods never before published. That of, P'eng and Hinge push hands, Small circle push hands and Small Circle Ch'i-na push hands. Once these have been mastered there is no going back to the old, peng, lu, chi and an pushing hands.

All of the 20 videos from Moon Ta-Gu Books are available from us in the PAL system for Europe and Australasia but Wayfarer in the USA handle our Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11. In the NTSC System.

Write to Moon Ta-Gu Books for a free CattleDog at our address for the Magazine. P/O Box 792 Murwillumbah NSW 2484 Australia.

IN THE MARCH ISSUE:

The March issue will be the end of our first year's publication and what a first four years it will have been. Many of your subscriptions will be due with the receipt of the next issue and there will be a notice on the envelope when you receive it. Please send in your next year's subscription promptly as we run fairly close to the wind and will keep this Magazine running no matter what.

- The continuing article (part 2) from Martin Eisen.
- A two part interview with Chang Yiu-Chun. Continuing his revelations about Taijiquan and how to use it.
- An article from Leroy Clark on Tung's Fast Form from the USA.
- One from Robin Whitewood on H'sin-I.
- Michael Babin continues his great articles for us.
- As too does Ed Star.
- Notes On The Chen Family's First Routine: By Alan Sims USA.
- One by Sifu Richard Mooney, USA on the correct way to use Ch'i-na. (This is an essential part of one's taiji training)
- Fu Sheng-Yuan continues his interview on pushing hands et al.

Please note that we may not have enough room for all of these articles so don't be disappointed if they are not all there, they will appear in the next edition of T'ai Chi Combat & Healing.

T'AI CHI, Combat & Healing Prices:

- To subscribe to this Magazine send your yearly subscription of;
- \$20.00 Aust. If you live in Australia or \$25.00 if you live in New Zealand.
- \$25.00 US, if you live in the area of the USA.
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OUR LOGO ON A 'T' SHIRT

You may purchase the WTBA (World Taiji Boxing Association) logo on a T shirt for Aust\$ 18.00 plus \$3.00 post to overseas countries.

CHEN FU-KONG

Yang Style Inheritor

By Xie Wu-shen Beijing China:

Chen Fu-Kong is the son of Chen Fu-Wing, the famous student of Yang Ban-Hou who is the Uncle of Yang Cheng-Fu.

Q. Did your Father, Chen Fu-Wing, often speak about his teacher, Yang Ban-Hou?

A. Of course, my Father was my master and so I regard Yang Ban-Hou as my grand master.

Q. From what your Father told you, how did Yang Ban-Hou's training differ from that of other Yang style masters.

A. My Father taught in the same way that Yang Ban-Hou did. He told me this and so I know about Yang Ban-Hou's training methods because my training was the same. Yang Ban-Hou was different because he did not wish to know about anything too spiritual, he was a very good fighter and his training methods were considered at that time to be rather brutal. My Father has had several bones broken just because he would ask questions in class about certain techniques and how they worked. Yang Ban-Hou would show how they worked literally. I think that the difference between Ban-Hou and other modern Taiji masters is that he taught people how to fight and that is all.

Q. Were there any other Yang style masters who you consider to be in the same category as Yang Ban-Hou?

A. Perhaps Yang Shou-Hou. He was also teaching only fighting and could be also quite brutal with his students. I think that Shou-Hou learnt much from his

Uncle Ban-Hou, perhaps more than what he learnt from his Father.

Q. Did Yang Ban-Hou concentrate on the form and it's application. Surely anyone can teach how to fight?

A. Yes, anyone can teach how to fight but you must remember that Ban-Hou was teaching T'ai Chi Ch'uan fighting and that is the difference. My Father would make me go over and over only one or even only one half of a movement of the form until I had it absolutely correct. Even if I had only one finger out of place, I had to go over it until I had it right. In this way, it took me over four years to learn the Yang style form. But this form was different as well from the modern Yang style. In my style, I have leaps and kicks and especially fa-jing movements. Yes, the form was the basic foundation of the boxing and without it, we would only be doing some form of animal boxing.

Q. From my knowledge of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, one must take each posture of the form and learn how to use it in order to fight.

A. On a very basic level this is true and most people only ever aspire to this level of fighting. However, there is another level much higher and advanced than that. This level involves the using of fa-jing.

Q. Fa-Jing (explosive energy), how is this used.

A. If we do not know about fa-jing then we cannot take T'ai Chi Ch'uan to it's highest level. The

whole fighting of T'ai Chi Ch'uan involves being able to knock an attacker out or kill them with the first defensive measure. If we rely only upon muscular strength then this is all we get and our muscles just cannot react quickly enough to gain enough power for this work.

Q. But how does one know how to use fa-jing?

A. It takes many hours of training but once you know how to do it, it becomes like breathing, it is very natural and easy to do. I will say this, however, if you are able to sneeze, then you are able to use fa-jing.

Q. But I am still not sure as to how you would use fa-jing.

A. Fa-jing is not used as a thing all by itself! You must combine the fa-jing with the muscles and body movement. Only in this way can the qi enter the bones and muscles to cause them to react in a very explosive way. When we punch for instance, we can do it from as little as two cun (Chinese measurement of about two inches) away and still be able to knock someone out. Or kill them if the correct points are struck.

Q. Is it correct to say then that one must already know how to fight, for instance, punching and kicking, before one is able to add to that ability the fa-jing?

A. That is almost correct. However, it is not possible to teach someone who is not punching in the correct way to use fa-jing. In order to use fa-jing, one must be

taught the correct way of fa-jing punching. When the qi is added to this way of punching then it becomes very hard to stop.

Q. Fa-jing has it's own techniques of punching and kicking.

A. Yes, there are special ways of punching and kicking. In fact, everything that is done using fa-jing has to be done in this special way other wise it will not work.

Q. What other methods did your Father teach you.

A. I have learnt pushing hands but this is not the normal type of pushing hands that most people are doing today. We do pushing hands so that you are unable to distinguish between the movements, they are just too small. I also teach shan-shou but this again is different to what most people teach. It is much harder and comes from Yang Ban-Hou.

Q. Many people now say that shan-shou is not real and that it is not good to practice set movements for fighting.

A. That is because many people do not know how to use shan-shou. We do not use shan-shou to learn about the techniques, we use it to teach us timing and awareness. A rain drop cannot fall upon us without us moving to it's force. At an advanced level, we do not use shan-shou as a set movement. The movements and techniques are not used in any set sequence. Then it becomes just fighting. The other benefit that shan-shou has is that with all of the thousands of strikes and counters that we do during our training, we become used to taking a punch or a kick and we get the heavy body contact that is required to train someone how to fight. Many people think that they can just do form and pushing hands and learn how to fight. This is impossible, we must have body contact in a fighting way

and it must be heavy and as realistic as possible.

Q. How realistic can you go using shan-shou?

A. When two people are trained to perfection, then there is no thought of ever hurting our training partner. If for instance I attack one of my students with a full power punch and at the last split second I see that he is not going to defend successfully, I will pull that attack so that it does not hurt him too badly, just enough contact to tell him that he had it wrong. In this way the student knows that if he does not successfully defend, then he is going to be struck and so this is as real as we go in the classroom.

Q. Do you have a large school in Wuhan?

A. No, I do not even have a school. I teach my own son and four students who have been training with me for about twenty years now. I do not want to have a large school.

Q. Why not.

A. T'ai Chi Ch'uan is not for everyone. I find it too difficult to teach everyone. It is much better to teach the ones who will really understand my fighting so that I do not have to waste time teaching the people who will never understand.

Q. Getting back to your early training, what would you say was the one major training method.

A. All of the training methods are important but I will single out the iron shirt training. This is where I had the most difficulty.

Q. Please continue.

A. Iron shirt is where we learn how to protect our body against attacks. We use some forms of qigong while we allow someone to attack us with strikes to certain parts of the body.

Q. Why did you find that the most difficult.

A. I think it was because I was a little too young when I began the iron shirt. One must be old enough to have the qi sunk to the tan-tien and this is impossible before one is an adult.

Q. How old were you when you began this training.

A. I was about thirty but this was also a little too young. By the time I was thirty five I was able to perform iron shirt at any time but I received many bruises before this. I do not teach iron shirt before any of my students are about thirty three years old and my son will have to wait another fifteen years for this area.

Q. But surely anybody is able to build up enough muscle tone to defend against attack.

A. We are not talking about muscle ability. Many people are able to take a punch to the abdomen using good abdomen muscles but I am talking about taking punches to the solar plexus and areas that are called death touching points. Using iron shirt we are able to protect most of the dim-mak striking points. It is not only physical ability here but a combination of the qi and the physical and if the qi is not yet developed and sunk to the tan-tien then we only have the physical ability.

Q. You have won many tournament fighting haven't you. How did you win these against all comers.

A. if it were not for my ability inherited from my Father to be able to take an attack almost anywhere on my body, then I would not have been able to win.

Q. Do you advise your few students to enter into tournaments, or your son perhaps.

A. No, no I believe that I was wrong in going into tournaments. I think that it must have set back

my training by at least ten years.

Q. Why?

A. Because it made me think that I was good at something and now I know that it means nothing to be good at anything. Now I believe that we only ever have to defeat ourselves and if we can do that then we have done our learning and we are able to leave this world.

Q. Have you done your learning.

A. I hope not, I like this world too much yet.

Chen Fu-kong is still teaching in Beijing, he is not one of the Government teachers but prefers to stick to the main teaching park in Beijing where he has a number of excellent students.

Steve Hurst

Steve Hurst is the representative of the World Taiji Boxing Association in Great Britain.

The Original Yang Style of T'ai Chi Ch'uan is taught with an emphasis on the fighting art. Pushing hands, pauchui fast form, small and large shan-shou and techniques are taught plus weapons. Phone Steve for a list of other World Taiji Boxing teachers in Europe

Steve Teaches in Manchester
To join Steve's club phone him on:
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PA-KUA CHANG PUSHING HANDS

An Article Uri Slomonski: Poland

In keeping with the idea that articles should be of benefit to all martial artists and not just the styles they represent, I present pa-kua chang push hands.

Unlike taiji push hands, pa-kua gets right into the martial applications inherent in the pa-kua classical circular form and the fighting or linear form. Like taiji push hands, the pa-kua equivalent can be of great help to all martial artists in that it is one of the best training tools available from any system.

So, how do we learn how to fight. How do we get that vital experience against an opponent. Some people are of the nature whereby they are able to go right in to fighting and don't mind at all being hurt. Most of us when faced with this type of training immediately leave that school and look for a less violent one. This way has it's virtues but doesn't help the student who does not like to be thrown right in to fighting. So we come to the second way, that of a gradual build up of fighting skills until the 'softer' natured student is doing full sparring and they haven't even known that that is what they were doing.

Pa-kua is the ideal martial art for introducing students to fighting without scaring the pants off of them. The pa-kua push hands practice leads the student into technique work with a partner right from the start but with the knowledge that h/she is not going to have their heads kicked off.

CIRCLE WALKING:

The 'walking of the circle' is a most integral part to one's pa-kua push hands training. This involves each partner walking around the circumference of a circle opposite each other. The wrists are touching in the typical pa-kua way as in Photo No.1. Now, I won't go into the type of walking which is indigenous

to pa-ku as that is not necessary for other martial artists who only wish to take this part for some special training. You must walk around with your wrists touching and where they touch should be over the centre of the circle at all times while walking.

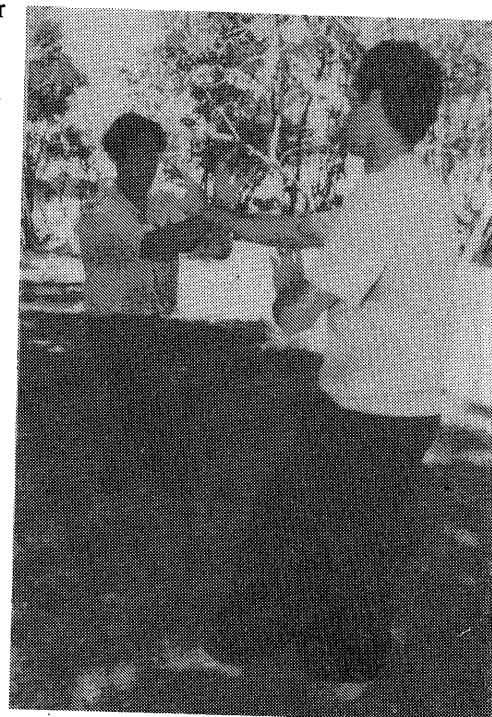


Photo No.1

INSIDE CHANGE:

There are two ways to change direction. the first is the inside change, called that because you rotate on your heels in towards the centre to end up facing the opposite way. For instance, if you are walking as shown in photo No.1 in a counter clockwise direction you should turn when your right foot is in the front. Turn to your left on your heels. As you do this, your right palm crosses your left and as you continue to your left it ends up in the centre with your left palm near your right elbow, the exact opposite to Photo No. 1. You are now in the exact opposite position with right wrists

touching. You should not be afraid to have a bit of power in your turning with a slight knock of the wrists as they touch. Now, either partner is able to change at any time; the other partner must sense this and turn at the same time.

It doesn't matter what footing your partner is on, you do not have to be both on the same step. Which brings us to the next part.

OUTSIDE TURN.

If your partner begins to turn while you have your left foot forward and while walking in a counter direction, you should spin very quickly on your heels out of the circle to your right to end up facing the opposite direction with right wrists touching. You spin on both heels as your right palm thrusts out over your left as in **Photo No.2**. And brings you back around so that the wrists are again touching but you have changed direction again. This teaches you about any of the spinning type of attacks be it back

laterally opposite your opponent in a good position for re-attack or defence.

From this point we introduce some simple attacking and defensive techniques from the walking. You might, upon executing a turn, attack low after your wrists have touched. **Photo NO.5**. Your opponent should hinge his leading palm down to hammer your attack. from here you could immediately hinge back up to attack to the face and your opponent has to sense this and hinge back up to block etc.

All of your kicks can come into this arena with your partner blocking with a hammer palm and changing direction. From the initial direction I could attack with a back spinning kick where upon he would turn and hammer downward in defence and come in with another attack. The rule for kicks is that we only block the kicks with our palms where they are able to reach without bending down. The lower kicks should be blocked with the feet. For instance, I attack the knee with a back stamp. He picks up his foot and attacks with a higher back kick or equivalent. **Photo NO.6**.

At first you keep it light and easy only throwing slower controlled attacks so that each partner is able to get used to being attacked from this close distance and you are able to attack from this close distance. As your expertise increases, the attacks can become faster and harder until your partner is able to block and re-attack at will. You must keep in mind that you are helping each other to learn and not trying to beat each other!

Try using all of your techniques from your own kata or style and block in the way that you have been taught. The only pa-kua peculiarity is eventually the walking and the wrist touching. Even then at an advanced stage, the wrists part until you are into full sparring and it has been a pleasure learning with not too many bruises or broken bones.



Photo No.3



Photo No.4



Photo No.2

spinning fist, palm or kick, the action is the same. For instance, you take a right attack with your left palm as in **Photo No.3**, turning your left foot to you right and stepping to where your opponent's foot is. You then do the outside turn on your heels and attack his face or lower rib area as in **Photo No.4**. You are now

Uri Slomonski Lives and teaches in Wasaw Poland.

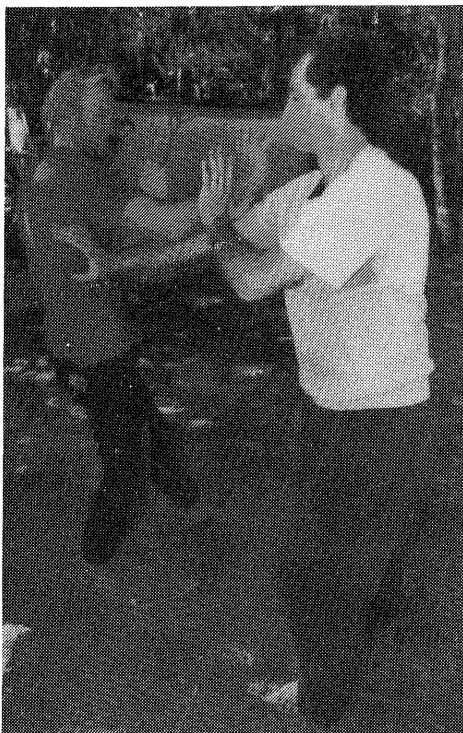


Photo No.5

JOHN McMAHON SIFU

John McMahon holds black belt 3rd degree in the World Taiji Boxing Association and has been a student of Erle Montague for many years. He is a founding member of the Australasian Therapeutic Movement Association and teaches all aspects of t'ai chi, internal weapons and also karate.

CLASSES ON THE GOLD COAST

John McMahon holds classes all over the Gold Coast of Australia and the Hinterland regions with private and group tuition available.

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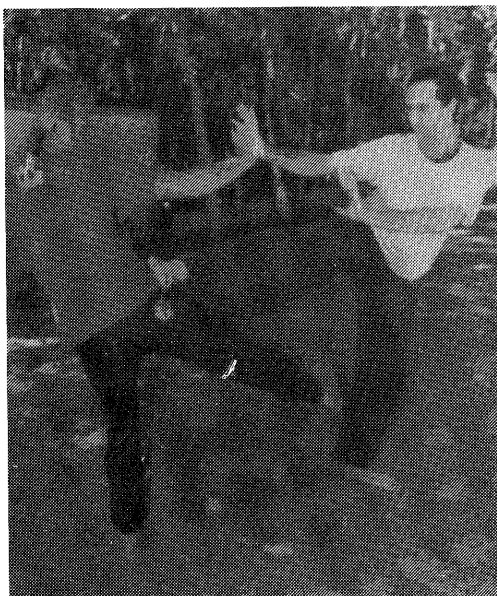


Photo No.6

Fu Sheng-yuan

By Erle Montague

Fu Zhongwen is now legendary for his pushing hands and has gained the name of 'Mr Push Hands'. Fu lives in Shanghai and must be getting close to his ninetieth birthday.

Now, his son, *Fu Sheng-yuan*, the son of *Fu Zhongwen* has moved to Australia and has started to teach his Father's style of Original Yang Cheng-Fu T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

Fu Zhongwen is the nephew of *Yang Cheng-fu* and was his favourite pupil from when he was around eleven years old. It was Fu's job to take on any challenges for Yang as Yang grew older and was in ill health and this is where he earned the nickname of Mr Push Hands.

Fu Sheng-yuan, his son seems to have inherited his ability in the pushing hands area and has put many a 'famous master' on his bum in Hong Kong and China. Here I ask Fu Sheng-yuan about his T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

Fu will be a regular contributor to T'ai Chi, Combat & Healing' and is one of our Technical Advisors'.

E/.How long have you been practicing taijiquan?

F. I have been learning T'ai Chi Ch'uan from my Father since I was nine years old. There is no end to the mastery of authentic T'ai Chi Ch'uan Kung-Fu.

E/.You have a very famous Father don't you.

F. When my father was young he was a constant companion of my grand uncle - Yang Cheng-fu, learning his T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Later, he travelled around throughout China teaching T'ai Chi with my grand uncle.

After my grand uncle passed away in 1936, my father established the Shanghai Yong Nian T'ai Chi Ch'uan society in order to achieve further development of Yang Style T'ai Chi Ch'uan. My father has students from all over the world and he is greatly respected by his students because of his teaching philosophy. He never boasts about his ability even though his T'ai Chi Kung-Fu is regarded as being the best in all of modern China and he is now the only living disciple of Yang Cheng-fu, one who has received the full amount of teaching from Yang over many years.

E/. What kind of training did you do with your Father. Did it differ from the way in which we train today?

F. My father passed down to me all the content of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Generally speaking, T'ai Chi Ch'uan can serve two purposes: one is to keep fit and the other is to defend oneself and to attack opponents who might attack us. Nowadays, T'ai Chi Ch'uan has been commonly practised for health and fitness. Few people even in China know the other face of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, that is, T'ai Chi Ch'uan kung-fu. Commonly, most people think that a set of T'ai Chi forms is the real T'ai Chi Ch'uan kung-fu. This is nonsense. However, practicing T'ai Chi Ch'uan forms is greatly beneficial to bodily health. It also helps to increase the resistance of the body to diseases.

E/. What kind of emphasis was placed upon pushing hands? Your Father is also known as "Mr Push Hands".

F. Every action in the T'ai Chi Ch'uan forms, however, is a very useful practical technique, if we consider T'ai Chi Ch'uan kung-fu. When one has mastered the T'ai Chi Ch'uan forms to a certain extent, he must start to learn push hands in order to know how to use T'ai Chi Ch'uan in practice. Push Hands embodies the practical defending and attacking techniques. Thus push hands is one of the most important components in learning and teaching T'ai Chi Ch'uan kung-fu.

My father is greatly advanced in all aspects of push hands and T'ai Chi Ch'uan kung-fu, after practicing his whole life. He is the best there is in China but has never said this of himself.

E/. On push hands, why do you do pushing hands. Not for competition? Or for winning tournaments?

F. If you want to learn and practice T'ai Chi Ch'uan kung-fu, you must learn push hands in order to understand the practical use of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Of course, practicing push hands is also good for health. There are three purposes for practicing push hands: one is for competition, the second is for personal interest and self defence, and the other is for the development of T'ai Chi Ch'uan kung-fu.

E/. What are your views upon the current trend towards taijiquan pushing hands competitions and what do you think they achieve.

F. In modern push hands competition in China, it often seems that the person who is stronger physically will win, however,

this has nothing to do with T'ai Chi Ch'uan kung-fu, one needs a qualified master who fully understands the meaning of the entire content of T'ai Chi Ch'uan and its training methods, and a determined, persistent and tough student. If the student does not possess qualities of industriousness, persistence, politeness and honesty, he will find it impossible to master authentic T'ai Chi Ch'uan kung-fu.

E/. Your Father Fu Zhongwen has some strong ideas on qi (Ch'i), what are your views. And on people who claim to be able to knock people down using their qi from a distance etc.

F. It is commonly considered that 'qi' is the vital power of all the movement in the universe. Qi can be accumulated in the body through physical movement of the body. T'ai Chi Ch'uan is one of the best ways to gain qi. But the so-called qigong T'ai Chi Ch'uan is a fraud. Actually, the practice of qigong originated from the sitting ceremony practices of Buddhism. The so called 'hard style' qigong is only a physical technique. The claims about knocking people down in the distance is a myth. For example, the lightening can only burn something if it touches it. So how can a person knock someone down without touching them? My ancestors and my father have never knocked down their opponents without touching them.

E/. In your view what are the most important aspects of one's taiji training.

F. Please refer to the ten important points in practicing T'ai Chi Ch'uan (available from a very good book called 'T'ai Chi Touchstones, yang Family Secrets' by Douglas Wile, USA)

written by my grand uncle Yang Cheng-fu. Among them, the most important one is to have a real T'ai Chi Ch'uan master to teach students properly. (Editor: When I asked Fu Zhongwen his most important points, he began by saying that to distinguish between yin and yang was the most important thing after finding a good teacher).

E/.How do you distinguish between yin and yang? Is it as simple as knowing that one leg has weight on it or does it go deeper than that?

F. T'ai Chi is the origin of yin and yang. 'No movement' is called, Wu Ch'i. Movement results in T'ai Chi. Yin and Yang are the two complimentary components and cannot be separated from each other. In other words, they cannot exist without each other.

E/.You have some strong views on the Chen style don't you. What are they and why don't you think that the Chen style is technically t'ai chi ch'uan?

Can you expand your views on the beginning of t'ai chi as per Yang Lu-Ch'an and the Chen's etc.

F. The movements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan should be slow, the slower the better, because it is more difficult. However, the movement must comply with the requirements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. The movement of T'ai Chi Ch'uan must be flowing, gentle and vigorous internally. Chen style T'ai Chi Ch'uan is Pao Chui or Mian Quan (a kind of shaolin kung-fu). After Yang Lu Ch'an developed Mian Quan from Chen Chiang-xin, he developed the Chen style into Yang style of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, which has been modified, improved and developed as it is today.

E/.In China today there seems to be a push towards wushu competitions and this seems to be having a denigrating effect upon the traditional ways of taiji-quan. At one such tournament I watched your Father sitting there with his head in his hands shaking his head as the various contestants performed movements that seemed too low too soon just to gain points etc. What are you views on this.

F. You are right, there is much confusion in the area of Chinese Martial Arts in China. People who don't have the qualifications are in the leading positions. They don't respect traditional martial arts, but change and edit the traditional martial arts, how can they develop new ideas? This is ridiculous! T'ai Chi Ch'uan belongs to the category of Chinese martial arts. However, the some important competition that are organized in China, T'ai Chi Ch'uan has often been intentionally excluded from the category of Chinese martial arts.

You are a Western friend who loves Chinese martial arts. I would like to pay my respects and gratefulness to you for your enthusiasm and concerns in the development of Chinese martial arts.

E/.What do you personally hope to achieve in your own teaching and spreading the Original Yang Cheng-Fu taijiquan form.

F. I have been involved in martial arts education for a considerable period of time. Initially teaching as a martial arts instructor for the Shanghai Wushu and later at Tongji University where I was in charge of physical education. Because of the nature of the appointments, I enjoyed many vacations where I was invited to travel around China and teach

T'ai Chi Ch'uan in other provinces. I was also a referee for National wushu competitions. It is therefore fair to consider that I have a sound knowledge of T'ai Chi Ch'uans' modern day development in China. It has been my observation that there are many people in China itself who do not understand the authentic art of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Despite this lack of understanding of T'ai Chi's fundamental principles, they have nevertheless sought to change and modify the forms. To me thus, it is hardly any surprise that non Chinese friends do not fully understand the true nature of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, as they are usually taught by less than proficient teachers who themselves lack understanding. I have therefore set out to fulfill my father's wish that I travel abroad and pass on the traditional knowledge of authentic T'ai Chi Ch'uan as a contributor to mankind's health and vitality.

E/.One last question. I'm sure that western Australia is very proud to have you over there, but really, it is like being in France! You are so far away! Will you eventually spread out to the Eastern Coast?

F. In Western Australia, (a State of Australia) there are many T'ai Chi enthusiasts. Not only old people are interested in playing T'ai Chi Ch'uan but also a considerable number of young people show interest. Many of these young students have practiced Chinese, Japanese and Korean martial arts, or even modified versions of T'ai Chi. My aim is to improve the standard of T'ai Chi Ch'uan in Western Australia. Although we are far away from the eastern States (3000 miles away from Sydney) and it is often dif-

difficult to communicate, it is my hope that we will meet one day. Certainly you are most welcome to visit me in Perth. many of my overseas students from Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Thailand and America have visited me in Perth since I migrated here from Shanghai. Hopefully towards the end of this year (1990) I will try to visit Canberra City and I have already been invited to visit Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, America/Canada, Japan and France next year, with the view to teaching Yong Nian Yang Shi T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

In a coming issue of T'ai Chi Combat & Healing, I will be asking Fu Sheng-yuan about how he teaches the use of T'ai Chi Ch'uan for self defence and will include some photos of his favourite techniques.

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Fu Sheng-yuan is the son of Fu Zhongwen. He now lives and teaches in Perth Western Australia.

The Original Yang Cheng-fu style of t'ai chi ch'uan is taught specialising in pushing hands. Fu Zhongwen is sometimes called 'Mr Push Hands' because of his excellent centredness and internal power in push hands. He has passed this knowledge on to his son.

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TAIJI FORM AND SELF DEFENCE

Learning to walk before you can run:

By Michael Babin, Canada:

By Michael Babin

Each side of the Taiji coin, form/martial function, can be practiced with benefit on its own. However, to truly understand each, both must be integrated in the same way that we are most integrated as human beings when experiencing ourselves as a union of mind and body, intuition and intellect, rather than as an on-going power struggle.

Paradoxically, despite the above being true, it is also equally true that you have to learn the basics of form before you can learn the martial function and that the solo practice, by itself, will not automatically bring martial skill.

Learning from without martial function is like being given a deflated basketball and expected to play the game without being told of the rather vital role of inflation. You may well be able to have fun but what you do will be only a pale reflection of the real game.

In terms of the Taiji form practice: think of competence in a particular sequence of postures (whatever the style) as the excavation to lay the foundation of your home; push hands is the cement of that foundation; the actual structure of your home are the principles as laid out in the Classics and your experience of them through your martial training.

DIGGING YOUR FOUNDATION

Taiji form practice allows the mind/body to gradually learn to experience itself as a unit; allows it to learn how to learn to relax; and, introduces the use of the postures for self defence and the concept of energy creation/discharge (flow).

These skills have nothing to do with mystical "secrets" and everything to do with giving the student the mental and

physical tools to begin proper training in push hands and martial technique.

Learning and practicing form helps to restore the body to a more natural posture and can bring relaxed and efficient movement. I can also teach the importance of living in the present (ie., if you don't concentrate on what you're doing, you'll make errors in posture and sequence). Doing form can be meditative in the sense of inducing mental quietness and restoring the natural sense of awareness that becomes deadened by the intellect's preoccupation with the need to control and analyze.

In addition, learning the postures has a great deal to do with learning to use only the right amount of physical and mental energy to accomplish whatever must be accomplished. You gradually realize why your old physical sense of balance is inappropriate, it was, so that you can gradually create new habits of posture and movement.

Psychologically, leaning to deal with change as you go from one posture to another in form gives you a sense of acceptance which allows for a smoother transition -- one that isn't paralysed or hindered by the fear of the unexpected. Creating balance and appreciating the process of change is the crux of the "formlessness" which comes with time and effort once you have digested from and made it your own.

Form also introduces the student to flow. If the qi flow theories are correct, then the body/mind begins learning, initially through form, to create the conditions necessary for the accumulation, flow and (if necessary) discharge of energy. To my understanding, there are two main camps of thought on this subject, both based on slightly different interpretations of a key passage in one of the taiji classics.

The first camp feels that flow must be uninterrupted for qi to circulate; the

other camp feels that there should be a slight pause at the end of each posture (not each movement, each posture -- many of the latter contain a number of movements, ie, Grasp Bird's Tail to the Right contains Ward off, roll back, etc.) IT is felt that such pauses are necessary to practice the discharge of energy.

Both camps are valid interpretations; the one you follow should depend upon what you're looking for when you're doing form. The pause method can give a better understanding of energy discharge, especially for beginners. For meditation / relaxation, the uninterrupted method allows greater integration of mind/body and movement. Constant flow is also essential to understanding the role of change in combat and in efficiently dealing with larger, heavier opponents.

The mind plays an important role in producing any such benefits. Whether these come from 'faith healing' or 'positive thinking' or through the Taoist/Taiji principles is impossible to determine in an empirical manner -- and largely immaterial to achieving and enjoying the benefits of training.

However, for the benefits of form to manifest themselves, it is necessary to practice everyday and preferably a long form rather than short or simplified. You should imagine yourself defending against imaginary opponents as you go from one posture to another as this exercises the mind and helps your initial understanding of using the martial techniques that you will later practice with a partner.

Doing form while observing the proper principles will begin to teach you to be free of needless muscle tension. This is an essential precursor to self defence and martial training but is only a beginning. Truly learning to relax can only come from the give and take of interaction with other students and from

experiencing the physical/emotional stress of martial training.

However, in terms of form training, beginning to learn to relax can, in itself, help alleviate or even eliminate many of the psychosomatic physical disorders which plague us. In addition, taiji becomes a means of understanding how the affects of long term poor posture can contribute to problems such as chronic lower back and neck/shoulder pain. Such manifestations can lead to pain, inflammation and, in turn bring further physical, psychological problems.

Incredible claims have been made for the curative powers of Taiji form practice and this aspect has been too readily embraced by those Westerners looking for an alternative to the mechanistic surgical drug remedies of Western medicine. In this regard, it is important to remember that Western style research into Taiji and qi flow has been done in China and that traditional medicine has, as a result been blended with Western medicine and has not replaced it.

In China, Taiji is routinely prescribed by doctors as an adjunct therapy for conditions that run the gamut from tuberculosis, intestinal problems to arthritis. Many practitioners, and the medical researchers of mainland China believe that the proper practice of TAIJI can stimulate the human nervous system in the same way that acupuncture is used for healing purpose.

It is also important to remember that many of the physical disorders best 'treated' with Taiji are those which can be classed by a pragmatist as psychosomatic.

What you believe in this regard will depend largely on your own emotional needs and inclinations. Each practitioner will experience 'physical benefits' depending upon his or her faith, the amount and quality of practice and the skill and orientation of the instructor.

As an aerobic for of exercise, Taiji is a relatively gentle form of exercise and has limitations in terms of developing those attributes most sought after by Western physical fitness advocates -- muscular development and cardiovascular fitness.

However, here again we are drawn into that never-never land of Taoistic contradictions so that Taiji is perhaps of more use in the latter two fields than would first be apparent.

Doing the form as if you were moving slowly through water -- an illusion frequently encountered in the Taiji literature -- provides an isotonic / isometric effect which does stimulate muscle strength, especially in the legs and lower body.

the increased efficiency of the muscles of the lower body has a cardiovascular effect in that the valves and walls of the arteries and veins are assisted by the stronger muscles to circulate blood more efficiently to and from the heart.

In addition, concepts of qi flow aside, the deep breathing combined with the slow movement of form trains the body to use oxygen more efficiently.

CONCLUSION:

Obviously, if you do form listlessly, mechanically, or without the use of the mind/imagination, you will end up with minimal benefits. Too little effort is just as bad as too much effort. The Taoist basis of Taiji emphasizes moderation and the desired results was/is to create and maintain health into old age.

Taiji form practice is the *BEGINNING* of learning and internalizing the martial aspects of the art. The latter teaches you to appreciate and apply the physical mental quiet that you've learned through form to the more stressful give and take situation -- interacting with others.

Let me put it this way, if your Taiji only works when you are alone and practicing under ideal conditions, can it have REAL mental or physical value.

Michael Babin teaches Yang style Taijiquan in Ottawa Canada. he has studied the art since 1975 and been teaching for the last five years. A former editor/writer with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, his articles have been published in dozens of North American and International police and martial arts magazines. He is a member of the *WORLD TAIJI BOXING ASSOCIATION* and of *THE TAI CHI GROUP*. See an advertisement in this issue for Michael's classes.

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The Practical Section:

My favourite techniques

By Ed Star of THE THREE STARS TAIJI ASSOCIATION: Taiji & Pa-Kua Inner Boxing, Phone; (209)268-2719 USA.

Nice title but I'm not sure it is accurate to say 'favourite', rather a better title might be 'essentially mine'.

Though there are somewhat common movements and postures to all the internal styles, there isn't necessarily universal agreement as to what works most of the time for most people. We are all built differently, have differing degrees of skill. For example, some of us are less structurally sound and rely upon our memory of a technique. And fewer still are truly internalized in their structure and so rely on both skill and instinct. And let's not forget age restrictions. And the situations of violence vary considerably as well like the guy who has had too much to drink or the mugger who suddenly appears at the turn through the alley. There are also an endless variety of limitations and safety precautions we should heed in order to pull up the most from our inner will of natural and honed skills. Those of you who might be over six foot and 220 lbs. plus, have less restrictions, but let's not let our collective heads swell too much and get overly confident, as there is always someone more skilled, quicker, larger or just plain wants it more. There are people who do not mind if they scatter some of your precious body bits on the street or dance floor, sorry, but it's a fact.

Fortunately most of us can avoid 98% of these really grim s.o.b's. by just not being where they tend to hang out. Remember, I am not talking about purse snatchers and the like, but bad people.

I often tell my beginning people that hopefully the instinctual Taoism that Taiji, Pa-Kua, H'sin-I and Aikido bring about, should create a greater awareness of not only your personal free expression, health, structure-timing and balance, but also your measure of self awareness and limitation. Or in other

words an expansion of common sense. (translation: don't go into an Okie bar if you don't like kicking butt with tough skinned Okie's).

(... Could anyone out there please tell me what the hell is an OKIE! Now come on Ed, I thought that the Australian language had it's quirks. Editor).

So what works for you? When Erle Montague first announced that he might be focusing at least a part of the interest of this new Magazine to people's favourite techniques, assuming street use or otherwise, I was eager to see what other might have to say, as I do feel that 'favourite techniques' are one of the most sought out of articles in any martial publication. My favorites are so basic that I don't bother to have the movement by movement analysis of a particular move, rather I approach a method by examining various ways and styles of doing the same application so that I can develop a natural sense of its essence in action and effect. Yes, Bruce Lee did the same thing, the difference may lie in the fact that he was always trying to find the best out of the lot and I'm trying to find the best for me.

So the first importance to me is a strong foundation of timing, balance and spatial knowledge that the internal naturally develop. For example, on the subject of balance. Consider the single weightedness that Taiji hones to perfection or the footwork that Pa-Kua and Aikido polish to perfection (no I'm not excluding any of the other internal or for that matter the semi-internal: Choy Li-fut, White Crane etc.). The structure of expanding, contracting, warding off and splitting energy, which I contribute in the main to Taiji and H'sin-I.

As to actual techniques, allow me to be overly banal and simplistic, which I frequently confess to being as I don't have great aspirations. I don't make any

money on the Martial Arts or for that matter on my Metaphysics's (I'm probably the world's most banal, non-moslem Sufi and Hatha Yogi), as I'm a self employed Artisan Housepainter and not smart enough or have the memory to be a Lawyer, accountant, doctor or Indian Chief.

THE TECHNIQUES:

Close-up techniques:

Three short elbow strikes, straight up diagonally across and front to side (very hard and tight arches). A tight short arch backfist, a short palm heel, a forearm diagonal block and strike, all to the head and upper torso.

A short stomp to the opponent's shin to top of foot and a knee with pull to the groin area, torso and head.

MEDIUM RANGE TECHNIQUES:

Concentration on 'Grasp Swallow's Tail' for take downs and short throw overs. Back fists and hammer fists to the nose, slightly above the lip and slightly below the lip. Finger slaps at the eyes, and cupped palm slaps to the ears, And lounging shoulder, elbows and knee kicks.

LONG RANGE TECHNIQUES:

Quick and nimble footwork. Long relaxed arm wards with open hands and long relaxed arm wards with closed backfists (snapping on contact) to opponent's attacking fists. Straight front

kicks with ball of foot no higher than groin level, low side kicks very short, and low quick round house kicks at the knee or mid-shin level.

Well, that's it for my favorites. I look forward to hearing from some of you and no, I won't be offended if some find my techniques too limited, too violent or not violent enough. Please remember that I don't mean these actions and counters to the guy who said your Mom's dress is too loud or the guy who has had too much to drink and is a real jerk. I expect the internalist to be big enough in moral and ethical stature to be insulted, spat upon or even laughed out of a bar (pub) without having to show off one's martial skills. The more we study combat, the less we should have to actualize a combat situation in our lives, this I at least hope for us all.

Ed Star teaches in Fresno CA: See this edition advertisement for his school.



Ed Star uses a Mid range Technique to a student

WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

by Miles Henderson

Taijiquan is a popular style of Chinese martial art. Despite its popularity there are few people in the west who know what the name of the style actually means. Taijiquan is usually translated literally as "Supreme Ultimate Fist" but to those with no knowledge of Chinese philosophy or have no background of how Chinese boxing systems are named, this name is misleading.

Not only does it give a meaningless translation for quan (the fist in "supreme ultimate fist"), but the literal translation of taiji as "supreme ultimate" also leads to incorrect assumptions about the meaning of the name. The most common misunderstanding is that the name means that Taijiquan is the supreme ultimate martial art. While particular individuals these days may have that view, Taijiquan in the Chinese does not have that connotation.

The purpose of this article is to clear up some of the most prevalent misconceptions about Taijiquan by first providing some information on the naming of Chinese boxing systems, including how the suffix "quan" should be translated and the many sources of names for these systems. This will provide a context for looking more closely at the background to the naming of Taijiquan concluding with a translation to replace "Supreme Ultimate Fist".

QUAN - FIST OR BOXING

The suffix "quan" is common to the majority of traditional Chinese systems. Quan is the ideogram for fist and is actually used as the shortened version of quanfa (fist fighting method) or quan-shu (fist fighting art). Quan as a suffix denotes a boxing system, or more fully a fighting system that includes wrestling, kicking and weapons training, with hand to hand combat as the base.

This is similar to what contemporaries in the west understood of the boxing of James Figg (?-1734) as his system included in addition to "boxing", throws and locks and the use of quarterstaff and backsword.

Exceptions to the use of quan to denote a system are rare. They include Baguazhang (eight trigrams boxing) which substitutes the ideogram for palm (zhang) in the place of fist. Some styles used a format that did not have an ending that indicated a boxing system. The name of the famous southern revolutionary style, Choylayfut (cailifo) for example is a composite of founders' surnames and the ideogram for Buddha. If anglicised in translation it would probably be something like Smith Jones Buddha.

More modern styles, usually the western composite ones, use the ideogram for "the way" (dao or do). These are influenced by the Japanese use of do (i.e the change from the jutsu to the do suffix) and no doubt by Bruce Lee's system (sorry process!!) Jeet-kunedo (Jiequandao - way of the intercepting fist).

SOURCES OF NAMES

Names of Chinese fighting systems can reveal much about the art and are derived from a number of sources. They give an indication of the history, the main philosophical and theoretical influences on the style or even the pretensions of the founders. Names of traditional styles were generally derived from a number of sources. Often they were named after the founder (sometimes legendary) of the system, the name of the family in which the system was first exclusively practised, or the region or a place name in the region from which it originated. In addition many styles were also named after the animal whose movements were imitated, the fighting tactics used in the system, or the name of a philosophical concept that best summed up the theories or religious influences on the style.

Choylayfut has already been mentioned as an example of a system named after founders. It was also a convention for some systems to be named after famous and long dead people (they weren't around to deny it). The famous Sung dynasty General Yue Fei has had his fair share of this. During his busy and sadly shortened career, running around slaughtering barbarian hordes and dodging the plots of malicious courtiers, he is credited with not only founding a family system Yuejiaquan (yue family boxing) but the two famous arts

T'ai Chi Healing

By Master Chong Kwok, Beijing:

Master Chong Kwok is a master of Taijiquan and also one of the leading teachers of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the Beijing teaching hospital. He has been practicing Taiji for forty years and has been a doctor of acupuncture for much longer.

When we say that Taijiquan is able to heal disease, it is not quite correct to say this. Actually it is the body itself that heals itself and it is Taijiquan that assists this healing.

Everyone has channels around the body and through these channels flows the qi. This can be said to be like the blood, if the blood is impeded in any way then we become ill and it is also this way with the qi. The qi, if impeded in any way cannot flow to the internal organs to give energy to the organs. All organs need this energy to survive and to heal tissue that has been in some way damaged by incorrect habits or by attack from outside by micro organisms.

On a physical level, the qi is able to help the body's own immune system to fight off disease. Also, if the channels through which the qi travels are damaged or restricted in any way then the flow of qi to the internal organs will also be impeded. We get restrictions of the channels from tension. This tension can be from without or from within. From without, we have physical tension which is brought about by the continual tensing of muscles when they need not be tensed. For instance, when we are driving a motor vehicle, we might grab the steering wheel too tightly because we are driving in thick traffic. Our shoulder muscles sometimes are tensed because of external things that happen to us. It is not actually the muscles themselves that cause the tension. In our shoulders there are very important acupuncture points which relate directly to the colon and to the gall bladder. If we are not eating too well then any tension will show itself in these areas of

the shoulders, so if we are able to fix our habits which are causing the colon and the gall bladder to be ill, then the small amount of external tension throughout our day will not have the same effect upon our shoulders and neck.

The other way to receive tension is from within, from the mind itself, through wrong thought habits. How many times have you had some bad thing happen to you in the morning and it has put your whole day into chaos. This is where the internal tension happens and it is because of our own mind. What I say to my patients is to look around you and see what is happening, are you well right now, are you happy right now, have you enough food right now, is your family well right now. And if the answer is yes, then, you are OK. And you should not worry about what had happened to you in the morning.

Where does Taijiquan come into this? Taijiquan helps our body to heal itself in two ways, an indirect way and a direct way. The indirect way is just as important as the direct way. As I have already stated, the channels through which the qi is able to flow must be clear of any blockages caused from tension. It is the job of Taijiquan to help the whole body to relax and in so doing, causes the qi channels to be clear. The direct way that Taijiquan helps to heal the internal organs is to act directly upon each organ in turn. It does this by directing the flow of qi to specific organs but the channels must be free before this can happen. Therefore it is very important to practice your Taijiquan well before you will be able to direct your qi to certain organs for healing. The qi will not be able to flow freely to the particular organs if the channels are not open or impeded.

Taijiquan was invented by men of acupuncture and they know that every movement that the body makes, sends the qi to certain areas of the body. To be sent to these areas, the qi must flow through certain channels. These channels are also associated with all of the internal organs and therefore, in travelling

through these channels, the qi is taken to all of the major internal organs.

Taijiquan was invented with all of the channels and the flow of qi in mind but one must remember that Taijiquan was firstly invented as a martial art for self defence and the acupuncture channels were used for hurting and not for healing, it was not until people began to find that Taijiquan made them feel better that the great acupuncturists of the time began to look at Taijiquan and why it made people feel better. Now we have a very deadly way of self defence used for healing the body and successive generations of Taijiquan masters have added to the Taijiquan movements to further the flow of energy to the organs. Taijiquan is still a deadly self defence quan but now it is also a great healing art.

It is very important to practice a correct form of Taijiquan, otherwise you will not be able to make the qi flow to all of the internal organs. Another important point to make is that, although every movement a person makes, sends the qi to certain areas, it is only Taijiquan that sends the qi through the channels in the correct order. In a whole day the qi will flow once around the whole channel matrix and therefore it is important that we try to make the flow of energy in our daily practice to be the same as this daily flow. Otherwise we will create internal tension by trying to send the qi through the wrong channels. It would be like trying to all of sudden change the direction of the water flow in a fast flowing river, a great deal of energy would be expended in trying to divert the river, but if we were to rather make the river bend and turn it back then the flow would not be impeded by our trying. It is exactly this that the Taijiquan form tries to do, every movement has been put there in that certain order so that the qi will be redirected gently through each channel and not turned backwards all of a sudden causing inter-

nal tension thus doing the reverse of what we are trying to do.

Some people now have tried to shorten the classical Taijiquan forms and in doing so have made an art that used to be great for healing something that is now not too good at all. I have seen some forms of Taijiquan here in China that leave out many of the important repeated movements to try and make it easier for people to do but in doing so the forms have been made almost useless in the internal area of healing. We are not concerned with only external exercise when we perform the Taijiquan movements, we are concerned with the internal flow of qi to the internal organs.

How Do you Know It Works?

By Martin Eisen

This is the first part of a two part series by Dr Martin Eisen, a long time student of taiji and Dr of mathematics in the USA.

Many experts fear that the practical application of kung fu and karate is becoming a lost art. before you ridicule the above statement, consider the following facts. Although many styles have forms which appear powerful and spectacular, the techniques in the forms are modified when they are used in free style sparring against an opponent of the same style. An even more radical change occurs when fighting a different stylist, especially in full contact. Most competitors fight in exactly the same way - western boxing with a few kicks thrown in!

In light of the above, the following questions arise. Why is kung-fu fighting becoming a lost art? How do you know that a technique will work? How should you train in order to apply a technique? How can you improve your fighting ability and self defence skills?

The above questions will be investigated from the viewpoint of *Master Mark's Praying Mantis System* (Kwong Sai Jook Lum) - one of the few classical systems that has survived intact. Nothing has been lost since there have only

been five masters and fortunately, none died before passing on the whole system. However, the most important fact is that every technique can be used in exactly the same way it is practised. The reason for this practicality is that the system was invented for revenge as the following brief history indicates.

Sam Dart, the founder of the system, was a monk in the *Jook Lum* monastery. He was so small and frail-looking that the monks didn't allow him to practice kung-fu. He was given all of the dirty tasks. One of his chief duties was to carry water from the river to the monastery. If he became tired and rested the abbot's chief assistant hollered at him and frequently beat and kicked him. Sam Dart endured this abuse because his tormentor was huge, powerful and white eyebrow kung-fu style expert.

One day Sam Dart was sitting outside the monastery. He saw a praying mantis battling a huge bird at least ten times its size. The bird retreated and finally flew away. Sam thought that if the small insect could vanquish the large bird, perhaps he could defeat his gigantic tormentor. He captured some praying mantises and studied their fighting methods. Sam copied the insect's fighting techniques and probably combined them with the inner power training methods he had learned from his former teacher. This sifu was a hermit called Hai Shem, who lived on *Wor Meh Mountain*. Hai Shen was a very deep and mysterious person. It is not known whether he knew any kung-fu.

After Sam had been studying for about four years, the abbot left to visit another monastery. When he returned he saw that his assistant was bandaged and limping. He asked the White Eyebrow what had happened. The White Eyebrow explained that he had an accident. The monks feared the White Eyebrow and didn't contradict him. Finally, Sam Dart said that he would tell the truth. He had fought and trounced the White Eyebrow. He was very sorry for what he had done, but he couldn't restrain himself - a beaten dog eventually turns on his master. The abbot commanded, "Don't do it again", and struck Sam lightly on the head three times. He repeated the warning and once again lightly tapped Sam's head three times.

Sam reasoned that since the blows were so light that they were not meant as punishment, but as a code. Perhaps Abbot wanted to meet him outside the

monastery at 3 a.m. That night Sam went outside the monastery's walls at three a.m. the abbot was already there. The abbot thought Sam Dart was clever not only because he had figured out the code, but also invented an outstanding system. he decided to help Sam. The abbot saw some weaknesses in the system and pointed them out. They continued to meet and develop the system.

At that point in history, most of the major classical kung-fu systems were well developed. The abbot instructed Sam Dart in many practical techniques from other systems. That is why this praying mantis system contains many techniques from other systems. They were interested in creating an extremely effective and deadly fighting system to use in tournaments between monasteries.

Sam Dart's successor, *Lee Siem* proved the worth of this Praying Mantis system in open competition in which death matches were common. Lee Siem won the kung-fu championship in 1850. After that he never participated in a fight to the death and became a high priest.

Master Gin Foon Mark is the fifth generation master of Kwong Sai Jook Lum Praying Mantis. When he was young, students were promoted only by fighting a master. They had to sign a certificate absolving him from responsibility for death or injury. At that time challenges were also common. These challenges were not like the modern day circuses, in which tickets are sold or someone just happens to have a video camera ready. They were settled instantly and ended when one of the combatants was disabled, frequently with a major injury. Master Mark was recognized as a kung-fu expert in his early twenties. As a result of his youth, he received many challenges from unbelievers. He defeated all comers.

Kwong Sai Jook Lum Praying Mantis is only about 180 years old. From the short history above, there are reliable records, undistorted by time, of many victories in fights to the finish. Therefore, we know that they system works.

There are many reasons why fighting has become a lost art in many systems. The masters of some of these systems never had to fight for their lives. Some systems are very old and so large parts of these systems have been lost, because the masters died before passing on their knowledge. Frequently, certain fighting

skills were kept secret in order to surprise the enemy. All too often, such techniques also perished with the master. Other systems originated from health exercises and consequently have very large movements. There is often a pause between successive movements. Some older systems originated before free sparring. Single strong movements were invented for self defense against a single strong attack. Such techniques may be suitable for self defense, but are usually ineffective in free sparring, in which short continuous attacks are used. In many styles, the techniques which are practiced alone and in forms without an opponent, must be modified when sparring with an opponent. In addition, there are very few drills used to make a smooth transition from one-attack sparring to free style sparring. The student flounders around trying to adapt to situations in which multiple blocks, kicks and punches must be used, instead of single techniques. Finally, in some systems, students never oppose a technique or react to cues. These students are brainwashed into thinking that their techniques work. They can apply them to students in their own school, but not to outsiders.

Nowadays, people flit from style to style. Some students have no patience and become bored. Others move to a different locality, where there are no instructors of their former style. Some realize that their system is incomplete. Finally, some are interested primarily in variety and the beauty of the movements and only secondarily in self defence. As a result, students study two or more contrasting arts, which require entirely different muscle action - for example, Shaolin and Taiji. An expert in either of these arts will easily recognize that such students can really perform neither. Moreover, such training is detrimental to self defense. Your body must learn to react without thinking. How is this possible if you must decide, at each instant, which of the two contrasting muscular actions you are going to use?

Sifu Mark began studying kung-fu at the age of five under his uncles and grandfather, who were famous kung-fu experts. He was able to gain admittance to the Shaolin, Jook Lum and other monasteries because of his precocious skills and the influence of his relatives. At that time, the monasteries were strongholds of kung-fu and the residences of famous masters. The monks were

taught realistic methods of self defense to protect the monastery and themselves. Mark studied Si Lum, White Crane, Eagle, Leopard, Tiger and various internal systems receiving instructions in:

- Ming Kung: self defense and healing arts
- Shin Kung: spirit kung-fu
- Chi Kung: use of internal power for martial arts and health. In addition to studying Praying Mantis at the Jook Lum monastery, he also studied about ten years under Grandmaster Lum. When Sifu Mark retired, he appointed Master Mark the fifth generation Master according to established tradition.

The last two questions can be answered can be answered by examining some of the principles of Master Mark's system.

1. COMMON SENSE

Use science and reasoning to decide whether a technique is practical and efficient. For example, low kicks are preferable to high kicks because they are harder to block, the opponent can't grab your leg, your balance is more stable, they travel a shorter distance than a high kick, they can be done without a warm up and in tight clothes; you can punch and kick simultaneously.

2. STANCE

You must have a strong and mobile stance. Some styles try to fight using a low stance from their forms or basic practice. A low stance is impractical for moving to another position or changing directions. The Praying Mantis fighting horse, is ideal for self defense. For mobility, the feet are separated by about ten inches. This enables you to turn and move in any direction. The body is half facing, presenting a smaller target. The body is concave inward. This places the internal organs deeper inside the body. This concave position can be practised by placing the back of your hands on your hips, bending forward and squeezing your elbows together with your knees. Being flexible in this direction will also help to absorb

the power of blows which are not blocked. The hands are held in front of the body like boxing. The elbows point inward to protect the body. The toe of the leading foot points slightly inward. This maneuver positions the front thigh to that it protects the groin. The knees are slightly inward making it harder to kick between the legs. The legs are used to block low kicks by hooking action. Then, the blocking leg is used to execute a side, snap kick to the supporting leg.

Practicing exercises that produce a strong stance is essential in order to be able to execute techniques properly. You should not only be mobile but also have the ability to be immovable, yet flexible and well balanced. Praying Mantis' pushing hands exercises help produce these abilities.

3. FOOTWORK

In Praying Mantis you learn to move and turn in all directions and also how to get behind an opponent. To avoid the power of a stronger foe you must be able to move in any direction.

4. RELAXATION

Your muscles must be relaxed in order to obtain maximum speed and to perform combination soft techniques smoothly and rapidly. The power of your technique can be increased by relaxing so that one muscle does not oppose the other. By relaxing your body and allowing your weight to drop into your feet, you can strengthen your stances.

5. TECHNIQUES MUST BE DONE WITHOUT THINKING

Firstly, you must practice by your self until your techniques can be natural, without thinking. If you can't do a technique alone, how can you do it with an opponent in front of you? Secondly, you must learn to react instantaneously to a surprise attack. If you have to think, it is too late. Some methods of developing this ability will be described below.

There are many drills in Praying Mantis which develop the ability to react to a surprise attack. Some depend upon feeling (see 7). Others rely upon sight

and sound and consist of exercises in which you are surrounded by opponents who attack at random.

6. EXECUTE TECHNIQUES EXACTLY AS YOU PRACTICE THEM

This fundamental Praying Mantis principle is not used in many styles. For example, in karate, basic punches start with the fist on the hip, while in wing chun, the fist is at the side of the chest. Yet, in free sparring both styles hold their hands in front of them, like western boxers and punch from this position. How can principle 5 be followed if principle 6 is not obeyed.

7. FEELING AND SENSITIVITY

These type of exercises, also known as "sticky and push hands", enable you to react without thinking to a surprise attack. They also allow you to react to multiple punches and kicks which are coming so fast that you cannot see them. Finally, feeling is necessary to detect the direction of your opponent's force so that the next principle can be applied.

8. USE YOUR OPPONENT'S STRENGTH AGAINST HIM

In a street attack the mugger is usually larger than his victim or else there are multiple attackers. Common sense dictates that you shouldn't try to use power against a stronger power. For example, suppose you throw a right punch to your opponent's head and he blocks it from the outside with his right hand. Instead of trying to force your punch in, make a horizontal circle around your elbow joint with your right arm in the direction of the opponent's exerted force. Then, punch him with your right hand. By practicing relaxing and sensitivity exercises, your hand becomes like a spring. The harder he blocks, the faster your arm springs around and hits him. Alternatively, you can use your left hand to hook underneath your opponent's arm, sweep it aside and punch him with your right hand. Similarly, your opponent's strength can be used against him in blocking, kicking and grappling.

9. CUTTING POWER

This principle is concerned with not opposing the opponent's power in blocking. Instead, you meet the attacking limb at an angle to cut its power. For example, a straight right punch to the solar plexus can be countered, without blocking, by a straight left punch from the outside, sliding your left forearm over your opponent's right forearm, from the outside at the proper angle. You can deflect his punch so that it will not hit you. Without stopping, continue the forward motion of your arm to hit the opponent. Another example of cutting power is; Hold your left hand as if eating a slice of pizza and cut downward and toward the solar plexus. This is immediately followed by a left flick to the face.

10. TIMING

Timing is very important in self defense. If you block too soon or too late you will be hit. By varying the rhythm of your attacks you can confuse your opponent and get through his defense. All aspects of timing cannot be learned in a form or one attack sparring. Drills described in No.12. or free sparring must be used.

11. DISTANCING

You must move in close to your opponent so that you can attack him. Conversely, practice keeping out of range of your opponent so that he cannot hit you, but you have the ability to hit him. To use such tactics requires knowledge of the effective range of your and your opponent's long, medium and short range.

The skills outlined in 2 to 11 must be mastered so that they can be used in free fighting. This requires drills for bridging the gap between one attack and free style sparring which will teach these skills. Such drills, as well as other attributes required for the practical application of kung-fu will be discussed in part 2. (NEXT ISSUE, MARCH)

THE VIDEO!

This is the one that everyone has been waiting for. The most advanced Taijiquan video ever covering the little known or ever shown 4th level or the 'opening and closing' postures.

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of Yingzhuaquan (eagle claw boxing) and Xingyiquan (form and will boxing) also.

Regional names for styles generally derive from the place name of where the boxing system was founded. Examples include the famous Shaolin Temple boxing, Wudang mountain boxing, and Emei mountain boxing. The source of some styles' names is controversial. For example Wingchun (Yongchunquan - everlasting spring boxing) could on the one hand be derived from the name of the chief student of the founder or on the other hand the name of the training hall where the founding monks met.

Many systems have a name that reflects the fighting tactics of the system. In the so-called animal systems the basic movements imitate the fighting tactics or fighting spirit of both mythical and real animals. Animal systems are very numerous and derive from animals as ordinary as dogs (Gouquan) and ducks (Yaquan) to more obviously martial creatures such as tigers (Huquan) as well the mystical dragon (Longquan). Other names described predominant fighting movements or tactical features of the system. Some examples are Mizongquan (secret path boxing) for its complex hand techniques and Tantui (spring legs) for its powerful kicking tactics.

It is not a well known fact that the earliest names for Taijiquan and its sister art Baguazhang derived from names describing the systems' fighting tactics. Baguazhang was originally called Zhuanzhang (circling boxing) based on the fact that the most basic tactic of the style was to circle the opponent. Originally Yang style Taijiquan was variously known as Mianquan (cotton boxing), Huaquan (neutralising boxing), Ruanquan (soft or flexible boxing). These names all described the basic tactic that distinguished the Yang style from other contemporary systems in that the tactic of soft overcoming hard predominated.

Some styles were named after a concept that summed up, sometimes accurately and often misleadingly, the theoretical or philosophical base of the system. These were usually terms from Buddhist and Daoist belief. Some popular examples of this include such styles as Liuhequan (six harmonies

boxing), Bajiquan (eight ultimates boxing), xingyiquan (form and will boxing), Baguazhang (eight trigrams boxing) and of course Taijiquan (supreme ultimate boxing). Understanding these names usually requires some knowledge of the philosophy from which the style derives its name and for this reason they are difficult to translate literally and still retain a meaning that is comprehensible to the average western practitioner. Taijiquan is a good example of this and the new translation "Yin and Yang boxing" will provide a more understandable name.

TAIJIQUAN - YIN AND YANG BOXING

When Taijiquan is translated as "Supreme Ultimate Boxing" many people mistakenly believe that it indicates that the founders' intention was for the name to show to the world that their system was the best, the ultimate. The Chinese meaning, however, is different to how it appears in the literal english translation.

Taiji (supreme ultimate) is a concept from Daoist philosophy representing the ultimate state in the universe in which the positive and negative elements are in perfect harmony. The founders intended that their style, at all levels of practice and application, would reflect this philosophy of seeking balance between natural opposites. Masters of Taijiquan in their books and treatises have gone to great lengths to explain this connection. It was also their intention to have a suitably Daoist name to reflect the heritage of Taijiquan's beginning in the Daoist temples at Wudang mountains.

While the majority of the public (including most western taijiquan practitioners) have no knowledge of Daoism and the concept of Taiji, most people these days are familiar with the yin and yang symbol. Few know, however, that in Chinese this symbol is called a taiji diagram.

It is so-called because it symbolises the concept of taiji. Taijiquan is in fact named after the concept the symbol depicts. One of the earliest texts explains the relationship. Wangzongyue's Treatise of Taijiquan dramatically begins "Taiji (supreme ultimate) is born of wuji (the infinite) and is the mother of yin and yang." A more meaningful

translation for Taijiquan would therefore be "Yin and Yang boxing".

The translation "Yin and Yang boxing" clears up the common misconceptions because it directs a practitioner with no knowledge of the Daoist philosophy of taiji (yin and yang) to the correct source and meaning of the name. By substituting familiar terms for "supreme ultimate" (taiji) this translation avoids the misleading connotations of the seemingly arrogant title "Supreme Ultimate Fist".

By providing a translation comprehensible to western practitioners the fog of mystery, that is often cultivated in some systems, is lifted. Practitioners of Chinese styles should make every possible attempt to understand the background and cultural context of their style as it will provide insights into technique that may not have been previously apparent.

But as western practitioners we can never fully appreciate all the subtleties of Chinese language, culture and philosophy. Coupled with the fact that western conditions and mentality are different to those of the Chinese founders, this means that the practice and deeper understanding of Chinese boxing systems in the west will be different to that of the founders. The result is that Chinese boxing systems in the west are changing to adapt to a different environment and in many cases will eventually bear little resemblance, other than in name, to the style as it is or was practised in China.

Understanding the background of a boxing style will ensure that the systems' unique characteristics will stay true to the original intention without impeding this inevitable evolution. Translating the name of a boxing system more meaningfully, as I have done with Taijiquan, is an important step in this process of change.

** Note. The modern transliteration of Chinese (pinyin) has been used for all the mandarin terms. Where the Cantonese name of the style is used e.g Choylayfut I have put the mandarin pronunciation in brackets.*