

# Combat & Healing

March 2001 Issue

Issue Number 44

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## Evolution of Survival & Human Consciousness

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## Baguazhang 'Animal Play'

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## Mind in Martial Arts

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## What Are they Afraid Of?

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## Old Dog, New Tricks

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## Relax During Practice?

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## Tough Guys?

**PLUS**

The Absolute Joy:  
Videos etc.



# COMBAT & HEALING

The Magazine of the World Taiji Boxing Association

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## FRONT COVER

***Ben Montaigne (now almost 18) , at age 6 practising his KO's on Dad.***

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## Moontagu Books: New Address

Erle Montaigne is moving. At long last the Horse's Head farm has been sold. The new farm is in a colder climate in Oberon NSW Australia, about 2.5 hours West of Sydney and 1200 Metres up. The move will take place mid-April just after Easter 2001

Our new address will be: PO Box 444, Oberon NSW 2787, Australia.

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# The Evolution of Conscious and Human Survival

*By Adrian Inchauspe (Master Surgeon and WTBA Instructor Argentina)*

When I began contacting Erle Montague in 1995 and first met him in Australia, I heard some crucial phrases such as: “Move from the centre”, “Your spine is a pole stuck in jelly, let’s move without losing its root”: “Your upper body moves from the diaphragm onto the tan tien, like a cavity over a greasy ball”.

All taught us about how to connect with our internal body. But the best I have heard says: “A man who is not capable of defending the place where he is standing on didn’t earn his place on earth”.

This last phrase shocked me so much that I decided to study seriously the system. I realized that I had to drop everything I knew about the martial arts, those that “territorial instinct”, involuntarily in that phrase implicated my connection with my reptilian brain.

## Instincts:

In human beings, instincts represent our animal heritage. But for martial artists, the instincts guide to the reflex reactions. This is founded since our ontogenical and phylogenical development.

The ontogenical development occurs since we have origin in fecundation (actual origin of man). The fusion of male and female sex cells drives to the zygote state (unicellular life). Since then, in the first three months of pregnancy, human beings pass a “revival of the animal kingdom’s history”. Those we don’t develop directly as humans but we must overcome all through the changes of life since it began. In this way, we “remember” the evolution of life entirely since its origins. From that unicellular state of zygote, then we progress to a multi-cellular one. Then the most perfect ordinator in cells, our DNA will act as a biology computer that kept this critical information for survival for millions of years.

## What does this have to do with martial arts?

In the case of DNA, we are programmed genetically, congenitally, bio-anatomically and most importantly neurophysiologically, with all the information of life evolution and all the survival systems too.

In our brains, we have included the nervous systems of the fish; then the amphibians (lung fish in Australia), the reptile centres and the old mammals status of the brain. They must be formed before

the neocortex in that three first months of pregnancy.

So, for that we did not escape from Darwin Evolution Law. But instead of keeping the motto, “the strongest will survive”, man superimposed that with, “The smartest will survive”. This is because, apart from being all the summatory of all the types of brains, we accommodate our lives to what I call, “The Neocortex Prevalence”.

***In fact, evolution is synonymous from neurophysiological development. It is the top complex bio-structural entity in creation.***

In fact, evolution is synonymous from neurophysiological development. It is the top complex bio-structural entity in creation.

## Actual Investigations

Perhaps for this, almost all of us think we have lost our animal capabilities. Really talking, we have less hearing range than dogs. Our olfactory lobe, only a thin membrane, is a big bulb in dogs. We cannot say the same for sight; it’s not a good example, for the eagles could be better prepared for hunting. But man is the best prepared for learning. And that

is what every taining is based upon.

## Foundations: What has been Scientifically Posed:

I am not able to talk n Australia about these matters without making reference to one of the top authorities in this subject. Mr John Eccles, Australia 1962 medicine Nobel, studied extensively every thing about the centre of aggression and pleasure in our brain. This place, the “Harenula” (bean) is a site really like a bean or an almond just under the fornix and the callous body and over the hypothalamus. His dorsolateral part is for pleasure. In rats was made what was called “old’s stimulation”. The electric stimulation of this centre caused the rats having 7000 orgasms per hour!! (Hey Ade, mate, you will have people all over the world now trying to purchase that information! ... \editor|). In human experience in medically intractable epilepsy, permitted the access to this part of the brain and its stimulation made patients to feel like walking in clouds (as in Taiji). A kind of behaviour, sensation of floating in space and calmness.

But the ventromedial stimulation told another story. Experiences of Dement, Penfield, Sperry, between others caused reactions suitable to the sayings of the old Taiji classics, they saw the following changes.

- 1/. The patients spread their fingers as claws (Bagua Palms).
- 2/. They demonstrated erection and arched back © Back).
- 3/. They showed a furious look, widening of the eye opening. (Eagle Vision).
- 4/. They made primitive noises, llike grunts, roars and also biting and whistling.

This last group is more proof of the genetical influence in mimicking (genetical determination).

### Examples:

The cat when threatened by dogs, put their tails up, resembling the cobra snake and will make whistling sounds mimicking the sounds of the poisonous snakes.

A bird in North Africa also makes whistles if a predator is near the nest and also undulates (as a dragon) intimidating the nest of the animal. Remember also that the reptiles dominated the earth for millions of years and they represent danger, (poison predation). Any other animal could consider first the idea of attacking it.

### My Own Experience:

I work in the “Alexandro Korn Neuropsychiatric Hospital”, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the world. It has over 3000 psychotic patients and

some of them you would swear were brothers to Hannibal Lecter!

They’re real psycho-criminals and have their “Habenula” much larger than normal. A large covert of doctors, the director chief surgeon and chief neuro-surgeon, members of the community, judges and lawyers and psychiatric doctors complete the list that determine an ablation of the referred site in order to save society from danger.

***The cat when threatened by dogs, put their tails up, resembling the cobra snake and will make whistling sounds mimicking the sounds of the poisonous snakes.***

Many years ago, the lobotomy of the frontal zone was the way to stop aggression. Then Stereoataxic surgery limited the damage to the brain.

Today some courts ask for MNR (magnetic nuclear Resonance) to appreciate the size of this place without surgery.

Remember that this “twilite zone” didn’t suffer involution. His size is equivalent to an insect and more than double than big apes. That’s not new for human with wars street violence and rape. Remember the saying of Konrad Lorenz, another Medicine Nobel Laureate: Besides the first Pytecanthropus Pekinensis

Man, were the marks and ashes, he dominated the fire and his first action was to use it to cook his brother!”

## The Ultimate Matter: Can we train our survival instinct?

For this I will refer to the Rudolf Bilz experience (1935). He took rats and put them in a bucket filled with water. They lasted 15 minutes before dying. They didn't collapse for immersion but for suprarenal insufficiency.

But with one of them he changed the test, putting a piece of wood only five minutes after the beginning like a life saver. With this device, the rat could float, reaching the border of the bucket. From there, the rat could jump into a warm nest with food. When he again threw this rat into the water, it lasted 30 hours before it died. Bilz could train his survival response augmenting it up to 320 times!

And the question is; can humans train and refloat this hidden but always existing “survival gift”? I will tell you another story.

Florence Chadwick was the first woman in crossing by swimming the Mancha Channel. In 1936, at 34 years, she decided to be the first woman to cross the dangerous Catalina's Channel. So very early and encouraged by her Mother and her coach, she began swimming in that cold wa-

ter. Many times the people of prefecture had to shoot into the water to scare away the sharks! Beside all that, a dense fog disabled her to see the coast, her ultimate goal. So after 16 hours, of swimming, finally she quit asking to be lifted from the sea. How was her surprise when she noticed that the shore was only 700 metres away!

When the press asked her about her experience, she said that if she would know how far the coast was from her she would finish the test. So after 2 months she tried again but knowing she could reach her goal. In her 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt with her own iron will, she made the test beating the male record by 2 hours!

### ***All the neurological systems, Habenula, Hypothalamus and Limbic Systems are integrated by circuits to the Neo-Cortex***

I could give more examples. Remember in 1972 the Andes experience. Uruguayans could live without support after a plane crash in the coldest high mountains because they ate the human flesh from the dead companions. They surpassed the human social rules of behaviour and made cannibalism for survival.

### **How Can We Train Our Survival Instincts?**

All the neurological systems, Habenula, Hypothalamus and Limbic Systems are integrated by circuits to the Neo-Cortex. The Lab animals that have not been with their parents or animal group while growing up also slow down their survival response. They lose their instinct responses because in the lab there are not the dangers on jungle like predators. For that, baby animals use playing games for learning their hunting and fighting abilities. (Abstract Training).

The internal styles, especially Erle's one, instinct in training abstract way of learning in push hands, martial applications etc.

Human beings are animals that grow in the zoo of society and their logical rules. Perhaps today thinks he doesn't have any more survival responses. He didn't lose anything, so it happens. We only forgot, the training of this survival mode!

Training is not a matter having bad behaviour or being aggressive beast, thinking we are warriors for doing this. We don't live in life or death situations every day during our training with friends. So the results of training will be that even we behave as normal people when danger comes and our life is threatened, we CAN bring out the “animal within” to save us.

# Pa-kua Chang “Animal Play”

by Michael Babin

One of the central concepts of the traditional Chinese martial disciplines is learning by observing and imitating animals. This takes two basic approaches: the “literalists” try to imitate an animal as closely as possible; for example, a monkey stylist will pretend to be that animal to the extent of making facial expressions, hooting sounds and flea-scratching movements while doing the forms and applications that imitate how that animal moves and fights. By contrast, the “abstractionists” try to copy the spirit of the movement of a particular animal; but don’t try to “become” the animal or imitate all of its mannerisms.

If it is true that Taoism was originally a shamanic religion than the use of “totem” animals is not an alien concept to it or to those aboriginal or European cultures (Celtic, Germanic) who revered nature and sought to transcend the boundaries between the spiritual and earthly dimensions. Without getting too carried away by the links between Taoism and shamanism — I think that the possibility of “becoming” a bear or a wolf for a few moments is not outside the realm of possibility — it shows up too frequently both in

history and mythology (ie., viking berserkers and werewolves).

For example, I do the bear (or does the bear do me?) and practise a short form I have created that imitates the way that animal moves.

This bear is well-balanced and stable in his postures and, while slow and lumbering, is capable of sudden bursts of speed. In ancient time in parts of ancient China, the shamans wore bear masks or heads and imitated the stepping of the bear on its hind feet in ritual dances as the peasants believed that humans were descended from bears. The Ainu in Japan still revere the bear as an “ancestor” and I have to admit that I would rather be the descendent of a grizzly than an ape!

However, for all of our flaws, humans have something that animals do not have — compassion. If a zebra gets sick, the herd moves on leaving the ailing animal to the waiting lions — not from cruelty or self-interest; but simply from obeying their own natures. Most humans wouldn’t and that’s one of the important issues that separates us, for good and evil, from the natural world.

In any case, “becoming an animal” is really only suitable in life-and-death situations; not for dealing with annoying arseholes or with your training partners. I only want to acknowledge the possibility of becoming a bear if I have to fight a gang of bikers — not be one permanently and live alone, except for mating season, and eat my own cubs, if I get the chance!

I tell my pa-kua students that cultivating animal energies, reptile mind, eagle vision, “C” back and the dragon palm are the flip-side of the “internal stillness” that comes through qigong — you may be able to become an animal (not imitate it) for life-and-death struggles; but you wouldn’t want to be one permanently for daily life. Compassion and the ability to choose how we act are what really separates us from “the garden of Eden”.

Erle’s pa-kua chang is potentially so effective and more than a little scary because he’s mated natural movement and subconscious fighting skills to what he calls the “reptile” mind. He doesn’t emphasise the traditional animals of pa-kua but that doesn’t mean that they are not relevant to your understanding of this concept or the art in general — only you can eventu-

ally decide what is important to your own training.

As far as I am concerned the self-defense aspect of pa-kua animal play means that you either choose the animal that suits your physique and concentrate on it for the training that you mean to be used in terms of life-and-death situations or that “the animal chooses you”. In practical terms, this means deciding over time which animal you are suited to and creating your own training based on the techniques related to that animal as available through the circular and linear forms. You can think of this exercise in form creation as being “graduate work”.

I'd like to finish with a cautionary note sounded long-ago and in another context by the philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche (c.1844-1900). His words are certainly relevant to the subject of animal energies and self-defence. “He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And, if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.”

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## New Videos From Erle Montaigue

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### MTG217

#### **The Wudang Hand Weapons Volume One (The first six)**

As all of the Internal forms and fighting styles came from the WUDANG SHAN system's 12 Wudang forms, so too do the two person sets from Taijiquan and Baguazhang come from the 12 Wudang Hand Weapon training sets.

Before push hands, there were the 12 Wudang Hand Weapons. There are the precursors to push hands. Not the silly 'you push me, I push you' type of push hands that most schools now teach and often go into competition with! But rather the excellent p'eng/hinge, fighting push hands methods of today and the Erle Montaigue system.

These 12 two person training methods teach you everything you need to know in order to turn your fighting into reflexive actions that will just happen automatically when attacked. If anyone asks me about what training methods I advise to learn how to fight, I tell them the 12 Wudang methods, along with most of the other stuff, but these are really special. They teach you fa-jing, how to use it, instant reaction, never stop attacking, how to move the body in a flowing energy saving manner, deadly fighting methods which attack to the most vulnerable points on the body, how to move in accordance with what the opponent is doing to you. How to do the most damage in the least possible time with the least wastage of energy. The hands are used in the way of their name. So the 'Spear' is used to cut and stab etc.

In this first volume, Erle Montaigue covers in his usual great detail, the first six hand weapons of:

**Hammer:** This two person set makes use of the closed fist using the base of the fist as a hammer. It attacks the CO

10 or 12 points in a devastating 'Point Set Up' strike, ST 9 and 10 (neck), GB 3 (Temple) and again ST 9. Then in retaliation of this last strike, your partner then has a go.

**Spear:** This one is deadly and caution must be taken when training as the eyes are involved. The points struck are; CO 10, eyes (scraping the finger nails across them), eyes (same in the opposite direction), CV 22 (by spearing it) and ST 10.

**Sword:** This one is also very dangerous; CO 10 (Set Up), ST 0, ST 10, ST 11, TH 17, Neck in general, GB 3 (Temple) and ST 9 and 10.

**Plough:** This one is wonderful as it trains your reflex actions to perfection; Neigwan (both hands), 4 Neck points, LU 5, CV 22 (Neck in general).

**Axe:** This one attacks to; LU 8 (Both sides), Both sides of the neck chopping, chopping down onto either side of the neck covering many deadly points, back into LIV 13 both sides.

**The Nun:** The 'Nun' is a 3 section Chinese implement for thrashing wheat or rice. It has been modified in its physical weapon form for fighting. This one attacks to mainly the neck and arms using the arms and hand weapons in the typical Bagua type 'Nun' posture so that the arms look like a 3 section staff.

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## Dear Mr Blursnog

*By Les Anwyl*

Congratulations on yet another great edition of 'Combat and Healing', a unique and valuable contribution to Martial arts literature. I especially enjoyed Anthony Court's article on emptiness, I have read much on the subject and thought about it a great deal, and found Anthony's explanation and analogies the catalyst for a deeper understanding; it has helped to 'lift my game' considerably.

While still on emptiness, Erle's article on empty force also struck a chord with me. Sometimes I am still amazed at the bullshit that people want to believe in, but then again it has always been so and will always be so. I would like to think that people who propagate and benefit from this twaddle believe it themselves; it is easier to delude others when you have deluded yourself. I have no doubt that many of these people are sincere. The sad part is that it can divert people from realising that good martial arts are more amazing and meaningful than the wildest flights of fancy, or the best party tricks. It also raises the important consideration of examining ones motivation for practice; do we practice to show off and impress people, or is there something more at the heart of our endeavours? In todays

world it is easy to have people in awe of you and think you know far more than you actually do; (in the words of Captain Goodvibes; "bewdy, we'll build a shrine, rip off all the blokes and root all the shielas"); people are so easily impressed these days it is a trap for the new teacher to start believing his students inflated opinion of himself. Ultimately however, the important thing is to practice. Even if the initial motivation is ego, sooner or later the ego will be knocked down and a new motivation will be found for those with a sincere and good heart. I wholeheartedly agree with Erle's outlook that we practice to better ourselves so that we can help others. Humility is important. With proper motivation and sincere and diligent practice, we can't go wrong.  
Les Anwyl.

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## New Videos From Erle Montaigne

### MTG216

#### Sudden Violence Applications from Push Hands.

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This tape is a way of taking one's advanced push hands training into a realistic physical realm. We firstly take push hands into a completely reflex way of training so that the movements become sub-conscious. Then we use the ten training applications of sudden violence from Push hands to add to this abstract way, a more physical way of using push hands in order to join the

sub-conscious to the physical. Ten applications from within push hands using the p'eng/hinge method of push hands does this for you. Very deadly and very useful both for training and for real self-defense.

#### Wal2:

**(Please note: This title cannot be used as the fourth free tile.)**

#### Advanced Traditional Chinese Medicine: By Wally Simpson.

On his first tape, Wally Simpson (Dip. Ac.) taught basic tui-na (Chinese Massage) methods. On this his second tape, Wally concentrates upon the more advanced methods of 'Cupping' and the use of 'Moxa' for healing all types of ailments.

Included are techniques for 'Cupping' Sliding Cups, Gua Sha (Scraping Techniques), Moxa, indirect moxa, stick moxa and Chinetsukyu, Kamaya mini.

Scar treatment is also covered.

Some ailments covered include, Repetitive strain injuries, neck and shoulder problems and lower back problems, Liver and stomach problems, prolapse, and insomnia.

This tape is essential for beginners to advanced all types of massage therapists, acupuncturists and anyone else who heals using hands on methods.

# Mind in the Martial Arts and Eastern Thought

By Anthony Court

## Part 5: Death, Reincarnation and Rebirth-Part A

About 17 years ago I found myself in Lam Rim Buddhist Centre. A beautiful manor house situated outside of a little village called Penrhos, near Raglan in Gwent. A Tibetan Buddhist Lama, The Venerable Geshe Damcho Yonten had founded the centre in 1978. Geshe Damcho had entered the great monastic university of Drepung (near the capital of Tibet) at the age of six. For the next 25 years, he pursued intensively the formal studies of Buddhist philosophy, psychology, logic, debate and scriptural studies, and the practice of meditation under the direction and guidance of some of the most learned and experienced Lamas in Tibet. After having escaped the Chinese invasion of his homeland in 1959, he was able to complete his studies in India and Ladakh, attaining the high qualification of Geshe. During the six years that he spent in Ladakh he became Abbot of Samtenling Gompa Norba. Returning to India in 1966 Venerable Geshe Damcho gathered

his first western students, and it was at their request that in 1976 he came to the west. Today Geshe-la is the Spiritual Director and resident Lama/Teacher at Lam Rim.

***The Buddha said that meditation on death was the most powerful practice of all. But "What is death?" and what does it all mean. "The end of everything?" or is there something else?***

On Sunday evenings, after the weekend formal teaching, students used to gather informally in one of the large rooms, which had a large open log fire, and discuss the weekend's events. Geshe-la would always join the students about 9.00 p.m. The particular evening that made such an impression on me, started quite innocently. One man said that the weekend had been spiritually, very uplifting, but on Monday he had to rejoin the "Rat Race" along with everybody else, and he went on to say how he was fed up with his job, the nine to five drudgery etc., and apart from his little bit of spiritual practice how life in general was such a drag. Soon others join in, everyone agreeing that "Life" for them held a great deal of unsatisfactory elements, and that no one was

having much happiness in their lives.

I watched Geshe-la sitting there quietly in the light from the log fire listening to all the negative comments. Suddenly he "O.K. stop!" and let me ask you just one question. "If you knew for certain that you had only seven days left to live, would you still continue thinking and acting the way that you do?" This question, of course, stopped everyone in their tracks. Everyone in the room started to reevaluate their lives. Someone said "Well if I was lying on my deathbed I won't be saying to myself I wish I had worked longer hours at the office" and after a long and interesting discussion everybody in the room stated that of course it would radically change their current behaviour. And then Geshe-la said "***And how do you know that, you do not have only seven days left to live?***"

The Buddha said that meditation on death was the most powerful practice of all. But "What is death?" and what does it all mean. "The end of everything?" or is there something else? If there is nothing else, like many people believe. O.K.! Then just go-out and have a good time. Why worry about anything? If there is nothing, then all effort is a waste of time. Well according to the enlightened systems, (whose goals is nothing less

than the achievement of total liberation from the samsaric life) **there is!** In the previous articles we have tried to focus on one important point, the *nature of mind* after all, in the Buddhist tradition alone it is said that there are 84,000 different teachings to counter the 84,000 different negative states of mind. Many of the “enlightened” systems have many varied methods to suit the many different capabilities and capacity of the seeker/student.

If we do not have some idea of the supreme teaching of “Natural Mind” and the “Conditioned Mind” then anything written about death, reincarnation and rebirth not only will not make any sense, but also will sound like some fantasy, some construction or some “Exotic Oriental View” of things. Let us look again at what are called the three “Kayas” or bodies. Empty essence, or dharmakaya, cognizance or sambhogakaya. These two are actually indivisible, and this is called nirmanakaya. A basic way to say space, energy, and form, but this is too simplistic. The essence of mind is both empty and cognizant, or one taste of empty cognizance suffused with knowing. The supreme liberation is to **recognise** the natural state.

***Utterly awake, with the five senses wide open.***

***Utterly open, with unfixating awareness.***

For ordinary beings, mind is also one taste of empty cognizance, but it is suffused with unknowing. This is because the awake quality focuses outward, latching on to whatever is experienced. Then the attention gets caught up in the three poisons of attachment, aversion and ignorance (spiritual) these three poisons are the constructed, conditioned and ignorant mind. It is often explained in the following way.... the space of the sky is like the empty essence, our cognizance is like the suns’ rays, and our thoughts are like clouds. The sky never changes, the suns rays are always present, but the clouds of our obscuration hide all this, and we consider our thoughts to be our mind. No wonder there is such utter confusion in our lives.

***When sentient beings look away from themselves, everything seems solid and concrete.***

***When the yogi recognizes the utterly free state of rigpa (Natural mind),***

***He knows that it is open like space,***

***And all the appearances of this world are just a marvelous show***

The nirmanakaya is what we see as the solid world, but its essence is empty, and its nature is cognizant, therefore it is call unconfined. Unconfined because everything in the universe springs from this empty essence. We are aware, because of our natural empty/cognizant nature.

So our natural mind is present here and now, enlightenment is simply seeing this, recognizing our true nature, our Buddha nature. From the nirmanakaya all things arise likes, dislikes, indifference, religions, cultures, politics, ideas, ideals, history in fact the total display of samsara, including birth and death. This magical display of appearances we call life. And this life of distraction keeps us from recognizing the nature of our natural mind. The enlightened mind can never be constructed (through spiritual practice for example) it is here and now.

***All sentient beings are Buddhas,***

***But they are covered by temporary obscuration***

***The nature of mind*** is beyond birth and death because it is the unchanging state. The ground of all that arises and returns. The Zen koan “Show me your original face before you were born!” refers to this. So nothing inherently exists from its own side. Everything is one, and totally interdependent (pity the people who mess up our planet can’t see this) Until we can *see* without any fabri-

cation the actual *nature of our minds* our suffering will continue indefinitely, because we take the illusion to be real, and continue to construct the unreal. The great Dzogchen (Natural Great Perfection or Completion) tradition is the highest teaching, and pinnacle of Tibet's enlightened history and tradition. It's teaching requires no religious belief or ridged rules, it is open, spacious and teaches the return to our natural state. The natural way of the Universe is not the way of man made philosophies, religions, ideals, constructs, the academic mind, the technical mind and definitely the conceptual mind, all the things we think are important. In fact all we really have to do is to recognize our natural mind, and in the very recognition is liberation from the conditioned. So, without at least a glimpse of the possibility that our thoughts are not the "Nature of our minds" then all discussion of death and rebirth is pointless.

The Tibetan Lamas undisturbed in the Himalayan vastness for thousands of years studied all the great questions regarding our existence here in this dimension, we call "Life" And although this is true of many cultures, such as Chinese Taoism, etc. nowhere today is there such an opportunity to study what was once (and still is regarding higher teaching) a secretive and closed society. Qualified Lamas are now openly giving teachings in the West, and if you can cut through the cultural outer cov-

erings you will find a highly sophisticated system of universal enlightened teachings underneath. The Tibetan study and understanding of the death states are second to none.

A description of the dying process according to the Tibetan "Studies"

***When one's life span has come to it's natural end, the "very near" signs of death appear. Firstly the five sensory powers begin to fail. The external sign is vomiting and loss of appetite***

When one's life span has come to it's natural end, the "very near" signs of death appear. Firstly the five sensory powers begin to fail. The external sign is vomiting and loss of appetite. The body begins to lose heat and, because of fear, one has difficulty lifting one's head. The inner sensation is of one's head falling down. Then the signs experienced with the withdrawal of each of the elements occur. The element of earth fails. Externally the flesh and bones shrink slightly. Internally the body feels heavy and one has the sensation of falling to earth from a height. Earth dissolves into water. Externally, one's body loses its natural shape. Bodily strength fails, internally one feels dull and hazy. The internal water elements are blood and lymph. When they fail, this is a sign that the internal element of wa-

ter has failed. Liquids flow from the mouth and nose, and one feels the sensations of thirst. This indicates that the water element has dissolved into fire. The internal sensation is one of warmth. Sometimes the mind is clear sometimes unclear.

The internal fire element is bodily warmth and this is soon to dissolve. The eyes roll up in the head and one cannot recognize anyone. The power of the fire element withdraws into the element of air and therefore one's bodily heat withdraws. The external wind element withdraws. Air is the element here and when it dissolves into the inner air element the breath begins to pass in gasps, and one's limbs begin to quiver. As an internal sign, the mind becomes agitated. At the time perceives a vision of a mirage like appearance and wisp of smoke. The red female drop from one's mother then moves up in the central channel (Conception channel) A colour red the fills the mind. This indicates that the mind of appearance has dissolved into the mind of increase. It is at this point that specific yoga's can be applied, to cut off the conceptual mind. The original white sperm from one's father moves down in the central channel. At this point the mind of increase has dissolved into the mind of attainment. The breath now passes in long slow sighs. The female drop now dissolves into the life-sustaining channel and comes to the heart. This is the stage called "radiantly black" and is fol-

lowed by an appearance of falling into a ditch in pitch darkness. At that time the mouth opens and the eyes roll in the head, fully revealing the whites of the eyes. The external appearance is like the setting of the sun. All sensory recollections and appearances cease and one has a vision that all images suddenly dissolve into darkness, into an immense pool of blackness. The breath now moves very shallowly, and, internally, one experiences a vision as of dusk and darkness. Two of the five female drops fall to the heart. The person then makes the sound of HIK with a breath that moves a span. A radiantly black appearance arises in the mind and one swoons into unconsciousness. The breath then totally stops and the red and white drops of the female and male forces meet together at the heart. One then awakens from unconsciousness into a state of joy. This joyous awareness dissolves into the clear light, and one experiences the simultaneously born bliss. The primordial awareness at the centre of the heart now dissolves into the suchness of mother and son clear lights. At this point the internal energies cease and the subtle mind and energy enter into the innermost channel of being. ***The basic clear light of death appears to all living beings.*** For high yogis/practitioners, this time of the death experience, when the mother and son clear lights enter into symmetry, provides an excellent opportunity for the attainment of liberation and

enlightenment. When a yogi/practitioner applies the correct meditations, the mind here immediately transforms into the ultimate state of the unproduced, uncreated sphere of truth. Mind becomes wisdom and then manifests into energy and form (is reborn) in order to work for the benefit of all living beings. This is the attainment of full awakening possessed of the three Buddha *kayas* (bodies) this is how highly realised Lamas and realised practitioners from similar traditions can choose to and control reincarnation.

***The above is how the death process is usually described, I have read and heard these teachings on a number of occasions.***

So, according to those who have studied, and experienced with clarity these states of mind, enlightenment in this lifetime is possible; for those who do not achieve this goal, it is possible even at the moment of death. Without instruction one will never be able to recognize the clear light at the time of death. According to the enlightened systems, all beings have, lived, died and been reborn countless times. According to my Tibetan teacher there is a difference between reincarnation and rebirth, he states all sentient beings are reborn, but only highly realized practitioners can control the process of reincarnation. Having died and been reborn countless

times, human beings, again and again have experienced the inexpressible, indescribable pure clear light. Yet because of the confusion created by the darkness of innate ignorance, they wander endlessly in cyclic experience, this is a very dangerous predicament. One should perish the opportunities for enlightenment afforded by having a human body and mind.

***So, according to those who have studied, and experienced with clarity these states of mind, enlightenment in this lifetime is possible; for those who do not achieve this goal, it is possible even at the moment of death.***

The above is how the death process is usually described, I have read and heard these teachings on a number of occasions. I used Glenn H. Mullin's fine translation and description from his excellent book "Living in the Face of Death" The Tibetan Tradition. So firstly we can ask what has this got to do with Martial Arts, well! There are many answers to this on different levels. For example, if the *nature of mind* is truly realized, it takes away totally any fear of death. This of course is an obvious asset where physical danger is concerned, as the practice is to relax into the *nature of mind* thereby integrating naked awareness and emptiness. In

Karate this state is referred to as MUSHIN or NO MIND. A martial artist who can reach this state is totally at one with whatever arises. Next, to clearly face and think about death requires the attitude of a warrior. Our culture (Western) does everything possible to avoid facing this inevitable process, hence our obsession with all kinds of distraction and entertainment. Our Ego/Conditioned mind seeks a state of permanent being, even though the only permanent thing in the universe is constant change, or we can say *everything is impermanent*. So when we die, our thoughts cannot help us, our wealth cannot help us, our friends cannot help us, neither can our fame, material goods, or any accumulated book learning, intellectual knowledge, or any conceptual religious ideas of some sort of paradise, even nirvana is just an idea. The only thing that can help is an understanding of the non-conceptual view, and an experience of the *way things simply are*. The state of a more enlightened way of being cannot be accomplished by mind only. The body, energy and mind must be trained together. The body is impermanent, the energy will one day cease, the conditioned mind is unreal, in as much as we have constructed it from all our experiences, only the *nature of mind* is beyond birth and death. This is the mind Zen calls the “everyday mind.” Nothing special! We can carry one with examining the “teaching on death and the bardo states” in

the next part of this series. And soon I hope to be able to trace back to the source of these teachings, going back in time from Taoism and Buddhism to the ancient Bon Tradition then back further still in time to the ancient culture of Zhang Zhung. A culture complete with its own language, that once cover an area of Western Tibet, and parts of China, India, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and ancient Persia. In fact it is beginning to be understood that many of the great traditions that incorporate practices and symbolism such as we have in Taoism, Buddhism, and Bon etc may have all come from this ancient Zhang Zhung culture. For example the practices of Qigong are very similar the Dzgochen practice of yoga. And the Bagwa symbolism is to be found in the ancient Bon tradition, as are the five elements and colours. Anyway we can look at this fascinating possibility in the near future.

I will leave you with a quote from a Tantra of Dzogchen

*As a bee seeks nectar  
From all kinds of flowers  
Seek teachings everywhere  
Like a deer that finds a quiet  
place to graze  
Seek seclusion to digest  
All that you have gathered  
Like a madman,  
Beyond all limits  
Go wherever you please  
And live like a lion  
Completely free of all fear.*

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# What Are They Afraid Of?

By Erle Montaigne

A real master is one who is not afraid to allow his or her students to go and train with anyone else. If a 'master' is confident in his or her own ability and system, then he will be confident that his students will come back and not wish to join another person. And even if they do, the master should never be upset or jealous of that other instructor, he should only be happy for the student that he or she has found someone that they can advance with.

Unfortunately, there are not many real masters around, ones who put aside all ego for the good and advancement of their students. As we grow older and hopefully wiser, we grow out of the childish stage of thinking that our own system is the ultimate best, knowing that there are 'horses for courses'. In other words that there are teachers for students. Some students will learn better from one teacher over another and most will eventually find the teacher that they deserve. I have my own students, while someone else has his students and I am not jealous that so and so has 5000 students as those students deserve that teacher at that time. And if any of my students wish to go train with

another teacher, that's OK. I do not care if my students think that someone else is better or has more knowledge, I am happy for them to have discovered at last their ideal teacher. Nor does the real master worry about what others say about him as he is confident in his own ability and learning and simply goes along his own pathway which is different to all other teachers' pathway.

***So we come to the recent in-fighting in the Yang Family Taijiquan system. One 'faction' (and that's all they are) says that they are the real Yang Family style while the other also lays claim to it!***

So we come to the recent in-fighting in the Yang Family Taijiquan system. One 'faction' (and that's all they are) says that they are the real Yang Family style while the other also lays claim to it! And we have very childish goings on where one person from one faction will confront the other person etc. These people are babies still and are not confident in their own ability. They only bring disrespect upon the whole of Taijiquan by causing factions among teachers and students. It does not matter if so and so lays claim to the Yang Family style, that is not

important. What is important is that what they are teaching is not doing any harm and that they make a good example for their students to follow. And faction fighting is not a good example for their students to follow.

It makes no difference if someone is the son or daughter of Who flung-dung as that person may not have even trained in his or her Father's system. What matters is if that person has actually learned well and is able to transfer that information to their students well. If only those who were the sons or daughters of the old masters were any good at Taijiquan, then we would have precious few teachers in the world and the few that would be around, would not be able to teach so many people looking for teachers. In fact, it has always been that not many sons and daughters of famous masters have ever been able to carry on the family tradition and it has always been up to the other students of that teacher to carry on the style's tradition. After all, most masters taught at their best even before their own children were born. And it is usual that those children rebel (as is normal with children) against tradition and are not interested in the family system usually until much later in life and even after their father has passed on whereby it is the job of the main students of that teacher to teach them!

And if we wish to be pedantic about this inheritance thing, wouldn't the oldest still living son of for instance, Yang Cheng-fu be the leader and inheritor of the Yang family tradition? That person would for instance be closer to the original source having studied with the illustrious Yang Cheng-fu himself. A person who is the daughter or son of one of Yang Cheng-fu's sons would not be able to claim the 'crown' until all of the sons of YCF had died! And then it would be one more generation away from the source.

***Most people know that Yang Cheng-fu had three other sons apart from Yang Sau-cheung (1909-1985) and all but one studied for any length of time with YCF. So it stands to reason that the eldest son of YCF is the only inheritor to the family system!***

Most people know that Yang Cheng-fu had three other sons apart from Yang Sau-cheung (1909-1985) and all but one studied for any length of time with YCF. So it stands to reason that the eldest son of YCF is the only inheritor to the family system! He is still alive and teaching in China.

So all the in-fighting in the world will not change the simple fact that the eldest practis-

ing son of the grandmaster is the leader of the Yang Family.

But it doesn't matter who lays claim to this as all that matters is what they are teaching. In-fighting only lessens the reputation of Taijiquan as being the 'supreme ultimate'. Many people in fact who visit China or Hong Kong come back and say that there was nothing special there and that what we now know in the West eclipses what they know in China with push hands of the 'you punch me, I push you' variety being the only thing that they now do with anything martial being left far behind at an earlier time.

Yang Sau-cheung had 3 main disciples and had taught two of them for quite a long period of time. In fact when I visited Yang at his home in 1981 I saw a plate on his wall with his 3 main disciples on it with the Old master. And that is all I saw. All I can say is that anyone who forbids his or her students from going to at least see what another teacher is doing, is not sure of their own ability and learning and therefore cannot be called a true master!

# Old Dog - New tricks?

*Peter Northcote*

**W**ith the right teacher - yes it's possible!  
I gravitated to Taiji at the age of 43 without any real knowledge of the fantastic complexity/simplicity of the Art.

Until then Taiji appeared to be a relaxing, graceful, 'dance' without any hint of the internal aspects, I was fortunate enough to join a class run by Tony Court here in Swansea, Wales, he was teaching Yang Cheng-Fu's Form with some Qigong and energy work, it was a broad based class age-wise with a good mixture of characters represented.

Tony took great care to ensure that we had a good grounding in the form, not moving too fast through the 'thirds' and emphasising the need for continued practice at home which, of course, I neglected! Needless to say my progress through the Form was slow and, without the personal application necessary to produce any sort of energy movement, my interest waned and I slowly drifted away from the classes.

I continued to see Tony on a social/business level and about a year passed by with me not

practising and Tony not pushing me. Then, completely out of the blue, he said that he and a few others were meeting once a week for a training session, I explained that I hadn't been practicing but Tony insisted that the group consisted of a couple of instructors and some students who had progressed through to complete the Form and that the sessions were to be very informal.

***Until then Taiji appeared to be a relaxing, graceful, 'dance' without any hint of the internal aspects, I was fortunate enough to join a class run by Tony Court here in Swansea, Wales, he was teaching Yang Cheng-Fu's Form with some Qigong and energy work***

Without any direct pressure from Tony I knew I should attend as I felt flattered to have been offered the chance considering my lax efforts to date. So it was with some trepidation that I turned up to my first session, after some warm up exercises they decided to go through the Form, I was OK for most of the first third but then I was lost! I followed as best as I could but about half way through the second third I dropped out and just watched. To see the Form done well at

its basic level was fascinating and at last the penny dropped!

The 'get togethers' only lasted for about six weeks, until we lost the use of the training room, but during that time I bought a copy of MTG 1 and Deborah Ann Harte's illustrated guide to the Form and applied myself as I should have from the start. At the end of the six weeks I had memorised the whole Form and was practising it every day.

Now - nearly eight years later - I am the 'Taiji Junkie' that most of us are, pouncing on all the information available through Erle's website and his videos and trying to follow 'The Way'. I am refining my Form, (now Yang Lu-Chang's), via the latest 'Correction' series which must be the most useful set of videos anywhere at the moment, I am working on my Three Circle Qigong, nearly 30 minutes now, and paying attention to my diet.

After thirty years of vegetarianism and a passion for cheese I am experimenting with soya milk and dairy-free meals. I am still doing the Form 'externally' but am getting teasing glimpses of the 'internal' that I now know to be attainable.

Tony has recently re-started his beginners Yang Cheng-Fu

classes and I have started again! Now I am privileged to be able to assist in these classes and start to 'give back' something to Taiji.

I would like to thank Tony for his patience and for creating that spark that has ignited the fire of interest I am still experiencing.

So for everyone out there who's Snake 'Creaks' Down rather than 'Creeps' Down it's not too late - persevere and the rewards will come, and if you are fortunate enough to have a great teacher those rewards are closer than you think!  
Kind regards  
Pete Northcott

## “Do you relax during your practice”?

*Colin Orr*

### Defining 'Sung' as practised in Tai Chi

The definition of 'Sung' is not easy to translate into English. To comment on the single word 'Sung', is extremely difficult, but loosely it means 'relax', 'completely relax'. Relax means to soften the tendons and blood vessels of the whole body and focus your Qi. The principle of 'Sung' implies loosening one's muscles, releasing tension and giving up external energy, but preserving internal energy so that the body will be sensitive and alert to adapt itself to any circumstance.

Students of Tai Chi travel along the road to perfection, only if from the very beginning of their training, they make 'Sung' a priority. Technical detail and refinement of each form posture will improve gradually and naturally with continuous practice and then and only then 'Sung' will be realised. Never force your form movement and posture, when this stage is reached you will experience the union of mind, body and spirit.

The vital quality of 'Sung' is lost by students who egotistically strive to 'look good' during their practice to the detriment of their Qi flow. Grandmaster Yang Cheng-fu used to say to his students, "Relax, relax and then relax again" in order that the muscles, tendons, ligaments and bone marrow achieve the supreme conditioning of 'Sung'. 'Sung, exists in the very depths of our essential nature, 'Sung' cannot be explained in rational terms, but the following may help a little to unlock the mystery and understanding of 'Sung':

***Students of Tai Chi travel along the road to perfection, only if from the very beginning of their training, they make 'Sung' a priority.***

When we free ourselves from fixed rigidity, we have 'Sung' in our posture. Then external strength, brute force and aggression disappear from our movements and give way before the gentle, relaxed softness of 'TaiChi-Sung'. We become moderate, flexible and open in all our movements, knowing when to yield holds all opposite forces in natural balance, creating a balance in our own body, at the same time enabling us to 'Self Heal'.

'Sung' must be felt and experienced when fully relaxed in movement and posture, the mind focused, the body re-

laxed, then the spirit can respond to any call. The martial artist would define 'Sung' as the warrior instinct; FaJing (explosive inner energy) can only be experienced when a student is truly 'Sung'.

***“Moving without feeling the detail within a movement”. For instance, in the slight wrist movement in ‘Wave Hands Like Clouds’, you should not feel that individual wrist***

“Moving without feeling the detail within a movement”. For instance, in the slight wrist movement in ‘Wave Hands Like Clouds’, you should not feel that individual wrist movement as it is subtle and flowing within the movement as a whole, and again when ‘Brushing Left and Right Knee’ the striking palm should flex from yin to yang during the hand transition at the wrist, but once again should happen without conscious effort, subtle and flowing within the movement. The state of ‘Sung’ highly promotes the flow of Qi and Jing. Therefore, to achieve ‘Sung’ you must let go of all tension throughout the body, but still remain alert in the mind. This is the true sense of ‘Sung’ ‘alert, aware and yet completely relaxed’. Then and only then ‘Sung’ will allow your Qi and spirit to flow like a river, subtle yet powerful. Do not look for ‘Sung’, ‘Sung’ will find you.

## Tough Guys?

*By Andrew Dawson*

Over the past few years, I have pondered the eternal question of many martial artists. Who are the REAL tough guys?

I will preface my answer by clarifying that there are plenty of tough gals out there as well.

So who are they? Large tattooed bikers? Maybe ex.convicts? A possibility. Football players? Well only in groups! What about Nazi skin-heads??

Hate can breed what some people would think is courage. Merchant seamen, very likely. You see, I worked at a dockside hotel in Newcastle Australia. The Albion Hotel, Wickham and I thought that I had seen and had been hit by some tough guys in my time working there.

Thankfully, those days are over now and I am now a mild mannered student of the internal martial arts; husband to Jennifer the Beautiful and father of two wondrous little munchkins. I am a lucky man.

Anyway, back to the question: Who are the tough guys? Have you ever wondered? Have you ever thought “could I handle someone like that”? Well, do not despair, I have found the toughest guys around.

Watching the idiot box (TV) the other night there was a

story showing the oncology unit at the Mater Hospital and the patients interviewed were a thousand times tougher than anybody I ever fought!

Dealing with cancer and other terminal illnesses, you must ask of yourself requires a lot more courage than what is required to deal with the above lot of characters.

So next time you see someone you think is tough, remember that like Qi, true power is internal not external and defending yourself on the street, may not be easy, but compared to a terminal illness?

A special word of thanks to my instructor, Mark Boys, he continually amazes me and is my guide through the big sea of internal martial arts. Thanks mate.

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*Andrew is a senior instructor of the Black Eagle Chinese Boxing, Newcastle Australia under Mark Boys, WTBA instructor Newcastle.*

# The Absolute Joy

*By Erle Montaigne*

I have now been teaching what I know for around 25 years. I began teaching in London in 1976. I have had literally thousands of students over the years, some have stayed with me, others have moved on. And although I have gained much joy from teaching my own students, and have learnt so much about myself through doing so, the greatest joy that I have come across of late, is teaching my own children in the traditional manner.

For years, my children have just 'done' Taijiquan as a part of their lives as it is what 'people do'! So I have never pushed them into training, nor have I scolded them when they did not wish to train. We have just allowed them to stumble along learning what they could and when they wanted to.

However, just lately, all three of my children (living with us, I have two adult children as well) ganged up on me and demanded that I begin their formal training! What a delightful shock this was as I was beginning to think that I had got it all wrong in my philosophy of non-interference!

Because our children have never even seen the inside of a school other than on polling

days when we have to vote, and they have been taught at home since birth, they have none of the normal peer pressures or influences that school children have. And they have a wonderful bond indicative of a turn of the century family in the outback when the children only had themselves and parents upon whom to rely for social skills and play and work.

So our children do not look to Arnold Swartzeneger or Elle McPherson for their role models, but rather more naturally look to their parents as role models. They are still rebellious as all children must be, but they also have a basic understanding of what real family life is all about, working together for the total good of the family unit.

Because of this, it has been of the utmost importance that we as the role models at least seem to be almost squeaky clean! Not too clean as that is also unnatural, but just enough to maintain a basic respect two ways between child and parents.

So our children, when asked what they want to be when they grow up, (why do we ask children that stupid question?) they always reply that they want to be musicians or internal martial/healing arts teachers or both. And all are moving towards those goals nicely with out family band coming

along very tasty and their teaching skills improving every day that we train.

So when they asked me to teach them every morning, it was such a joyous occasion to myself and Sandra.

Now, we rise every morning and train only for one hour from 6 until 7 or from 6.30 until 7.30 a.m. And do it traditionally where in for instance ten lessons the children have covered only what most people would cover in one or two lessons! But they are getting it right from scratch.

And after each lesson, each child goes away and writes down the important points of each day's lessons into a diary just the same as I did so many years ago.

And we are also filming each session as these sessions have to be so correct with every minute movement begin corrected before they are allowed to go on to the next movement. IN this way, I am able to take them straight into the more advanced 'Medium Frame' Old Yang style. So we thought that Others would also like to 'join in' (by video) and learn from these filmed lessons. (Oh no, not another 1000 tape series Erle!)

I am so enjoying teaching my own, and my enthusiasm has

once again been lifted to great heights.

After training we all go about doing normal stuff that one does on a farm with each child (an we adults) having their tasks to perform in the way of hard physical work which is an addition to the mental and physical martial arts training. We get some real 'active' exercise working at our tasks which is also great for the spirit.

Then in the afternoons when it is not too hot, we will play some music, with Eli on Drums, Ben on Piano and myself on guitar and vocals, and Kathleen also on vocals.

Laughter is abundant during our training sessions with none seriousness being the order of the day. Once you begin to take your martial arts too seriously then you begin to take yourself too seriously and that is deadly to a martial artist! Pretty soon you will have your students calling you 'sifu' or 'master' or 'sigung' or any other myriad of lofty names that people insist on being called because they have taken themselves too seriously.

My advice is, that when it all becomes too serious, that is the time to stop teaching and learn to enjoy your life again.

A teach cannot take himself too seriously when he has a wife and children! They know you for WHO you are and not WHAT you are! And it is amazing how quickly one

learns to see himself from whence he came and not from where he is when he has children and learns and also grows with them because they are at home constantly.

It is possible to play the part of the 'sifu' with one's students who you might only see twice per week for a couple of hours. But your children see you all day every day and they know what and who you are. So it is impossible to play martial arts 'games' with one's own children.

## Moving

Now, the Montaigne's are moving to a cooler climate. We have purchased a new small holding about 2.5 hours West of Sydney about 1300 Metres high in the mountains where it snows in winter. This will take place in April 2001 (see inside front cover for address details etc.) It will be a sad day when we leave our beloved "Horse's Head" but it is time. We have come so far in this area and done so much, our children have grown up into wonderful human beings and we have seen our animal friends come and go.

But now is the time for us to move on to a new location and a new training regime where I concentrate more upon my children's training and also more upon my music, both writing and performing. I will still be travelling the world teaching, maybe not as much though. And our video titles

will keep coming with around ten more titles in the works as of now.

My senior students, Wally Simpson, Mause and Rob Eaglen will keep the home fires burning with regular training camps in the Northern Rivers area just as I have been doing. And as they have been training with me for longer continually than anyone (I mean continually on a weekly basis), I trust them with my system to give out the good oil just as I have been doing for the past ten or so years up here. And I will call in from time to time just to see how they are all going.

So, for those who are in the area, classes will continue and I urge you all to continue to train with each other. Others from overseas who wish to come train with our senior students are invited to do so by contacting Mause or Wally to find out the training schedule.

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