

# Combat & Healing

September 2001

Issue Number 46

---

Beginning Taiji

Mind in Martial Arts

Animal Play

How Dim-Mak Works

Life in the Dojo in Okinawa

Wudang Hands

**PLUS**

WTBA News, New Videos etc.



# COMBAT & HEALING

The Magazine of the World Taiji Boxing Association

## EDITOR

**Bramsneed Blurnog**

## FRONT COVER

## ART DIRECTOR

**Ben, Eli & Kataleenas Montaigne** 2001

Erle and Ben Montaigne teaching in New Jersey, March

## INSPIRATION

Sandra Montaigne

## USA

Al Krych

## Canada

Josephine Anderson

## England

Peter Smith

Tony Court

## Hong Kong

Ng Siu-wing

## WTBA Secretary

Mause Eaglen

Combat & Healing is independently owned and published for the international martial arts community, distributed worldwide. Opinions and views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the owners or editor. In the interest of fair play in the martial arts community will be given a fair go. Articles go in to this magazine unedited apart from obvious spelling and grammatical and illegal items etc.

## CONTENTS

Page 1.....**Beginning Taijiquan**

*By Erle Montaigne*

Page 5.....**The Mind in Martial Arts & eastern Philosophy**

*By Anthony Court, (Wales, UK)*

Page 7.....**Animal Play in Bagua**

*By Michael Babin (Canada)*

Page 9.....**A Legend is Mourned**

*By Katherine Loukopulous (Japan)*

Page 12.....**How Dim-Mak Works**

*By Chris Johnston (USA)*

Page 16.....**WTBA NEWS**

## Our New Address:

## Moontagu Books

PO Box 444

Oberon, NSW 2787

Australia

Ph: +61 (0) 2 6336 1317

Fax: +61 (0) 2 6336 0317

## POSTAL ADDRESS:

POB 444

Oberon, NSW 2787

Australia

Ph: +61 (0) 2 6336 1319

Fax: +61 (0) 2 6336 0317

E-mail: [wtba@ozemail.com.au](mailto:wtba@ozemail.com.au)

<http://www.taijiworld.com>

The E-mail and Web address stays the same.

# Taijiquan Basics

By Erle Montaigue

**N**ot a day goes by that I do not receive an email or a letter from someone wanting to know why it is that when they practice the movements of Taijiquan or Baguazhang, be it form, push hands, or weapons forms, that they experience a surge of energy and a great feeling of well being. Most also say that they do not get the same results from doing other exercises such as running or swimming or other martial arts.

To me, this is obvious, but then I have been doing this stuff for 35 years. And no matter how many times I tell people that the answer is on my site, al-be-it ... somewhere, I still receive these questions.

In my early days I was on a mission to let people know about the great benefits that the Internal Arts would impart upon one's health and well being. I would write articles by the dozen and submit them to newspapers and magazines trying to get people to listen. However, over the years it became painfully apparent that only those who were willing to listen and who asked for this information would be interested. Many would simply take up a local Taiji class which perhaps was teaching only a slow (and damaging) form and give it all up a few weeks later because it 'did nothing' for them.

So, in my middle to old age, I am not on such a mission anymore, but only give the information when it is asked of me. And this is one of those times.

Firstly, you do not receive the great and published benefits from doing an inferior or shortened form of Taijiquan, in fact, shortened forms can in fact damage your health!

---

**They will not damage your health if you only ever do a few slow movements and never ever get into the internal, but then why take the time and effort to learn Taiji if you never wish to enter into the 'internal' part?**

---

They will not damage your health if you only ever do a few slow movements and never ever get into the internal, but then why take the time and effort to learn Taiji if you never wish to enter into the 'internal' part?

You have to learn one of the original forms of Taiji and more importantly from someone who has learnt correctly and has at least seen his or her teacher performing at a higher level, perhaps the small frame forms.

I have also received letters from people who have complained that their Taijiquan made them sick and when I inquire as to what type of Taiji it was, it is al-

ways the same, some shortened or new form of Taijiquan!

So why does Taijiquan in particular work in such wondrous ways? The answer is relatively simple. The people who invented the series of movements did so specifically to enhance one's health and over-all well being. They based the movements upon the fighting systems of China purely because just about everyone in China was touched in some way by some form of martial art or 'wushu'. So just about everyone could relate to a set of movements that in some way represented a fighting system. In this way it was easier to them to pick up the movements as they were already in tune with martial movement. In order to be practical about their way of healing the body, the old masters also had built into every internal form, the most deadly fighting or self defense systems ever invented as they also looked upon 'health' as being able to protect oneself not only from internal pathogenic attack but also from physical external attack.

It took hundreds of years to finally come up with a set of movements that would work in exactly the same way that the Qi is activated in every meridian in a 24 hour period, the only difference being that this activation was repeated three times during one form. They slowly added to, took away, changed or modified each movement until it lined up exactly to that activation of Qi

every day so that we would emulate the balanced flow of Qi throughout the body three times during one set of movements. This is why people feel great when they perform any of the internal forms correctly, because they are simply placing their body into a state of true balance yin and yang wise.

You can take all the vitamins and herbal supplements in the world but it will not make you well when your body is out of balance. So the first area that the master worked upon was to make a set of movements that would cause the body and mind to come into balance or at least try to get into a better balance.

However, this does not happen over night as it takes much effort to gain the more advanced benefits of balance from your Taijiquan. Most people however, experience a great sense of achievement and also balance when they first begin a correct form because they have probably been totally out of balance for some time and experiencing even the slightest bit of re-balancing is a revelation to them. This has the effect of giving them incentive to keep going to reach the more advanced levels.

## Balance:

Firstly it is important to at least have the legs in balance. So one must be aware of how to step in Taijiquan. In the beginning we take no notice of how to step as we can walk! We happily plonk around each day on our pegs

never taking one thought as to what exactly our legs are doing as walking has become automatic. So when we learn Taijiquan we must re-learn how to walk correctly in a balanced manner. In order for the student to learn this, he or she must learn about yin and yang energy and how it relates to the body. So when we tell a student that one leg for instance, becomes yin while the other becomes yang, what does that mean exactly?

---

## So when we learn Taijiquan we must re-learn how to walk correctly in a balanced manner.

---

We have to tell the student that when we walk for instance, not only the picking up leg, but that whole side of the body will tend towards the yin side while the standing leg's whole side of the body will tend towards the yang side. And they must be able to feel this as it happens. But, again, what does that mean? How does one side just become yin for instance? Well it doesn't, as energy cannot be created or destroyed, it must drain into the other leg while the yin qi will drain into the other leg. So when we for instance lift up the left leg to step, and provided the student has learnt correctly, we feel that the right side has become yang while the left side is almost completely empty. The Yang Qi from the left side drains out into the right side while the reverse happens with the right side of the body. If the student is able to feel this happening, the

whole world of Taijiquan will open up to he or she. The whole body will change in accordance with the changing of yin and yang, the shoulders will feel as if they are just moving by themselves, the arms, head, neck and whole body will feel like it is floating! And this feeling is so nice that once one experiences it, they are hooked on Taijiquan forever! However, sadly, most never even get past this early stage as their instructor either does not know about it, or is unable to transmit this knowledge.

Everything begins from the ground up. So it is obvious that we must begin with the feet and legs. If we can get the legs correct, then the rest of the body will follow.

## How to teach this:

You have the beginner student standing with even weight on both legs. Then he or she has to slowly sink the weight down into the center (tantien) of the body. This includes sinking firstly the head and neck, then the shoulders, then the backbone and finally the pelvis. I give an analogy of the pelvis being a big basin (this is what 'pelvis' means) and we drop everything down into this basin. The tongue is resting up onto the hard palate and the breathing is deep into the lower abdomen and natural. At this stage it is important to stop 'looking good' and to allow it all to hang out! Once a strange feeling is felt at the rear of the skull, now is the time to slowly change the weight (without losing that feel-

ing) to the other leg. Think that something is being drained out of your whole left side into your right side. This has the effect of making your right side, in particular, your right leg feel quite heavy and your left side feel light. As the left foot is now lifted slowly, an even more pronounced feeling will be felt at the base of the skull until you will now feel that the left side of your body is now empty while the right side is full. Keeping this feeling, swing your left foot forward as you drop your weight further down onto your right leg and place its heel onto the floor in front of you as if taking a step. The left foot should only touch the ground on its heel with no muscle power at all holding it up, it should just fall onto the ground.



1

Now the reverse will happen as you change the weight onto the left foot. You should now feel as if something (Yang) is being drained out of your right leg and into your left leg until your right leg is almost all Yin and your right is almost all Yang or heavy.

The above exercise can be practiced anywhere at any time, standing on a train or bus or in the kitchen or just walking around and is an excellent way to teach how to walk so that when you go back to your form, everything will have changed for the better.



2

### An exercise that has a dual role:

An excellent exercise that can also be done almost anywhere with anyone in your family and which has the dual role of teaching you how to defend yourself as well as how to gain internal balance is the following. It is basically translated as “Double Hands, no Mind”. I practice this quite often simply moving around in my own home for instance when one of my children moves closer to me, he will almost always throw out some kind of an attack! They really love me, but this is the way we train! Not always of course as this would become boring. I use the following two person exer-

cise as an automatic drill that is easy and very useful in gaining that balance of both body and mind.

### The Method:

‘A’ throws some kind of upper body attack with his left hand. ‘B’ uses the right ‘hinge’ blocking method while his left palm is in the ‘p’eng’ ready position. **Photo No. 1.** Notice that my body has turned to my right slightly. As I now turn back to my left, my left palm slams down onto his left forearm as my right fist comes underneath to attack to his face. **Photo No. 2.** ‘A’ now throws another attack with his Right Palm as ‘B’ turns slightly back to his left to slam that attack onto his forearm with his right palm and then turns back to his left as his left fist co-



3

mes over the top to attack again to ‘A’s face. **Photo No. 3.** ‘A’ again throws his left palm forward as my left palm slams it again onto his forearm pulling his left arm over to ‘B’s right as my right fist attacks to ‘A’s

lower rib area. **Photo No. 4.** ‘A’ now attacks again with his right fist so my right palm comes up underneath to slam the inside of his right wrist as my left palm sneaks up underneath. **Photo No. 5.** ‘A’ seeing this again attacks with his left palm so my right palm slams also into his left wrist area as my left palm takes over where my right one left off. **Photo No. 6.** Finally, my left fingers strike into his neck. **Photo No. 7.**

You do this all on the other side as well which gives an even balance. Once you become proficient at this and it becomes quite automatic, it is time to do whatever you please within the general framework. See what happens automatically.



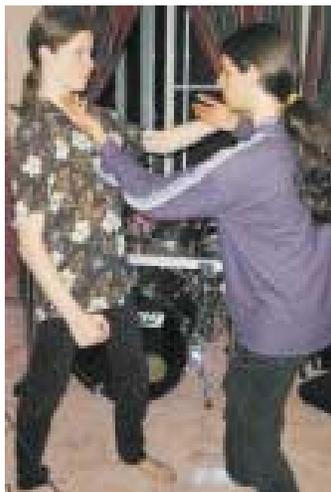
4



5



6



7

## Some Herbs that work Wonders to Re-Balance

Once you have the body and mind working in total harmony, you can then use other means to keep it that way. Of course it is important to continue with your Qigong and Taijiquan (or other internal art). However, there are some easily obtained herbs that also work almost miracles in the re-balancing area. I have begun a book called “Erle Montaigne’s Favourite Common Herbs”.

### Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa Serrulata*)

For me, this is a wonder herb. One of those herbs that even western science recognises as being of great assistance to many people for many ailments. It’s homeopathic name is ‘Sabal’ and it is a tissue builder. It has an amazing effect upon the prostate gland in men and usually after only a few days of taking this herb, any beginning problems with this area of the body will begin to lessen. It is also useful in atrophy of female breasts. And also used in sexual dysfunction.

### Parsley

Yes, I know, that green stuff that is always discarded from dinner plates. We should be eating the parsley and discarding the food!! This most common of garden herbs is a miracle herb in its ability to fight off all kinds of cancer! Especially prostate cancer. Only a sprig per day will help you to fight off any cancers. This herb will definitely help you prevent cancer.

Both of the above herbs also work to re-balance the internal Qi in the body. Just grow some parsley in your garden and eat a sprig per day. The Saw Palmetto is usually in capsule form from a chemist or health store.

# Mind in Martial Arts and Eastern Philosophy

By Anthony Court

## Part six: *Death, Karma, Reincarnation and Re-birth-Part B*

These days many people talk about Karma, but here again there is much misunderstanding. Many consider Karma to be some sort of fate or predestination. Karma is considered by the authentic enlighten traditions to be “**the infallible law of cause and effect that drives the Universe**”

The word Karma means *action* the *power latent within actions* and the *results that our actions bring*. When things go well we call it good luck, and when they go badly we call it chance or bad luck. Only something as vast, all pervading, and subtle as Karma can explain the extraordinary differences that are found between all of us.

Although we may be born in the same country or family we are all totally different, with different characters, inclinations, talents, and preferences. As Buddha said, (regarding Karma) “What you **are** is what you have been, and what you **will be** is what you do now” We are all totally responsible for our actions. There will be many who argue that this is some fancy oriental mumbo jumbo.

But please take some time out to simply observe. At the moment as I am writing this, the U.K. is going through yet another crisis regarding farm animals. We have had salmonella, B.S.E., foot and mouth, diseases with fish from fish farms, rivers poisoned by so called modern farming methods (something I have hated since a child, to me farms are places of complete and utter horror) and outbreaks of god knows what. Is this chance? Is this fate? Is this bad luck? Or with a little common sense can we *see* the law of cause and effect at work? **FARMER KARMA!**

---

**The word Karma means *action the power latent within actions and the results that our actions bring.***

As the great “Tantric” practitioner Padmasambhva said “*If you want to know your passed life look into your present condition, if you want to know your future life look into you present actions*” Because the law of karma is infallible when ever we harm others we also harm ourselves, and if we bring others happiness, we are bringing ourselves future happiness.

We can add also that whenever we harm the environment we also harm ourselves. Karma then is not fatalistic or predetermined. Karma means our ability to be able to create and to change. Creative because we

can determine how and why we act.

We can change! Whatever is happening to us now is mirrors our passed karma, and if we truly know this then whenever problems difficulties, and suffering arise, we won't view them as a failure or catastrophe particularly, or see suffering as a punishment. Nor do we indulge in blame or self-hatred. We see the pain we are going through as the completion or fruition of our past actions. It is interesting to note that when the Dali Lama first came to the west it had to be explained to him what “self hatred” meant. He had no concept. “Western guilt” was also another concept that Tibetan Lamas knew nothing of.

So the driving force from rebirth to rebirth is our current action. When I first started to take an interest in the Chinese, Indian and Tibetan cultures I found, like I'm sure many others did, that some of the ideas seemed to be either too simplistic, or just plain daft.

Take for example the idea that a human being could be reborn as an animal. Crazy? A few years ago I would have agreed, but when you really begin to understand the *nature of mind* your whole view of life will change. Completely! To recap the *nature of mind* is both empty and cognizant. These sound like two different qualities, but (this is important) they are inseparable in the way that you cannot sepa-

rate wet from water. Empty because **nothing** exists from its own side **everything** is interdependent.

Just observe is there anything in the Cosmos that is totally independent? Cognizant is the natural awareness of the mind. Back to our animals. All my life (O.K. I'm getting old, 60 next year) I have kept animals, no two (of the same species of course) have ever been remotely the same. They (like us) have different personalities, habits, and characteristics etc. and that like us, are dependent on cause and effect. When you look into the face of an animal, surely you can see a consciousness looking back out at you. All animals are conscious beings. Right? They are not unconscious. If then the **nature of mind is both empty and cognizant**. When we die and the animal also dies and the form (body) is gone. What is the difference between our respective states? Both the human being form, and the animal form, has returned to the natural state. When the winds of karma begin once again to blow. Only our subtlest minds will take rebirth. The ground of our being is EMPTY/AWARE that's all. Any new form can arise. It depends on our mind. The nature of mind is not just our natural state, but also the natural state of all things.

It is not said that we have a soul that reincarnates from rebirth to rebirth like a string of pearls. Rather, that it is like a pile of dice that are stacked one upon

the other, different from each other, yet supported and dependant on the one beneath. In the Ancient Traditions it is said that we experience four states (or Bardo) we can divide the whole of our existence between four bardos or realities: Life-Dying and death-After death-Rebirth. Which are the four bardos. The natural bardo of this life. The painful bardo of dying. The luminous bardo of the natural state, and the karmic bardo of becoming. These teachings have been developed by enlightened beings in the vast Himalayas and the boundless and inaccessible wilderness of China. Through deep states of meditative practice including dream yoga the very mind its' self has been studied and understood. These teaching are now becoming possible for those who really want to wake up from this world of illusion. At the risk of offending anyone locked into the conceptual religious world. We have to understand that we are both the creator and the created. All ideas formed by the conditioned mind will only chain us to delusion.

*Anthony Court*

Any questions regarding any aspect of the series so far would be welcome. So possibly we can have (with Erle's permission) an article of questions and answers. You can email me on [Ant@kunzhi.com](mailto:Ant@kunzhi.com)

## NEW VIDEO TITLES

We are slowly encoding many of our Video Titles into '**Video CD**' (**DVD**) which can be played on any modern DVD player as well as on your computer screen. The advantage of this is that I am told that they will last forever, play after play and you can jump to any part of the VCD at any time without having to fast forward etc. At first I was a bit suss about the quality that could be achieved without going straight into full DVD (far too expensive), however, we have been pleasantly surprised at the better than VHS quality.

We will however, also continue to make VHS as well for as long as this medium survives!

### **MTG222**

#### **Chang Yiu-chun's Deadly Pre-Emptive Attacking Methods. (Also on VCD)**

Chang would teach 8 methods that taught 'timing'. Being a realist, these also taught you how to attack relentlessly before you were attacked.

#### **On VCD:**

#### **MTG Titles: (28/5/2001)**

184, 144, 104, 217, 218, 222, 107, 116, 122, 131, 138.

I should have the whole of the Wudang stuff on VCD as well as the 'Sudden Violence titles' on VCD by the time this issue goes out.

# 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.**

---

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.

---

**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 assholes 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 to 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”.

---

**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”.**

---

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 eventually 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-defense.

“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.”

# A LEGEND IS MOURNED

*Katherine Loukopulous*

I came home late on Friday night. As a habit, I first made a cup of coffee and sipped it while I listened to my telephone messages. There was one message from my sempai Shiroma Katsuo informing me that on the sixteenth, about 2 P. M. I should go to the funeral parlor near the dojo in the Tomishiro area where Akamine sensei's house and dojo were located.

Akamine Eisuke sensei, chairman of Ryu Kyu Kobudo Preservation and Promotion Association, was dead at the age of seventy-four. He had been ill for a long, long time, and his immediate family cared him for, as is the Okinawan tradition... Nevertheless, students always did their best to show the notice and speak with Akamine sensei even though he looked very frail and was very thin... and as tired he might have been, he never turned any student away.

I have lived, worked and studied on Okinawa for the past thirteen years, and I like to think that I have been a part of the training culture as much as any of the Okinawans themselves... The story is about Akamine sensei; the late Akamine sensei and I will get to that. But, I cannot talk about Akamine sensei without talking about the people around the master who made it possible for me to train under him and with his students.

In December of 1982 I came to Okinawa for the first time. As a Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu student I studied at the headquarters of the late Nagamine Shoshin sensei in Kumoji, Naha, Okinawa. There I met my sempai Shiroma Katsuo, who was a young and vibrant Okinawan man. He spoke to me lots, I remember, I could not understand a word he said other than the customary karate vocabulary... but he showed me a *tunfa kata*, and that required no language. I like that *kata*, and I liked Shiroma sensei's vibrant communication although to this day I have no idea what he said...

Since that first one month long trip to Okinawa, I returned to Nagamine Shoshin dojo many times for continuous training. Then, I had met a true gentleman and awesome technician; a Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu teacher of the Nagamine sensei dojo, and his name was Nakamura Seigi sensei. He was strong, sharp and very, very kind. Nakamura sensei spoke some English, and he was the only Okinawan middle aged teacher who utilized an English - Japanese dictionary. Nakamura sensei gave me special training for hours and hours, and then he would take me and introduce me to teachers who he felt were very, very good and could teach me further and so, Nakamura sensei knew that besides Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu karate I was very much interested in Goju Ryu

Karate do and Okinawan weaponry...

At that time seventeen years ago I practiced very much with the *bo*.

Nakamura sensei introduced me to Miyazato Eiichi sensei of JUNDOKAN and he also introduced me to Uehara Ko sensei, a long time ago student of Miyazato Eiichi sensei and a very strong Okinawan weapon practitioner...

One month was not a very long time to learn all the things that I wanted to study. But since then, I returned to Okinawa again and again, and Nakamura sensei was always there to guide me and instruct me further.

During those years going to Okinawa was not a popular trip among practitioners from the United States. In those years they used to travel to mainland Japan for karate instruction. In fact, I remember I was made fun by members of the United States National Karate Committee telling me I was studying "village karate". But, in a sense, they were true. Okinawa was a village jumping out of the pages of martial arts history. I was born in a village myself, in a small mountain of a tiny village of southern Greece. Going to a village held a special feeling for me.

Nakamura sensei, always in charge of me and my training, and even my recreation, took control and charge of everything. Uehara Ko sensei's dojo was walking distance from Nagamine Shoshin sensei. So, I would first study Kobudo with Uehara Ko sensei, and then walk over to Nagamine sensei dojo and take the late class, which would start eight o'clock in the evening. This was the routine, which slowly but surely set my development, and Nakamura Seigi sensei was overseeing it...

On the average I trained four to six hours per day. It was a difficult schedule living in simple conditions, but I told myself that I was living my dream, and so, I endured. Since 1982 to 1986 I returned several times to Okinawa. When I concluded my amateur competitive career in August of 1986, I made arrangements to come to Okinawa to study for one year. The one-year extended to thirteen years, and I still live here.

What fascinated me mostly is that karate and kobudo is captured in a time capsule on Okinawa. While the world is moving forward in a high pace, karate and kobudo stands still on Okinawa. In fact, culture stands still on Okinawa. People practice and preserve the accuracy of techniques with great detail. While the world is dazzled with fancy and colorful uniforms, Las Vegas style performances done to music, while practitioners hire designers to create unique outfits, music en-

gineers mixing and creating unique melodies, dance choreographers putting together difficult to execute moves (except for the gymnasts), all in the name of martial arts performances; here on Okinawa, the simple, the austere, and the old ways prevail. And even though, some Okinawan teachers have been brave enough to write books, they are still pretty shy about their accomplishments. In fact, it is not until a few years ago that I learned that both Miyazato Eiichi sensei and Akamine Eisuke sensei have written books, and according to Shurei Do owner Mr. Nakasone, those books are out of print.

I had learned to train and observe and say nothing, and by paying attention to detail and listening, I could fill in the gaps... and not knowing the language my gaps were huge. I loved going to Uehara Ko sensei dojo. I loved his training, his method of explanations and the manner by which he trained us. As the rule, the Okinawans are pretty easy going and so was Uehara Ko sensei. But when it came to training he was pretty demanding... and he wanted the details just the exact way he was showing us, even though we could not always see them. The training on Okinawa for most of the time is pretty much individualized to the students needs. So, students must be pretty much motivated on their own, because they have to go to the dojo and start to train by themselves. The teacher will be watching, perhaps ask the student to show a particular tech-

nique, and then the teacher will give a particular correction. Afterwards, the students will continue to train on their own. That is a difficult process because in order to be accurate with the techniques we have to practice them endlessly by ourselves, we also have to train all the things that we need to do in order to stay in shape. While in the United States everyone studies how to be different and unique, here everyone studies how to be exactly alike.

It is from Uehara Ko sensei that I first heard of Akamine Eisuke sensei. Uehara Ko sensei telephoned Akamine sensei often, and around 1987 Uehara Ko sensei talked to Akamine sensei about me. Uehara Ko sensei promised to take me and to meet Akamine sensei when I getting close to Shodan Testing. We did go once, I remember... It was a Saturday afternoon. I was fascinated to see the dojo and to see Akamine sensei. I had heard so much about him. I had learned that he had been a direct student of Taira Shinken sensei. I did not know what to expect.

When I went to Akamine sensei dojo for the first time, I went with Uehara Ko sensei. We entered a dojo made of wood; the dojo itself was very old. Wooden nametags of students were hanging in lines in accordance with their ranks. The dojo's windowpanes were wooden, the shutters were wooden, the floor bounced and creaked and that was old wood with huge cracks in between the beams. The ceiling was not particularly high, nor the dojo was

large. I wondered how many people could actually train together all at one time. What fascinated me even more there were no changing rooms and there were no bathrooms. A little yard surrounded the dojo. Akamine sensei himself was a soft-spoken man.

I performed kata and Uehara Ko sensei together with Akamine sensei observed and discussed the pluses and minuses of my performance. Then, we had Japanese tea, and left. Uehara Ko sensei and I went back to Akamine sensei, many times since then, but that was the first time meeting and stayed with me in mind. My Shodan Test was conducted in this dojo. To Uehara Ko sensei nothing mattered and on one was important other than and only Akamine sensei. We went often to see Akamine sensei, and as the years progressed, slowly Akamine sensei started to lose weight, and a few years ago everyone was convinced that sensei was seriously ill. He was losing weight rapidly. Akamine sensei's son Hiroshi was also practicing karate and Ryu Kyu Kobudo. Hiroshi sensei and the rest of the family decided that it would be great and would make Akamine sensei happy to see a new dojo. And so, in the same lot of land, the old dojo and house were taken down, and in a short span of time, a new dojo, a modern three story building was erected. Although small, the new dojo was equipped with all the modern facilities. A modern sink and toilet, and bright wooden polished floors and

concrete walls with large windows with cross ventilation. The dojo occupied the second floor. Often times visitors lived on the third floor. On the ground floor Akamine sensei and his immediate family lived. Although everyone praised the new building and especially the dojo, for me, it just was not the same anymore. The old building just like the old castles held a special feeling. It smelled different and somehow I felt different, but that could be just me.

Over the years, I became a direct student of Miyazato Eiichi sensei and have continued to practice Ryu Kyu Kobudo with my old time sempai Shiroma Katsuo sensei. In August 1997, there was a world Karate Kobudo Championships sponsored by the Okinawa Prefecture government and held in the newly built Budokan. There were two days of seminars prior to the actual tournament. Ryu Kyu Kobudo seminar attracted many students, and Akamine watched us train sitting in a wheel chair. Never the less he was there. One young man took a third place in sai from South America, and I won the women's black belt category for Bo Kata. A few weeks after the tournament there was a little party celebration at the Akamine sensei dojo, and students were glad to make Akamine sensei feel happy.

Well, that was 1997. In November of 1997 Nagamine Shoshin sensei passed away. Akamine sensei was becoming very thin. We did not see very much of Akamine sensei in 1998, and on

January 14, 1999 the curtain fell for this seventy - four year old practitioner. During the years I had known sensei I never heard him raise his voice, he was always soft spoken and he was always kind to those around him.

The funeral service held on January 16th, was attended by hundreds of people. Besides the relatives, there were hundred of people who over the years had trained with him, and those who had worked with him. The students who were really close to Akamine sensei, and the students who studied at the Hombu dojo ushered the people and directed traffic. And so, respects were paid to this great and yet simple man.

Exiting the funeral, we gave a slight bow to those who clearly were close to sensei and were ushers for the day. One student asked me:

"Katherine, what shall we do?" I could not think of a right answer. Certainly he knew more kata than I did, and he had studied longer than I had. What should I say? I said: "Gambarimasho."

Katherine Loukopoulos / Director

BUBISHI KARATE DO ORGANIZATION

2-34-18 Nodake, Ginowan City, Okinawa, Japan 901-2203

Tel/Fax: 81 (098) 893 - 2656

e-mail:

kloukopoulos@hotmail.com

# How Pressure Points Work

## Processing of Afferent Nociceptive Stimuli With Amplification of Subsequent Stimuli

*Chris A. Johnston,*

As a martial artist I have taken up the study of anatomy in recent years, mainly in an attempt to describe various phenomena scientifically that clearly seem to work, but have never been adequately explained in Western terms. Specifically the study of pressure point striking (Kyusho) has prompted a great deal of questions. The older paradigms, which are not scientific by the conventional definition, leave much to be desired in terms of a logical relation to specific body structure and process.

It certainly works to strike a particular vulnerable point initially with great force, and logically less force produces a lesser trauma. What is less obvious is how striking another point initially allows the same point struck in the first example to be hit much more softly while the same reaction is caused. This type of sequence can cause a knock out using a light touch. Clearly the first strike somehow amplifies the effect of the second strike. The question is what physiological mechanisms are involved in this phenomenon? The following is an attempt to relate these phenomena to existing knowledge of the corticothalamocortical network.

1). Path of initial nociceptive stimulus. It is necessary to elucidate the sequence of events upon stimulation of cutaneous and/or subcutaneous pain receptors. Initial stimulation initiates a signal that projects through relay

neurons to the spinal cord. The spinal cord is divided into vertical layers called spinal laminae, based on discrete function and connectivity of the neuronal projections within each lamina. In the spinal lamina (layer) known as the Substantia Gelatinosa, which is also called spinal lamina II, reflex actions involving gating (switching on or off) of subsequent polymodal C fiber slow pain impulses may or may not be initiated. Regardless the initial fast signal ascends through the spinal column (in the neo-spino-thalamic tract) to the medulla where the signals are split.

One branch targets the reticular activating system (RAS), which is an ascending extension of the spinal cord involved in preparing various neurons for input, specifically receptors, thalamic sensory relay neurons and the cortex. The RAS serves to regulate visceral (internal) organs through various involuntary processes (i.e. heart rate, breathing, secretions), as well as keeping a person conscious by suppressing bursting processes associated with sleep.

The other branch of the neo-spino-thalamic tract merges with the medial lemniscus (the central ribbon shaped conglomeration of ascending sensory nerve projections directed from the medulla to the thalamus) and continues onward to the ventral lateral posterior thalamus. Stimuli are targeted to different thalamic nuclei based on the nature and origin of the stimulus.

The branch that targets the RAS is modulated (controlled; modified) by input from the cerebrum that represents ongoing contextual events, then a projection is sent to the centromedian thalamic nucleus. The centromedian nucleus is phylogenetically the oldest part of the thalamus, and it sends a diffuse projection to the cortex with a widespread pattern of innervation. This portion of the ascending afferent projection is involved in 'waking up' the cerebrum,

creating a condition of greater vigilance with respect to incoming sensory information.

It is important to note that two separate but synergistic ascending paths exist whereby pain is transmitted to the brain. The nociceptive fast receptors of cutaneous tissue project to the area of thalamus known as the ventral lateral posterior nucleus via the Neo-Spino-Thalamic Tract. The nociceptive thalamic nuclei are somatotopically organized (organized in sequence equivalent or analogous to their relative positions of origin in the body). These nuclei then project to the somatosensory cortex of the post central gyrus (upward fold) of the parietal lobe, giving rise to a complicated series of reciprocal projections (returning nerve projections) back to the thalamus and also to other areas.

During the same response to stimulus, the secondary slow nociceptive impulses are sent through unmyelinated polymodal C fibers via the paleo-spino-reticulo-diencephalic pathway of the spine, joining with the medial lemniscus at the medullar level of the brain. These slower impulses then diverge from the medial lemniscus, proceed through the reticular tissue and target the Intralaminar thalamic nuclei, so named due to the somatotopic representation of the discrete spinal laminae in the thalamic Intralaminar nuclei. Subsequent projections go onward from the Intralaminar nuclei to the fore brain. These are thought to play a role in both emotional pain awareness and are also one of the mechanisms that can initiate descending impulses that are involved in the gating (switching on or off) of pain at the spinal level. It is likely that the latency of the activities associated with the paleo-spino-reticulo-diencephalic path are great enough that they do not play a large part in pre-potentialing (chemically predisposing neurons to more easily fire) dorsal thalamic nuclei for an amplification of any subse-

quent signals directed through the thalamus. This type of effect is most easily explained in reference to fast pain signal response.

The RAS (arising generally in the upper tegmentum or roof of the medulla) also sends projections to the thalamic intralaminar nuclei; these in turn modulate efferent (descending) projections from the frontal cortex to the dorsal thalamic nuclei. This circuit has been implicated in the modulation of behavioral states, specifically arousal from prolonged periods of bursting activity associated with sleep. The thalamic intralaminar nuclei in turn exert an activating influence on the brain stem reticular core(1). This particular aspect of the circuit is not directly involved in the processing of ascending nociceptive stimuli; rather it is involved in opening or closing the cortex to coherent information from the body during the state of wakefulness.

The cerebral cortex is also organized in layers that are called cortical laminae, based on structural and functional differences in the residing neuron populations. These laminae are organized much like layers of an onion. The importance of the particular lamina of termination of projections targeting the cortex is due to the structural and functional properties of the reciprocal corticothalamic projections (returning signals back to thalamus), and the timing of the impulses that are returned through them.

The segregation of various kinds of afferents (to cortex) is maintained in the thalamocortical projections to the somatosensory cortex (in Neocortex, postcentral gyrus of parietal lobe). The nociceptive mechanoreceptive projections most notably target area 3B of the somatosensory cortex (cortical areas are functional boundaries organized like states on a geographic map). Terminations are largely in lamina (layer) IV of the somatosensory cortex, but also deep in lamina III to a lesser extent. The border between lamina IV and lamina III can be described as ill defined in this respect(2). For this reason some past studies have had difficulties in determining the role of this projection. Recently some very extensive somatotopic mapping of these associ-

ated thalamocortical and corticothalamic projections has eliminated this confusion.

## 2). The role of the corticothalamic projection (from cortex to thalamus)

One major function of the descending projection from the cortex to the thalamus is to set the stage for reactions to be formulated in a manner relevant to ongoing activities. These reactions involve adjustments of cell membrane polarization in populations of neurons in various areas, thereby effectively pre-potentialing cells to either fire easily or remain at a rest state. "The corticothalamic projection is involved in providing thalamic neuron populations receiving input from one part of a topographically organized system with information representing events occurring in other surrounding parts, defining the context upon which a stimulus driven event is superimposed"(3).

Corticothalamic projections activate by facilitating or suppressing afferent (incoming) volleys traversing the relay nucleus of the thalamus(4). The amplification / suppression of subsequent ascending transmissions is most important in explaining how pressure points work together. This modulation is done through both direct synapse on relay neurons and also through synapse on local interneurons that are themselves suppressive (gabaergic). Also the Thalamic Reticular nucleus is targeted, and this nucleus subsequently suppresses both relay neurons and also local Thalamic interneurons, thus exerting a selective optimization or suppression dictated by cortical direction. The structure of the corticothalamic reciprocal projection is complex in that various elements of the projection come from various laminae of cortex, each with different structural wiring, function, and nerve cell type.

3). Afferent nociceptive thalamocortical stimulus processing; role of laminae IV, V & VI  
As pain impulses exiting the thalamus are received initially by a population

of neurons in lamina IV of the 3B area of the somatosensory cortex (5) these impulses penetrate to deeper cortical laminae.

The first response back to the thalamus and lower brain areas comes from Lamina V neurons of the somatosensory cortex. Two primary roles of this projection from lamina V are 1). Generally exciting ascending pathways and 2). Serving to activate descending projections that are involved in the initiation of suppressive gating in the Substantia Gelatinosa of the spinal lamina II.

Cortical lamina V neurons fire before the lamina VI neurons and exert an activating influence via fast signals. These neurons are heavily myelinated and large in axonal diameter and therefore propagate fast signals(6). The lamina V neurons innervate vast areas of the cortex via lamina V specific collateral branches, and have a high density of spine-like projections from their cell bodies. Usually a large dendrite (spine) invades supervening laminae, giving off oblique branches up to lamina I(7). The axon projects to the thalamus giving off collateral (secondary) branches that continue on to various mid brain sites, notably the RAS, lower brain stem and spinal cord.

It is important to note for the purpose of understanding the pressure points that the thalamic reticular nucleus is not innervated by this array from cortical lamina V. This differentiates this lamina V reciprocal projection from the subsequent lamina VI reciprocal projection, which has an entirely different structure and function. The Lamina VI projection targets Thalamic areas associated with the initial Thalamocortical projection, and also target the Thalamic reticular nucleus (not to be confused with the RAS). The function of this architecture is to selectively facilitate (amplify) select channels associated with the initial relay projection, and also to suppress noise from unrelated channels. 4). Corticothalamic reciprocal innervation sequence

Upon receiving a nociceptive projection from the thalamus, the somatosensory cortex activates a sequence of reciprocal projections that serve to activate ascending pathways in general and also to specifically target the area of thalamus from which the initial thalamocortical stimulus was projected. Information is used from the oral pulvinar regarding salience (relevance) of nociceptive signals. The first reciprocation is the fast lamina V signal. The lamina V collateral intrainnervation is pervasive in its innervation of the dorsal thalamus. The idea of lamina V projections implementing cortical determinations at this level about what areas of thalamus are relevant and will therefore be targeted for excitation is equivocal. However it is certain that the excitation is a distributed array, as with various other activating systems. This implies fast stimulation of relay paths in a general excitatory role.

The portion of the lamina V corticothalamic projection that targets the RAS is sometimes capable of effecting an excessive de-polarization (excitation) of the targeted neurons. This can particularly occur during rapid sequential lamina V impulses in combination with incoming ascending sensory information from the spine. This overwhelms these neurons and preventing a normal recovery from firing; thus the reticular activating system shuts down temporarily. This causes unconsciousness due to a loss of activating influence that normally halts the synchronized firing associated with sleep and unconsciousness.

Due to the convergence of many projections from many different sensory modalities on individual cells in the RAS, the specificity of input often cannot be maintained. Since the RAS also has descending projections that control breathing, heart rate, and secretions in various visceral organs, such trauma to the RAS can effect the function of various internal organs. It is likely that further research into mapping the exact somatotopy of the RAS itself with respect to visceral organs will elucidate the conditions where this effect might be likely to occur, and

indeed this should be a target for further research.

As the lamina V axons project downward out of the cortex, they bifurcate, forming 2 reticula (diffuse arrays). One reticulum targets the thalamus in general, the other innervates various mid brain sites, the RAS, lower brain stem and spinal cord(8). This projection acts on ascending relay projections to pre-potentiate them to facilitate tonic firing sequences in the dorsal thalamus. This in effect sensitizes ascending relay pathways, and also in some respects operates very similarly to the action of the reticular activating system during arousal from sleep. This mechanism explains how a strike to a first point can generally amplify the effect of a strike to a second seemingly unrelated point by increasing vigilance.

The other bifurcation of the Lamina V reciprocal innervation is thought to play a role in the initiation of descending inhibitory impulses that modulate gating activities in the spine via contact with the reticular magnocellular core(9). Many such descending paths exist that modulate gating, and to date only 3 of these pathways are well mapped and documented (10).

The portion that targets the thalamus innervates the intralaminar nuclei and effects a general stimulating effect via glutamatergic transmission and subsequently acts to pre-potentiate relay neurons.

After the thalamocortical impulses trigger the fast reciprocation from lamina V, the lamina VI neurons are triggered. These are a population of small axonal diameter, medium speed neurons. The primary purpose of this population is to initiate a reciprocal innervation of the dorsal thalamic nuclei, but also collateral branches are given off that innervate the thalamic reticular nucleus. While the lamina VI projection is excitatory in the chemical sense, inhibitory effects also occur due to a synapse on local interneurons of thalamic relay nuclei, and these interneurons are GABAergic and therefore suppressive themselves.

The lamina VI projection uses an ex-

citatory synergistic action involving Calcium Glutamate and Acetylcholine. The portion of this projection that directly targets the dorsal thalamus is largely excitatory in effect, synapsing directly on relay axons or proximally on their dendritic trees (those branches emanating from the cell bodies of the nerves). This manner of connection suggests a strong excitatory influence on these relay neurons. This excitatory projection returns to the thalamus from the cortex following the same general path as the initial nociceptive signal. However it terminates in a diffuse array that covers not only the exact thalamic origin but also surrounding areas (11). These innervated thalamic areas, being somatotopically organized, represent spatially associated body areas (12). Subsequent stimulation of these associated body areas would effectively be amplified due to this mechanism, as the ascending pain signals would encounter relay neurons that were pre-potentiated to readily fire.

It is interesting to note that the corticothalamic reciprocal projection in general has about 10 times as many fibers as the thalamocortical projection (13). Of that corticothalamic projection, most of the fibers are devoted to the reciprocal innervation arising in lamina VI. This implicates the lamina VI aspect of the corticothalamic reciprocal projection as a major player in the modulation (control) of thalamic relay activity. Thus amplification of a second nociceptive stimulus is controlled by the Lamina VI projection.

The portion of the lamina VI reciprocal projection that targets the thalamic reticular nucleus stimulates a population of GABAergic neurons that act in an inhibitory manner, causing hyperpolarization of the neurons they synapse on thereby decreasing the tendency to fire. This is a similar function to the intrinsic interneurons found in the thalamic tissue, but the interneurons project only locally whereas the reticular neurons act as a suppressive array on remote areas. This suppressive action is steered by the lamina VI cortico-thalamic projection.

Two basic actions are carried out through the thalamic reticular nucleus. First, the reticular fibers synapse on relay neurons that have been cortically identified as irrelevant to the current stimulus. This effectively blocks the irrelevant paths, and increases the signal to noise ratio(14). Second, some fibers synapse on local inhibitory interneurons, thus strengthening signal traversing paths subsequently controlled by these particular relay neurons. In this way the lamina VI reciprocal projection acts both directly on the thalamic signal source in an excitatory manner, pre-potentialing nearby projections to fire easily, and also indirectly through the thalamic reticular nucleus to suppress unrelated noise. Also Gabaergic interneurons are suppressed in the specific area of activity which causes further amplification.

A study of mice revealed that upon stimulation of one whisker, a signal is sent through a barrel of fibers to the thalamus and subsequently to the somatosensory cortex. Next, the mechanisms outlined above sensitize areas of thalamic tissue that represent the other whiskers(15). After such a preparatory stimulation the level of stimulation required to promote a response was much lower. This suggests optimization of signals from spatially related body areas.

Convergence of cortical input on individual thalamic interneurons suggests that vastly different cortical areas modulate amplification/inhibition in different situations. Cortical structures that formulate such decisions have yet to be elucidated. Summary There is a time after an initial nociceptive stimulus during which a subsequent nociceptive stimulus is likely to be amplified, by virtue of both initial stimulation of the reticular activating system and also cortical projections originating in lamina V of area 3B of the somatosensory cortex. These lamina V projections, among other functions, initiate a pre-potentialing activation of thalamic, mid-brain, medulla, reticular activating system and spinal neuron populations.

Beyond this effect there are also possible augmentations which can give rise to further amplification of a secondary, already partially optimized signal. This can happen when 1). The secondary nociceptive signal originates in a topographically related area of the body or 2). The second nociceptive signal traverses an area of thalamus that has for any reason been targeted for disinhibition, or amplification. Cortical mechanisms that are involved in the selective targeting of thalamic relay projections should be the subject of further research. Also, the exact pattern of synapsing of interneurons on other interneurons, and of lamina VI and reticular neuron on interneurons, is not known to a point necessary to define exactly how much inhibition is a general result, and how much may be a specific cortically programmed result.

The possibility of unconsciousness is dependant on both the complexity and intensity of the neurological impact on the reticular activating system (RAS), which must remain active to support the conscious state.

Finally, the exact role of the thalamic pulvinar nucleus in discriminating somatosensory salience (relevance) is not known. The pulvinar thalamic nucleus receives nociceptive somatosensory (pain) signals in a portion called the oral pulvinar. The greater part of the pulvinar is devoted to discriminating visual signals. In general, the pulvinar acts to discriminate between irrelevant and salient visual inputs, and decisions about salience are sent to the geniculate cortex and factored into its decisions about what to send back to the thalamus. Presumably this applies to the small portion of pulvinar along with somatosensory information as well, but the exact role of the resulting decisions has yet to be elucidated.

Certainly the reticular activating system combines internally originating information from the forebrain with spinal sensory information to arrive at an integrated contextual background upon which to base decisions about what distant areas of the brain need to be activated.

## COMBAT & HEALING HITS 10,000

Combat and Healing has hit the 10,000 mark with the introduction of the free downloads!

Although our paid subscriptions has lessened so that we are still only breaking even. It is great news that last issue we had around 10,000 downloads! And this will rise with the next issue.

I introduced the free method so that the magazine, (our views) would be spread out to more and more people so that the 'good oil' so to speak would get out even more. And it looks like this is working nicely.

So, if you would like to be world famous! Just send in your articles on anything at all, just as long as it has something to do with healing and or martial arts, at a basic level or advanced, it does not matter.

We have beginners reading our magazine as well as advanced instructors. Many people think that everything has been said and so they feel insecure about writing anything. However, I can assure you that what you have to say is interesting to our readers

# WTBA NEWS

## USA and Wales Tour 2001

It's strange for me when I finally get to meet people that I have 'known' for years through them being long distance students and to finally see what they look and sound like. Some,

heard of them through our organisation etc.

People from different countries meeting others who are associated with the WTBA, all from



**T**hey came from everywhere! From as far off as the UK, Canada and all the way from California to New Jersey in the USA. Some drove for 12 hours, others paid their air fares from Canada and the UK. Everyone from school students, to police officers to military personnel were represented at the weekend workshop in March 2001.

The mood was 'up' to say the least with laughter and happiness the order of the weekend.

This was my first workshop in the USA for about 6 years and I must admit, it was good to get back there to meet some old friends and some newer friends that I had never met personally.

like *Charlie Zayas*, I have known for years and when this chap came up to me and introduced himself as Charlie, he seemed to know of me very well. So later I asked *Al Krych* who that chap was so I went over to him and re-introduced myself as I then knew who he was!

Everyone who attended the workshop turned out to be such nice folk, caring, gentle and friendly. It was like an old family reunion of friends. And it's wonderful for me to see others when they also meet some of our more well known students such as *Mike Babin* or *Al Krych* etc., they always exclaim, "So that's who you are" as they have

other countries and finally realizing that they are indeed not alone! It can be a daunting thing when one begins in my system as we are just so different to all other systems of the internal arts and one can sometimes feel a little alone etc. But when they all come together in friendship and people realize just how world-wide we are, they have a feeling of contentment knowing that many others are all studying the same stuff.

We began with the first 6 of the Wudang Hand Weapons forms. These forms are the pre-cursors to our modern push hands methods. Not the 'you push me, I push you' competition version but the realistic way of learning about real self-defence! When a



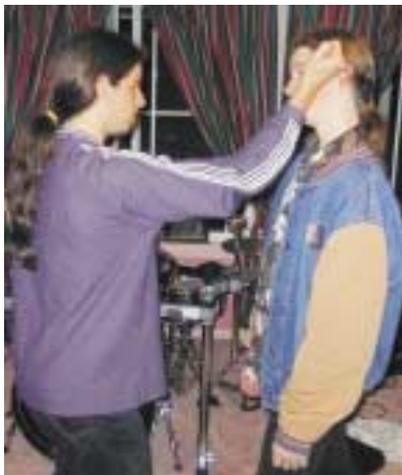
1



2



3



4

student of Taijiquan learns these methods, he or she realizes just exactly where push hands has come from and how it has been totally watered down in modern times mainly for competition.

The Hand Weapons teach us how to fight sub-consciously in a reflex manner. And this is how push hands should have remained. And it was realistic when Yang Lu-ch'an changed it slightly so that it was more intuitive and reflexive or abstract. Then we westerners got it and thought that we should intro-

duce competition to give we westerners something to strive for! In this way, we have completely lost the whole idea of what push hands was originally intended for! There were NO PUSHES, only strikes using the whole body. So to then take this abstract self defence two person set and introduce pushes and pulls in a competition, changes the whole idea of what Taijiquan is all about. You cannot have one of the World's most deadly fighting and healing arts by pushing someone!

### Wudang Hand Weapon number 1/ Hammer Hand:

You and your partner stand opposite each other in a 'power stance'. Notice that we do not use the very wide and low stance of most modern push hands methods. We use a normal stance, one that we might be using when attacked in the street. 'A' Will attack 'B' with any kind of mid to upper attack. 'B' will use a hinge type of at-

tack onto the mid-forearm releasing Yin Qi into the arm. (This will only be done in a real situation and not in training!) **Photo number 1.** He then turns to his right pulling his right 'hammer fist' out to his right and turning his waist back to his left slightly (fa-jing shake) will hammer down onto 'A's upper forearm at CO 10 or 12. **Photo number 2.** 'B' then turns his waist bak to his left slightly as his right hammer fist attacks now to 'A's neck at ST 9. **Photo number 3.** Turning his waist back to his left (fa-jing shake), his right hammer fist attacks to 'A's left temple area at GB 3. **Photo number 4.** With is last shake back to his right, 'B's left hand will now attack to 'A's mid to upper body thus giving 'A' a chance to perform the routine. And so it goes on like that, exchanging with your partner back and forth.

You will notice that many of the moves are inherent in modern push hands, like p'eng, hinge, lu and split. And this in only the first of 12 methods.

# Chang Yiu-chun's Deadly Pre-emptive Attacks

I also taught Chang's Pre-emptive attacks of which there are 8 with one of my own thrown in. These are methods that Chang would teach to actually teach the very important area of 'Timing and Distancing'. However, being a realist, he would try to have everything he taught have a realistic nature and also be practical. Hence these methods of pre-attack before the attacker has even attacked you. Unless we are street animals, most normal loving people are not used to opening the attack and always ask me what they should do in these situations. So these methods really teach the student exactly what to do, where to attack, the on-guard none escalating stance, and how to attack and keep attacking never giving the attacker a break.

And to top off the whole weekend, I also taught the 12th Qi Disruptive or Wudang form called "Finishing Form". It always amazes me how much energy is generated in the room when I teach this form. People are almost flying by the end of the first parts! Like one of the best caffeine hits ever without the bad side effects.

Most people sent me emails and letters saying that they actually retained most of what was taught. It has always been my belief that one should teach as much as people can take in during a workshop because they pay to learn something and not only a few steps!

## Wales

As usual, the Welsh workshop was chocker (full) with people arriving literally from all over Europe and the USA. Some even attended both the USA and Wales workshops.

It is always like coming home when we arrive in Swansea as we have such a wonderful following there. Around 80 arrived from all over the UK,



*Chang's number 1 Pre-emptive Attack:  
The On-guard position*



*Chang's Attacks. Photo number 3*

France, Israel, Italy, Spain, Germany, Australia, USA, Sweden, Norway, etc.

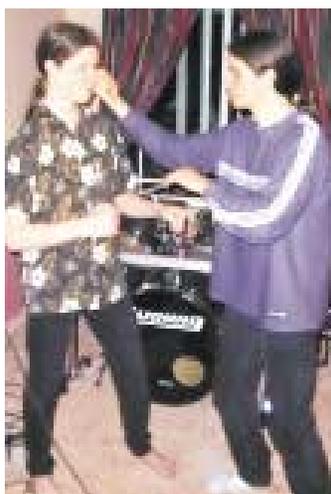
I taught the number 11 Wudang form in Swansea as well as the last 6 Wudang Hand Weapons and some Yang Lu-ch'an form corrections.

So, again in 2002, first weekend of March for Wales and the 2nd for the USA Ben and I will travel to teach. This time however, Eli will also be coming with us as his own training is advancing very well so these tours are a great way to show my children exactly how it is all done.

*Thanks to Al and Carol Krych in the USA for organizing the whole workshop there and for looking after Ben and I and in-*



*Photo number 4 Chang's Attacks number 1*



*Photo 2 of Chang's Attacks number 1*

*roducing us to "Dunkin Donuts". And also as usual, thanks to Tony Court and Linfa for organizing the whole Wales workshop. And to Peter and Celia Northcot for looking after us also.*