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Tai Chi & Bagua

Combat & Healing

Lead Story

How Tai Chi Works

Mindful Formless

Martial Guidance

A Little Help

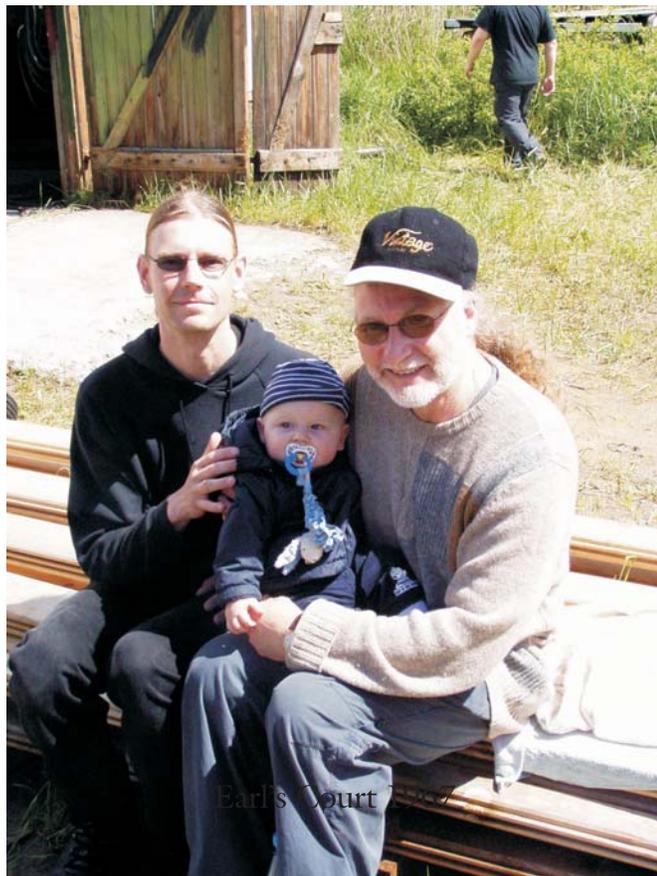
Camp 2006 Report

Neutralizing & Yielding

Solo Training In Bagua

PLUS

WTBA NEWS



Erle with Christian Zietsch and his new son Arne at Camp 2006

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How Tai Chi Works

Erle Montaigne

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Tai Chi is a set of around 108 postures all linked together in one long flowing exercise. These postures work in a number of ways to increase one's general well-being and physical health.

Firstly, we have the purely physical area whereby the postures gently stretch every muscle and sinew in the body giving an overall body workout. Surprisingly, it also gives the heart a good cardio-vascular aerobic workout as the whole set of movements takes around 25 to 30 minutes to complete.

Even your bones are given a good work out thus being good for the prevention of things like osteoporosis, arthritis and other bone diseases. The weight of your body on bent knees seems to help in keeping arthritis away. And if you were to continue with your Tai Chi lessons and advance up to the older system, you would receive and even greater total body workout with leaps and jumps, thus causing mild and gentle stimulation to every bone in your body which scientists tell us is a positive in reducing and preventing osteoporosis. A 40 year study done on children as they grew up showed that it was the jolting exercises that prevented bone diseases. The Chinese have known about this for hundreds of years and so included these kinds of exercises in their daily routines.

However, Tai Chi goes much deeper as a healing art in that it

works upon the energy system of the body. Ancient Chinese masters knew about the flow of energy in the human and animal body and were able to work out ways to manipulate this energy flow using needles (as in acupuncture) and exercise as in the ancient group of Chinese exercises called Qigong (pronounced 'chee gung'). They discovered that certain exercises gently stretched and therefore activated the 12 main acupuncture meridians or channels which run all over the body carrying life giving energy to every organ and cell in the body. They then devised a set of exercises that would activate these meridians in exactly the same way and time that happens automatically in a 24 hour period, thus giving us more life force energy during the day.

These exercises over time eventually became what we now know as Tai Chi.

More importantly what the Chinese doctors call the 'Life-Force' is also activated via the Jung-mei' or 'Life-Force Meridian or Channel, thus giving a feeling of great well being and happiness after one's morning and afternoon training. Better than a stiff cup of Turkish Coffee.

Because China's history is violent and most of their culture is based in the 'Wushu' or 'War Arts', like Kung-fu, so too they based their healing arts on their Wushu culture. So they invented a series of movements based upon their fighting or self defence systems. These movements each have a self defence

meaning and here lies the more advanced way that Tai Chi has in healing the body. The ancient masters knew that certain movements would send the life energy, or Qi (chee) as they call it to different parts of the body depending upon the perceived idea of the martial application of each movement. However, in order to do that kind of 'work' or martial self defence application, the Qi had to pass through one or more of the acupuncture meridians. For instance, one posture called 'Brush Knee and Twist Step' has a self defence application of defending oneself against an attack low into the rib area. We are taught this application and how to do it against such an attack. Once the sub-conscious mind knows about this and has done it once, we no longer have to consciously think about that martial application as the Qi will be automatically sent to the correct peripherals to do that exact kind of work each time we perform that posture. And in doing so, we send the Qi to the heart via the 'Heart Meridian'. This bathes the heart and pericardium (the very important sac that houses the heart) in life giving energy.

And so the whole 25 minutes of moving Qigong sends this life giving Qi or energy all over the body through each meridian and into every major organ in the body including the skin, hair, muscles, sinews, bones and the very cells that we are made of.

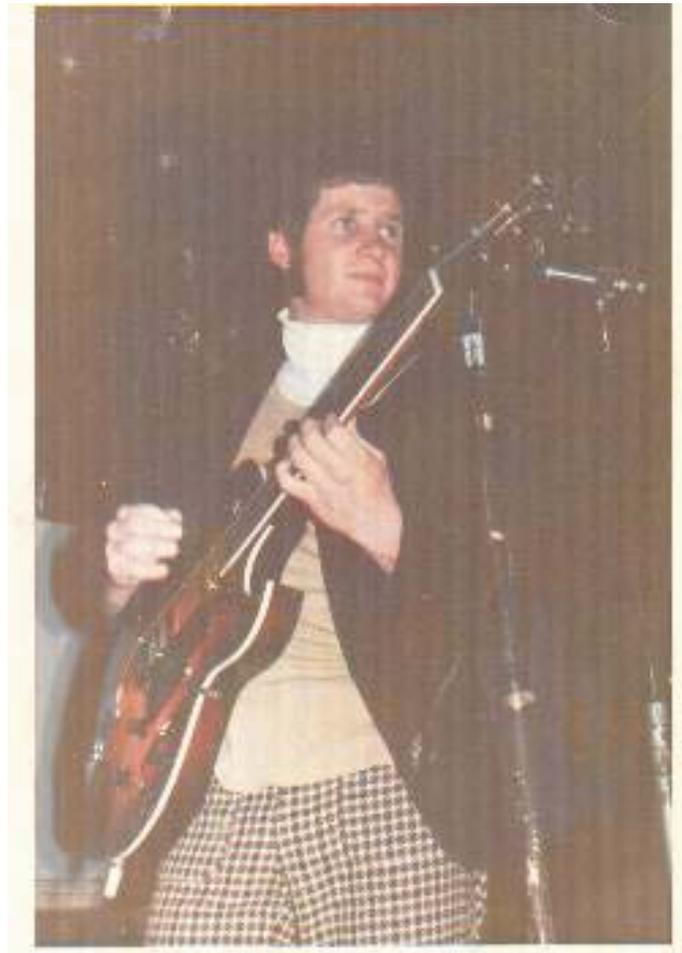


Eli Montaigne Teaching at Camp 2006

BGL (blood glucose level) before and after both the very strenuous walk up on the Black Mountain and back taking one hour and before and after the Tai Chi training in the morning taking only 30 minutes. Both of these exercises lower the BGL the same amount! Walking is one of the best exercises for all people, however, combine it with your Tai Chi training and you also have the benefit of the Tai Chi balancing out your whole system keeping your blood glucose levels normal, or as normal as possible if you DO have diabetes. Your electrolyte levels are balanced as are your hormone levels, thus making Tai Chi the ideal choice for the world-wide epidemic of depression.

The Chinese doctors regard the skin as an important organ attached to the liver in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Tai Chi works extensively upon the Liver Meridian and thus helps to keep a youthful appearance by toning up the skin via the liver. The Colon is also worked upon extensively as well as the kidneys, heart, small intestine, spleen, lungs, brain, etc. More importantly what the Chinese doctors call the 'Life-Force' is also activated via the 'Jung-mei' or 'Life-Force Meridian or Channel, thus giving a feeling of great well being and happiness after one's morning and afternoon training. Better than a stiff cup of Turkish Coffee.

Diseases such as diabetes are helped greatly by helping to keep the blood glucose level more stable. The author of this article, (me, Erle Montaigne) has had diabetes for many years and as such is able to show scientifically by testing the



Tai Chi will also help to keep your weight balanced, so if you are too thin, it will help to gain weight, but if you are over-weight, it will also help you to lose weight gently and gradually and generally tone up the whole body. It does this by balancing out the amount of 'Yin' or 'Yang' energy or 'Qi' (Chee) in the body. Chinese medicine tells us that all disease states can be attributed to an imbalance of Qi, thus allowing disease and external pathogens to slowly creep in. When we are balanced internally, we are able to fight off external and internal pathogens, as well as bad thoughts and depression.

Erle has written over the past 35 years.

There is an original Tai Chi system to suit every kind of body and level of fitness and health level. Age is of no concern, as long as you can take only one step, you can begin your Tai Chi journey to good health.

A feeling of well-being and happiness abounds when one finishes the morning Tai Chi practice making you ready for the day's activities in a healthy and positive manner, making you able to cope with the daily stresses of work or study etc.

However, you must make sure that you learn Tai Chi from a well respected teacher, one who only teaches one of the main original methods and not one of the shortened 'Western' methods as these methods will often work in the reverse!

Erle Montaigne's son, Eli teaches in Llandeilo, Swansea and Cardiff weekly as well as taking some private students. Erle's other son, Ben also teaches in London and takes private lessons in the local area. Email: eli@qigong.org.uk or ben@qigong.org.uk Or see our web site at www.taijiworld.com where you can download or read many of Erle's books free on-line along with around 300 articles that

Mindful... formless!

Baher Okda
Egypt

The ultimate goal in learning martial arts is to be a mind and not to have a mind ,i.e. to put your mind in every cell not just in your body but also in your opponent's one.

In learning chess, one MUST study every single opening (opening is the way one follows in preparing his pieces to attack his opponent's king seeking to check mate him, who is the ultimate goal) in minute detail in order to be not just a grandmaster but to be a real chess player. Then and only then one can decide which opening he is gonna follow. In chess we do not buy openings books and pick up the opening that seems fancy to us! Grandmaster Yasser Seirawan (American chess grandmaster) said fixing defects is better than hiding them. What will be the result if I did that (this how I really did when I was first learning about chess)? Let's say I will not learn but the opening A.(Remember combat has no rules, it's always changing.) In the game, simply, my opponent will not follow the same sequence (A) that I trained on, the rest is easy! In any chess game (especially in tournaments) one can not say " look...either to follow that opening ,or variation, or I will not play with you".

Back to fighting again. I can't help laughing when I imagine this scene: two persons (A) and (B). (A) plays western boxing, and the

other one have no experience in any martial art, just defending himself against (A). (A) will punch left, left, and before right (B) goes down for A's legs putting him out of balance, then the rest is predictable. The funny thing here is when I imagine (A) saying:" damn... you shouldn't do that but that, in boxing we don't do that" or " damn... you shouldn't do that... you are cheating" :).

This is one of the problems of giving oneself to a certain type of martial arts. Every system put rules for fighting. However, combat is not constant, it is always changing.

This is one of the problems of giving oneself to a certain type of martial arts. Every system put rules for fighting. However, combat is not constant, it is always changing. And putting rules forces the trainee to break his mind balance so that one part is mindful and the other is mindless. In boxing you expect your opponent to punch and block only, in tae kwon do you expect your opponent to kick only, in aikido you expect your opponent to rush to you so that you can make holds and locks. In short, giving oneself to a certain martial art force you to put your mind in certain parts of your body (that you use in that system) and your opponent's body (that he is supposed to fight back with) leaving all the other parts of your own/your opponent's body mindless. To illustrate what I mean by mindful and mindless, let's

look at our God, but before going on I do not mean that we can do like him, of course. Every preacher keeps saying that God exists in every thing in the world in me, in you, in trees, in birds, in animals, etc. Imagine that if the God put his mind in just one thing, the result is that the whole universe will collapse, or he is not a God! But because Alaah is the God he can feel every one of us, he can feel us at once, so that he knows I am typing now, and he knows what you are doing in the same instance. Therefore, God is the mindful. When a part of your body is mindless it's dead and unprotected. You can not move it in response to any kind of attack. The first thing one learns in chess is to train his eyes to detect unprotected pieces in his opponent's army so that he goes for them, and in his army so that he protects them.

In chess the biggest problem for beginners (like me) is that they look only on their own pieces or on their opponent's pieces. I remember when I first played chess I was just putting my pieces in the most preferable places (as the opening that I follow says) not even noticing what my opponent is doing. Then, in the next move BANG I lost. Then, I kept asking myself why I lost although I put my pieces in the position the book says. It's like building a big castle from sands on a beach that can not stand against one wave! Indeed, the most preferable positions are not a constant thing.

Every situation has its rules. There is no ultimate rule that one should stick to but seek your opponent's unprotected parts. I once asked a college (who trained in some martial arts):

Me: what are you gonna do if you get into a tassel?

Him: when I am there you will see. it's like having an exam...you can study for it, but can you predict it ?!

So in combat... there is no forms no sets no patterns. The problem is not in training in these patterns or forms but the problem is to expect that the tassel will be like that! They are just to help us not to capture us. In learning walking, an enfant takes instruction from his parents, they help him to walk, to stand in balance... but afterwards he gets a unique way of walking different even from that of his parents. Psychology says if you want to know about anybody see him walking. Therefore, in combat I can not say I am gonna do that then that... simply because if it's like that why do not we just attack alternatively me then you, and the one who gets tired first lose. No, in fighting if I said A my opponent has not to say B.

In chess I know the factors that control any game which is time, space, and material. And according to how much I have of them I win or lose. The real problem is that I do not know the factors that control combat. What is worse I do not know how to be a mind rather than to have a mind.

I hope Mr. Erle can help me.

Finally, I ask Alaah to give me some of his

Wisdom
Patience
Knowledge
Power...

Amen

Baher Okda
Egypt

Note: the idea of this article is not mine. It's the idea of Bruce Lee. But I absolutely believe in it. God bless his soul.

BUNDABERG TAIJI NEWS

From Ray Potter

The Bundaberg Taiji group (in Queensland, Australia), has had another active and varied year, with regular training three times a week by a number of dedicated practitioners in Bundaberg and this year for the first time, in Hervey Bay (1½ hours south of Bundaberg), classes are led by World Taiji Boxing Association (WTBA) instructor, Ray Potter.

Two Taiji workshops were held during the year; the first was held in Bundaberg in April '05 and was conducted by two senior instructors of the WTBA from Murwillumbah, Mause and Rob Eaglen. These two excellent instructors have personally trained with Master Erle Montaigue for 12 years.

To complement the interaction in Bundaberg between two internal martial arts, the workshop was held at the Dojo Academy of Martial Arts (formerly Dragon Dojo of Aikido). There is an interchange of students between the complementary internal martial arts of Taiji and Aikido. This association between Taiji and Aikido began in Bundaberg about 4 years ago. This workshop covered many varied aspects of Taiji – including the Yang Cheng Fu and Yang Luchan forms, push hands, small sansau, stick form, Qi disruptive forms and bagua and qigong. This was the third workshop held in Bundaberg by Mause and Rob Eaglen.

A workshop was held at the WTBA permanent training facility at the Taiji farm, Murwillumbah northern NSW, in October '05 by WTBA senior instructors Mause and Rob Eaglen and was attended by a group from Bundaberg Taiji and from the Armidale and Coffs Harbour Groups of the WTBA in NSW. Instruction from Mause and Rob was thorough and again covered many aspects of Taiji – the Yang Cheng Fu and Yang Luchan forms, push hands, small and large sansau, qi disruptive forms, bagua and qigong. Some of the students were thrown in the deep end with instruction in the qi disruptive forms for the first time. A new qi disruptive form is being taught by senior WTBA instructors Mause and Rob Eaglen at each workshop conducted by them and attended by Bundaberg Taiji practitioners.

Instruction was provided by the Bundaberg Taiji group on the use of the Wudang short stick and knife defense at an Aikido workshop held in Bundaberg in November '05 by the Dojo Academy of Martial Arts. This tuition included some of the wudang stick drills and was a follow up from another instruction session on the Taiji Stick form with self defense applications held last year at an Aikido workshop, with Aikido and Taiji students.

This year, regular fortnightly Taiji classes began in Hervey Bay and have been conducted by Ray Potter, traveling from Bundaberg to conduct the classes with a small but growing number of students.

There is much ignorance and misinformation in the general and martial arts community about what “tai Chi” and the internal martial arts really are and the Bundaberg Taiji group has been attempting to spread the message of the true art of Taiji to the wider community. Some students from other martial arts, including teenagers, especially from some of the “harder” styles have been trying out Taiji at the classes held by Bundaberg Taiji to discover the depth and variety in this internal art.

For details on training times for the Bundaberg Taiji Group please contact the Erle Montaigue website, taiji world.com, or phone Ray Potter on 07 41 523 020 Australia.

Martial Guidance

By David Leffman

Teacher Xiao was hitting me, trying to get beyond my intercepting forearm, while I was attempting to let the force of his strikes turn my waist and so power my return punches. *Tai ying le*, he kept repeating; *song, song!* “Too stiff; relax, relax!” Not easy under the circumstances. Then he was through, grabbing my arm and rolling backwards whilst simultaneously twisting his waist; I was pulled forward and hit by the recoil of his arms, which knocked me sideways and onto the ground.

The Chinese are proud of their culture, and when they see a foreigner is serious about studying an aspect of it, they go out of their way to inform. My interest is in taiji. Don't let anyone tell you taiji is simply a pleasant exercise for pensioners. It can be, but it's also a martial art whose flowing moves form a linked series of kicks, blocks, and strikes; the slowness of practice builds up great stability, co-ordination, and – in real combat – speed.

I've studied taiji for ten years, and during many trips to China have taken the opportunity to train with anyone who would let me. I met teacher Xiao in a city park at dawn, amongst surreal crowds letting off steam by practicing martial arts, ball-room dancing, boot-scooting, or just by shouting. I've practiced with monks on Wudang Shan, the mountain where taiji is said to have originated; and been lucky enough to meet the spry eighty-year-old Mr Han Huiming, a famous fighter in his day,

at the ancestral home of the founder of my taiji style. Others have demonstrated their strength by breaking bricks on their heads (or their students' bodies) for me; or have pared the art down to just a few movements, which somehow contain immense power. All were talented people who did their best to help me understand their approach to taiji.

There are drawbacks in orbiting between teachers. Taiji is very factional, and the different styles are all convinced of their own superiority. Taiji also allows for a degree of personal interpretation, so while some instructors emphasise grappling or punching, others prefer yielding or attacking. Having invested decades in developing their own techniques, teachers can become dogmatic about their training methods. It's impossible to try to please everyone: in the end you'll either renounce taiji completely, or – as I eventually did – try to find some common principles underlying the different styles.

The most important taiji principle is *song*. *Song* translates literally as “relax”, but in martial terms indicates a state in which the body is not uselessly limp but minimally tense. *Song* also means “pine tree”, whose solid trunk and loose, flexible branches perfectly illustrate the desired martial state. *Song* is not easy to achieve – it can take years – but once you have it, your stance becomes very firm, and you begin to subconsciously “feel” your opponent, reacting to an attack without thinking. This is because there are no obstructively tense muscles to first relax before using the ones you actually need. With *song* also comes an ability to generate power from your waist, and allowing

this force to travel unobstructed to the attacking portion of your body – in effect, putting your whole body strength into the attacking portion (be it fist, foot, or head), rather than relying solely on local muscles.

Another place where most types of taiji find common ground is in the division of solo and two-person forms. The solo forms are those slow-moving, lengthy routines which typify taiji and are, confusingly given the name, often practiced en masse. Without an opponent to interrupt, they represent an idealised version of taiji, and (though containing martial movements) are used primarily to develop internal energy or *qi*, a strong flow of which the Chinese believe is essential for good health.

In contrast, two-person exercises take the martial principles of the solo form and show how to apply them. The most common two-person exercise is *tuishou* or “push hands”, which – amongst other things – teaches you how to absorb and redirect an opponent's force; more complex *sanshou* routines use long sequences of moves from the solo form to create realistic fight choreography.

But perhaps the most important unifying feature of taiji styles are the secret words for success revealed to me by teacher Xiao as he helped me up off the ground. *Lianxi, lianxi*: “Practice, practice”.

A Little Help

Paul Dadswell: London.

And I finally managed to eliminate the need to check my stance in a mirror with its help. I came up with this little exercise:

1) Stand with the feet aligned and distanced as per your instructions with hands by the sides. Concentrate on the point just forward of the heel (i.e. directly under the middle of the tibia/talus joint - this must be the point that activates Kidney 1, right?) and relax the body as much as possible.

2) Relax the back of the neck. This will cause the chin to drop with the weight of the head, and the upper body should sway backwards slightly if you are relaxed.

3) Let the head/neck joint stay loose so the head and body continue to oscillate gently forwards and backwards through a couple of inches (NB we're not talking the front row of a Sabbath gig here! More like a willow in the breeze.) Be very conscious of any muscles which tense as you sway, and try to let them go as soon as you can.

4) Learn to feel the point where the head passes over the tibia/talus joints. It gets more obvious with practice, as when the head is over the right part of the foot, the spine will want to extend, waving and unrolling gently like a charmed snake! This is the upright reflex kicking in properly, which also allows you to relax shoulders, back etc. much more easily (as per the article).

5) Once you have felt and internalised this point, you can gently lead your head to rest over it. The spine should now be straighter, achieved in a pleasant way without counter-productive "military" straightening - and if your head is above the right spots, a slight sense of toes "gripping" the floor without actually gripping may appear as if by magic (more likely for beginners if you've had a foot massage recently!)

6) Just concentrate on keeping your neck free and your weight over the right spots, let your knees collapse slightly forward as you sink into stance.

(Imagine how a marionette's knees fold as the puppeteer lowers it towards the ground).

Hey presto! You have now developed the facility to find your three-circle posture without having to carry a full-length mirror everywhere! Just a little something for beginners to play with...

I realise that to some people, this is like teaching your granny to suck eggs.

And to some, it's a physical discovery that is stumbled on through physical hobbies such as taiji. But I know all too well from personal experience, some people have no idea what a straight, relaxed posture feels like, but merely assume that they have one because they don't know better!

In fact, I think these are the ones that will suck up taiji like sponges (if their frustration with basics doesn't send them running) as they will feel the biggest changes! If they can find and transfer this level of relaxation to the form, they'll be soft fa-jing like a crash-test dummy in slow motion before you know it!

Paul Dadswell

You have now developed the facility to find your three-circle posture without having to carry a full-length mirror everywhere!

SINK:

Erle Montaigne

One of the most difficult and yet easiest to execute, this most important Chinese word with reference to Taijiquan will give you the exactly what the classics tell us that we should receive when practicing Taiji.

The problem that most people (well all actually) is that in the beginning we all TRY to 'sink' the Qi and as Qi is an abstract sort of thing that we generally cannot feel, it is impossible to make the Qi sink. In fact you cannot make the Qi do anything using your conscious mind. It's like trying to influence your blood flow by thinking about it, it is an automatic motor action within the body that cannot be influenced by conscious thought because it is so important. We were made this way in order for the body and its automatic functions to work properly without hindrance.

And it's the same with our Qi, only there are two reasons why we are unable to influence it using our conscious mind. The first is the same reason as for the blood in that our Qi is of course very important for good health as we would die without it and its flow. The 2nd is that if we were able to control our Qi, we would be able to damage others at every selfish or revengeful whim.

The trick to getting the Qi to do what you want it to (to SINK) lies hidden in a phrase that I always remember, told to me by one of my teachers way back. In fact it was one

of the very first things he told to me, thus: *"Qi is like a shy girl; she looks at you from behind a tree when you are not looking and you see her out of the corner of your eye and she disappears. Then you TRY to see her every day after without success until you are not trying and then she will appear again when you least expect it."*

And this is the total secret to your advancement and understanding of your Tai Chi practice. Simply DO IT! No silly mind games, no thinking low, or I must sink my qi, no thinking of honey rolling down your body etc., or the many other games that we are told to play as these are all CONSCIOUS thought and another important classic saying that I was told way back was that: *"Conscious thought will block the Qi"*.

And this is the total secret to your advancement and understanding of your Tai Chi practice. Simply DO IT! No silly mind games, no thinking low, or I must sink my qi, no thinking of honey rolling down your body etc.,

However, one of the most difficult things is to NOT think while performing your Taiji form. And most people will TRY to block all thought from their mind. This is incorrect as TRYING to block conscious thought is in itself conscious thought and more so that normal thoughts that come and go in your mind while you practice. If you cannot rid your mind of all thought (and of course if you KNOW that you are doing this then you

AREN'T), then it is much better to allow any thoughts to come and go while you practice, as long as they are thoughts completely different to what you are actually doing and that those thoughts do not cause tension to rise into the upper body. Normal thoughts like what you will be doing next after your practice, playing guitar or any really nice thought that will come and go. Never should you think not so nice thoughts like revenge or hatred etc. Even if you simply think about the surrounding countryside (if you are practicing in the outdoors) or the birds chirping, that is good enough to cause the Qi to sink.

However, there is another way that Tai Chi allows the Qi to sink naturally and this is one of the main reasons that we perform the form with bent legs. We would of course never actually defend ourselves with this bent leg position and this is a big mistake that most make when teaching Tai Chi as a fighting art, they think that we must use Tai Chi exactly as it is in the postures. However, this is incorrect. We have bent knees in order for the conscious mind to FEEL the pressure in the thighs. This in turn tells the sub-conscious mind that we are SINKING. And another classic saying that we are always told in the beginning that: "What the physical does, so too does the Qi". So when we SINK our body physically by bending the knees, the sub-conscious mind will cause the Qi also to SINK to the tantien leaving the rest of the

body to simply move in accordance with each posture thereby causing the Qi to become activated in each particular meridian in turn which is wonderful for health.

This sub-conscious SINKING also allows us to issue forth Qi when we must defend ourselves. However, again, if we think about doing this, it will never happen. This is why Tai Chi and Bagua can never be used in a tournament sport situation or stupid push hands competitions, because we are constantly thinking about what will happen next and how we will defeat it. This is conscious thought and so the Qi will not be issued. Another reason is that God made us such that we could not hurt others needlessly using the great power of Qi and in a sport, there is no need for this so it will never happen! The only time the Qi will be issued forth is when we least expect it, when the shy girl is peeping at us from behind the tree. And this means when we are attacked in the street when we least expect it. This has happened to be on a number of occasions in my mis-led 20s and 30s where I have felt that immense power of Qi. But in each incident when I would try to gain that power again, it was gone because I was TRYING!

Another area where the Qi will manifest automatically is in the healing area when we come across someone who needs healing. If we were to consciously THINK about the Qi going into this person, it would not work at all. However, healing is also exactly the same as being attacked suddenly, it works when you least expect it. And here is where that lovely saying is so true: "You are only a true healer if your patient is healed as they walk from your door to your desk". In other words, the real healing happens not

by the needles that you will stick, nor by the herbal remedy that you will prescribe or the pills, nor by the massage that you will impart; it will happen before you even talk to the patient. The physical things are important of course like laying on of hands etc, but the beginning activation of Qi happens simply because you have come in contact with someone who is ill. And it is every animal's automatic obligation to heal others who are ill. I have seen this happen in the wild or with family pets many times. Even to the point where an injured animal who cannot be fixed, will be chewed up by another animal because that was the only course of action.

It is really easy to get the Qi to sink and it is really difficult at the same time. However, as I keep saying over and over; all you have to do, is the movement. Every great secret about Tai Chi and Bagua is locked up in the movement, nothing else

It is really easy to get the Qi to sink and it is really difficult at the same time. However, as I keep saying over and over; *all you have to do, is the movement*. Every great secret about Tai Chi and Bagua is locked up in the movement, nothing else. It cannot be intellectualized, it is a purely physical thing which when done correctly (and herein lies the most important thing) will impart to the practitioner all of the wonderful benefits that all internal systems have to offer.

Sadly though in modern times even in China, these wonderful arts have been watered down so much that they have become nothing! They have been denigrated by those who

would put them into national and international tournaments to see who is best. So the internal part is lost, and as they are INTERNAL arts, what you are left with are arts that are empty shells which cannot be used for self defence or healing, so people resort back to things like Karate and other hard styles whereby the chap with the biggest muscles always wins.

CAMP 2006

From Erle Montaigne

The annual international WTBA Summer Training Camp was held near Rostock in the North of Germany, end of May 2006. WTBA instructors and students from 12 countries attended in a spirit of friendship and dedication, humour and comradeship.

The camp was held over 4 days with most arriving on the Thursday evening and leaving on the following Monday after class or Tuesday morning. Schnatermann is the name of the venue for the camp and is a family run purpose built camp which caters for everyone. From those wishing to actually camp in a tent, to those who would like to have the experience of sleeping in a Covered Wagon, to a little more

sion. A very nice dinning room is provided for our benefit and a huge training shed is also available if the weather cracks up.

Having held many camps in the past, I must say that this one in particular was the most friendly and sharing of all. Perhaps it's just that I am getting older and push less the macho fighting stuff concentrating upon the



This is what happens when a swarm of bees invades the training! Actually it was an excellent warm up method and Qi centering Qigong on First Day.

Around 45 WTBA instructors and students from Switzerland, South Africa, Germany, UK, Ireland, Australia, The Netherlands, France, Slovenia, Norway, Greece and Sweden attended the first Summer Camp held by Erle Montaigne in Europe. For those instructors who for some reason could not attend, you really missed something special. So please see if you can attend in 2007 as it is important for your own training and that of your students to be seen to have a connection with 'head office' so to speak.

comfort in lovely wooden cabins and then there is a wonderful Hotel right at the camp for those who like their creature comforts. The Baltic Sea is only 10 minutes drive while a huge lake is right at the edge of the camp where sail boarding and canoeing can be done.

Included in the accommodation fee (which is very reasonable) are three meals per day, mainly vegetarian. However, those who must eat cow or other large animals, this is available to order at an extra cost per ses-

healing aspects, although the fighting is of course included, it's just that I place less importance upon it nowadays.

A number of WTBA instructors also received an upgrade to their level as I am able at these camps in particular to watch everyone and see how they are going etc.



I took my whole family this time which was such a lovely way to do it as I was much more relaxed knowing that we were all together. Eli and Ben taught, also helping me out when I needed it and also took some private lessons in the off times. And the Moontagu Family band performed in the evening along with others who could play a musical instrument.

However, it was the training that everyone came for and that was the best ever as we were able to get through all 8 palm changes of the Bagua Original Circular form, plus the Bagua Snake form and Yang's Secret 4th House where we take our push hands and turn it into something real in the way of realistic self defence methods.

An excellent 2 hour session happened after dinner each day as well. This was not a formal lesson as it was an extra training session thrown in for those who wished to cover things that weren't covered in the normal training sessions. So we covered things like Yang Lu-ch'an corrections where the students were able to ask questions about the different parts that they were having difficulty with and this 2 hour class proved to be a real winner with everyone.

A number of WTBA instructors also received an upgrade to their level as I am able at these camps in particular to watch everyone and see how they are going etc.

From now onwards, this is one of the only ways that instructors will be able to receive upgrades. So next year, this camp will be held also at Schnatermann in Germany over the weekend of August 3rd to 6th. See my class time table for this information.



My sincere thanks to *Ron Beier*, 3rd Degree, WTBA instructor and my representative for Germany and his lovely wife *Frau* for organizing the whole camp. I know how difficult it is to organize 50 or so people, catering to the different likes and dislikes etc. And Ron and Frau took it all in their stride and did an amazing job.



In the end, the camp was a huge success as far as training, friendship and WTBA bonding was concerned. Many new friends were made and old ones renewed. Those who live relatively closer to each other are now getting together to train on a regular basis and those even from other countries are making arrangements to visit again for training.

Mark your calendar for 2007 as you have over a year to plan for this in 2007. It is important that all of our WTBA instructors attend at some time in order to catch up with the training personally from myself.



Explanations of Neutralizing, Rooting/Grounding, Yielding etc

Paul Brecher (London)

Just so that we are clear on this if someone says that they do Chinese Internal Martial Arts (CIMA) and start talking about neutralizing energy and try and convince you that this means something mysterious to do with chi/qi energy and cannot be explained and is an ancient secret and was only a rare skill attainable by the ancient masters of the past and etc etc etc then they are living in a dream land and have lost touch with everyday reality.

To use neutralizing energy on someone means to neutralize them as in I counterattacked by repeatedly using fa-jing elbowing the opponent in the soft tissue of the neck in the area of acupuncture point stomach nine causing the effect of the activation of the cardio inhibitory action of the vagus nerve which will make the heart fail (heart stop dim mak) also causing major trauma to the carotid artery (blood stop dim mak) and also repeatedly elbowing the opponent in the soft tissue of the neck in the area of acupuncture point conception meridian twenty two causing massive local trauma and the crushing of the respiratory track (restricted air dim mak). The opponent has now received my very effective neutralizing energy.... He has been Neutralized !

Or another example if someone starts talking about the power of rooting/grounding and says that they can not be pushed over because their rooting/grounding is so

strong and powerful etc etc then they are not martial artists and will lead you down an interesting but irrelevant side road and you will miss the main road of the CIMA.

This is because they have no true depth of understanding about the real world and are lost in a funny dream world and are out of touch with reality. Firstly, because when someone goes to repeatedly punch you in the face you do not NOT stay where you are and be rooted to the spot. This is ridiculous why would any one want to stay in the same place that the opponent is attacking ? The correct thing to do is to move out of the way of their attack, to use fast footwork and not be where they are attacking. So the idea of rooting/grounding is a distraction, it is not martial arts, yes it is very, very, very important for chi kung healing, but not for fighting.

To yeild means that we do not block their attack, we do not try and change the direction that their attacking limb is going in, instead we let them do their attack but not be where they are attacking.

The second thing is if rooting/grounding is in the martial arts at all it is not you who should be rooted/grounded it is the opponent who you want to be grounded, you want him to stay where he is and get hit ! So you move but ground him and then hit him and then hit him again and then hit him again, then you hit him again until he is incapacitated and collapses to the ground Now he is Grounded !

Yielding, yielding, yielding !?! many people who go on about this skill are so far away from the most obvious reality of life on earth that they should be writing fiction. Yielding does not NOT mean lose to win or step back or let them push you etc etc why this obviously ridiculous idea is still encouraged by practitioners of CIMA I do not know ?

To yeild means that we do not block their attack, we do not try and change the direction that their attacking limb is going in, instead we let them do their attack but not be where they are attacking. We have moved forwards to a position where they cannot hit us but we can hit them.

Yielding means rushing forwards and head butting them in the face, it does not mean going all floppy like a piece of wet spaghetti !

So just to sum up.....

I think maybe that there are many people in CIMA who have been led to believe that if they stay rooted/grounded (stay where they are) and neutralize (use the chi) and yield (go floppy like wet spaghetti) then they can survive being attacked by a violent criminal who is repeatedly punching them in

the face. These people are being deceived and it is unjust.

My view.....

To train in a way that is connected with reality we must put aside a romantic idea of ancient masters and mystical abilities and think long and hard about the reality of what really happens when a person is attacked.

The attacker is not going to grab your wrist and say that he can pull you over, nor is he going to try and push you to see if he can uproot you etc. In reality the opponent is going to try and distract you with swear words and intimidating questions like 'Are you F**king looking at me?' and then he is going to steam in with repeated full power punches to the face.

If you have been training CIMA as a healing and meditation system and no martial arts aspect that is fine but if you have a martial arts component to your training you should want it to be relevant to real life.

So how can I be so sure that CIMA is connected with the reality of real combat ?

Well Chinese internal martial artists were hired to escort rich traders, their merchandise and profits through inhospitable terrain and they were often attacked by large groups of armed, mounted bandits who attacked them with spears, broadswords, knives, arrows and axes etc.

Their response would have been to counterattack with similar weapons and close quarter striking techniques (fa-jing/dim-mak), with

speed and power, strike the bandits down and kill every last one of them.

Or do you really think that the response of these highly trained fighters would have been to stay rooted to the spot and go soft like spaghetti !?!

Paul Brecher is the Senior London Instructor for The World Tai Chi Boxing Association, he teaches Tai Chi Chuan, Bagua Chang and Wudang Shan Chuan for both healing and self defence, he can be contacted at www.taiji.net

Tai Chi Anarchy

Don Morgan:

It all started when I was complaining that I had a bad back and someone said ‘Try Tai Chi. That should help.’

I have been doing Tai Chi for just over 4 years now. I don’t practice. Right or wrong I just do it to the best of my ability and enjoy it.

This is how I like to do it:

Well the sun has just come up so I get out of bed and go into the garden and start with a bit of Chi Gong, (usually lift chi up pour chi down). Where I stand is in the shade of a tree. Then I do the form; I don’t try to get it exactly right. What I do is enjoy being a little monkey outside, living in the present, and doing the craziest of movements. Sometimes I close my eyes to do the form and enjoy the feeling (which has limited martial value), but it is interesting to see where I am and which direction I am facing at the finish. Trying to get it right is reserved for going to classes. Then I do some standing Chi Gong usually in Wu Ji, it’s really strange how much scope there is to improve this stance. By now the sun has risen from behind the tree and I have a warm back and a long shadow.

Regarding classes, after two years I had a year off Tai Chi classes so that I could practice on my own, read a few books internalize the whole thing. I took some Healing Chi Gong classes during that period. Now I am back going to classes with my original teacher and enjoy-

ing them more. I had drifted off with many details of the form, which had to be corrected. I like to think some of it was developing my own style. What I found interesting was I could see the improvement in my teacher after his year off from teaching me!

I tried a weekend workshop with my teacher’s teacher and found out that I was still a little monkey scratching the surface of Tai Chi. A bit depressing at first but I suppose he had been doing it for about 30 years. He went to learn it in London at the same time as a young chap called Montaigne.

I tried a weekend workshop with my teacher’s teacher and found out that I was still a little monkey scratching the surface of Tai Chi.

What are the effects. Well my back is a lot better. It does not take as long to stop hurting after I have done something that I shouldn’t have done.

Other strange things that happened:

If my wife throws something at me; my hand goes up to catch it all on it’s own. That never used to happen, she used to hit me.

The most interesting occurrences are with animals:

When I first started Tai Chi our collie dog got very cross, he would bark and jump up at me. Did he see

my movements as threatening? Now our terrier comes and sits at my feet, which is OK for Chi Gong but I have to step over him for Tai Chi. Is he bathing in the field of chi round me?

My daughter’s pony seems to understand. I walked up to him when he was lying down one day and thought ‘I’ll squat down and see if he will stay down on the ground’ so I bent my knees dropped my shoulders, rotated my hips, (Wu Ji). Well he panicked jumped up and ran away. Another day he was out pulling the cart when he got a fright. So what did he do? Arched his back dropped his bum stuck his head up and prepared to rear up or buck. Time to get off the cart quickly and try to contain the situation. Is this horse Wu Ji?

The question of how do animals hold up their heads occurs. After all you would think it must be hard for a horse to hold up that big head all day. Do they relax their muscles so that their heads stay up without any effort. Is this what we are all trying to find in our Tai Chi.

THE GREAT ULTIMATE LOVE

Franklyn Birbal

What pervades the Silence? You want to see Emptiness' dancing then look no further than love. Love is. Love is the first movement of the divine. It's the very fabric of everything you and I do, whether you no it or not. The truth of what you are is unknown it's an a unknowable mystery you can't say what it is, Just fall into it. Let these words do what there supposed to do and Point to it like a sign you pasted one day on your way to internal power.

The one becomes two from the two the ten thousands things and all the myriad manifestation of life.

Life is always telling you something. Fall in love with life and you whole life will begin to change. Watch the sun rise, feel the morning air, make your breakfast kiss your family good morning and wake up to another day of Loving. It's not the swishy washy type of love where talking about here, this is unconditional love it makes no bones about giving you your lessons. Everything you need to know and grow as an individual journeying from nowhere. It hardly ever lets on it's doing it. It may seem at times that life is completely getting you down and is unfair but there's a higher order of things. It must be seen that the only reason you are here in the end is to see. Lift the veil through

heart the doorway to the all and everything you love in life.

The one becomes two from the two the ten thousands things and all the myriad manifestation of life. It's not to see you are not alone. You are alone, Drop through your fear of annihilation. There is something else waiting to be born into your life. Embrace your self and all of creation in the wonder of what you truly are and fall in love again.

Let the Grand Ultimate fist, meet the Grand ultimate Love.

WTBA & Healing

Solo Training in Baguazhang

Michael A. Babin

A competent style of bagua teaches balance and relaxation (sung), the development of whole body power, as well as the use of mental intention (Yi) for martial purposes. Done properly and moderately, over the long term, bagua solo training can also transform you and your health, often in ways that may surprise you.

The circular solo form can be strangely beautiful, full of graceful twisting movement, sudden explosive power and changes of pace and direction as well as dramatic swooping and lifting actions. Perhaps, because of this many who begin training in bagua focus almost immediately on the solo circular form and neglect to develop an appreciation of just how important it is to master the more basic walking training — and practise that regularly once the form is being practiced.

Unfortunately for those who neglect it, walking what Erle has called the “Eight Mother Palms” at a relatively slow and precise pace is essential.

In the long-term, true skill often comes from simple details and the more tedious repetition of core training methods. Doing relatively simple but rhythmic exercise tends to quiet the conscious mind and induce relaxation — ask a baby why it likes to be walked around or swung slowly and rhythmically in its parent’s arms.

Walking “properly” in bagua terms is also a profound way of warming up the body for the more strenuous activities of martial practise or the demanding stretches and the low stances of the postures within the individual changes of the solo circular form.

On the other hand, one of the biggest enemies of progress — on any level — is boredom with the training as the weeks turn into months and the months grow into years. I suppose that I could compare it to being in a long-term relationship with someone but my wife might read this so I better not!

Walking “properly” in bagua terms is also a profound way of warming up the body for the more strenuous activities of martial practise or the demanding stretches and the low stances of the postures within the individual changes of the solo circular form.

When you need a little variety on a particular day, there are different ways to modify your practise of the circular solo form after you have spent at least a small amount of time walking the circle with the Eight Mother Palms.

When short of time; do only one side of each ‘change’ while still following the sequence as if doing the whole thing symmetrically. Having to remember which version of each change that you have to do next (counterclockwise or clockwise) as you proceed is another way of keeping the mind attentive once you get

to the stage where “daydreaming sung” tends to be a real danger for martial quality and technical precision.

When you have more time in a particular session, walk the circle more slowly and precisely than normal (remember it should not routinely be done quickly in any case) and/or do more than the usual one revolution of holding the Dragon/Frog Palm before starting the next change.

Another way to vary your practise of the solo form is to use an electronic timer (it has to be a model that will automatically repeat the same period of time after the first ring) and set it for, say, eight minutes. Then just repeat the First Change over and over on both sides until the timer goes and then do just the Second Change over and over on both sides until the timer rings again. Many experts have written that the first two changes of the circular form are the most important and provide the core lessons to be learned about martial baguazhang.

Whether you are doing the solo form or just walking; the exact size of the circle you walk is less important than how precisely you step and how you transfer the weight of the body and connect the spine to your feet and hands. By the way, some walking methods in other styles than that practiced in the WTBA advocate using deep angles of the knees and much lower, longer postures. Done properly, this can bring leg and core torso strength but can also ruin the

knees in particular unless you are supervised enough in your own training to do the method precisely; conversely, some styles use more speed in the walking and higher stances which often means that the students “float” more than they realize.

Having a strong root and movement that physically connects the hands to the ground through the length of the spine — at any pace — is no easy task.

I will finish by reminding you that the martial side of the art can really only be discovered, with any realism, through regular training with partner(s). Practising solo can bring the beginnings of martial posture and body mechanics but if you don’t realize and make practical that solo practise through martial interaction, you only get half the beast. In the end, no matter how well you train on your own it won’t automatically translate into bagua — or ANY — martial skills unless you spend the time, the sweat and the sorrow.

Too many modern practitioners, especially those who train exclusively on their own through videos and dvds have deluded themselves on how well the material has sunk in on a martial level. As Erle has often said and written, it is not enough to have memorized dim-mak points and how to attack them; you also have to have all the interactive skills necessary to be able to “carry the fight” successfully.

I suppose that you could say that practising by yourself is like masturbating, it can be very enjoyable, even addictive; but the skills and pleasure you get that way are nothing like the skills and pleasure you can get from interacting in bed with someone else! But, again, my wife

might read this, so I won’t write that ...

Ragdoll Gung-fu

Franklyn Birbal

I finally got my foot in the door of the internal and the sky has been opened up in my taichi practice and it's raining pearls. Thanks to the inner teacher and the outer teacher. I wonder if it was my experience with energetic healing arts that did it.

All I know is I will never give up, as long as I able I will continue to practice for it's wonderful benefits. I not trying to be a master it's a game, I just want to see how far it goes. So maybe in another decade or so I'll step through the door.

I enjoy writing its pure expression. I hope that it would inspire others to write and share thoughts on taichi within the WTBA, You never know you might just have that one sentence that might help a little piece click into place for someone. After all the form becomes yours over the years so here is another expression of thought.

Relaxing is a term used in all taichi classes, you should be relaxed while doing the movements. Back then I thought of relaxing as trying to chill out and take it easy.

So I go to a class and do take it easy taichi.

Learning two movements at a time, of course It has to be learnt slowly but I was also impatient like must beginners. You think you got it after you have finished learning the form. Relaxation as you go deeper has holds great importance to your taichi practice. What fellow's is my personal experience with relaxing in

tai chi chaun and my learning of the Yang Lu – Chaun form, after ten years of Yang Chang – Fu First of all I never thought that a decade of taiji practice can creep up on you so fast but it does believe me. I could have been a lot further along the road, but I choose to broaden my healing experience and have a family.

Can You be Like A Baby and It's Like a rag doll where two terms I came across and are used to describe in a way a type of Relaxing incorrectly translated as “ to Relax “, we call this **Sung**. “ to move without feeling it “

Taichi is a way of moving that happens within Sung. It like an engine in neutral it's ready to explode at any moment.

To flow was one of the first things I was told to do when doing the movements. I certainly didn't feel any flow but it was a necessary pre-requisite to explain something that will only come over time. When you begin to encounter it in your training at first it want be all at once in every movement. It may be just a few areas, a wave of the hands, wave hands like clouds most likely will be one of the first area you will feel sung. The first time I experienced sung was with my teacher, he was controlling my movements correcting a portion of the form, and suddenly I was taken over like someone else was doing the movements. I said to him it like someone else is doing it. He just smiled and carried on. My form changed from then and I was all ways in search of that feeling. I now realise it was the sung feeling, that was six years ago and it's now coming into it's own.

Sung is supremely important to your taichi Chaun without it the whole thing just doesn't work fully as an internal art.

To flow in sung means to have every part connected moving with an inner movement. When the qi becomes tangible something else moves you like your being taken over by something, like an inner wave.

My form builds up a lot of Yang qi to the point where I feel like I wanted to wip- out lightening just at the end of the movement, I felt like I wanted to explode by the end of my form. Because it was an all- slow from I could not show the great power ready to express, Sure I could do all the aligned structure stuff and see if you can push me stuff, but could I really defend my self with that. It would be probably better for me to rely on my previews training like boxing and just throw a punch.

How do you express power that you where never taught, and suddenly coming to the WTBA there was Fa- Jing (Explosive energy).

Tai chi is all Fa- Jing it's just with the all slow form is very subtle fa-jing with the Yang Lu chun form we do it, which is a requirement for self defence. For Fa- Jing you must have sung, **with no sung no fa-jing**. With no sung no deep flow of energy to clear blockages, which allows the healing of the body. Tension blokes the (qi). In a state of sung self healing (qi) can have a deeper impact on the energetic

system and flows in a much more powerful way.

Thus here I give testimony to to my recent practice of the Yang Lu chun form, What a relief, what a blessing energy wise. Those energy release points are fantastic and they have changed my life. Let me explain I had been holding it all in so long on that level, it was just so good to get it out and moving in a vigorous way. I have lost weight my complexion has improved my physical and internal fitness and my understanding of the giving of energy for release has greatly deepened. This releasing of power (Fa- Jing) has helped Me in the area of knocking down doors and breaking through barriers I just seem to pack a bigger punch when I need to take action. You see your working with your energy, your awareness, it has a psychological effect to my mind, When the energy is not fully expressed out as in fa- jing that's why the YLC form is more balanced because you get rid of stagnant (qi).

In order in order to use the centrifugal force from the spine and hip you must have sung in the movement. It has a wave like the functioning of a whip with the energy emitted at the tip. At it's higher levels it's called loose boxing "Hao chaun". This floppy taichi my look useless to the un-initiated those that haven't studied an internal system and know how to use the power of hips, tremendous power can be generated after some training.

Just like a Rag doll doesn't have the ability to tense up (Rigid Tension) if you imagine it being able to perform a taichi movement slow or at the fa- jing pace. So to is it with taichi it must be that loose. The energy that comes out from doing striking like this is used again, recycled in to the next posture nothing is wasted not even the rebound, in

this way tai chi can be said to be a green martial art because we use everything with got whole body power.

We still maintain the structure and form but it is held loose, the form has a certain amount of gravity to it and you feel like you sink down into the ground with heaviness. The whole form merges into one " there is only one move " what we do is pull out a few elements and look at them, and then merges the back into the whole form.

Maybe it was worth waiting this long because now it feels like electricity (qi) Maybe all those years of slow form have homed my awareness of it, that now I know when it gathers for release, I can feel it. Taichi chuan is a deep thing, I have just begun my journey into it an already some very interesting things are starting to come out, and part of the way is sung.

World Taiji Boxing Association News

E Montaigne

A renewed vigor and interest in the WTBA seems to be happening Worldwide. New member applications are up by around 50% on 2005 already.

Many find that our way of the Martial/Healing Arts is just too informal, so they leave to find another association which is more rigid and controlling that we are. But that is OK, 'Horses for Courses'. However, those who prefer to be leaders and make up their own minds about how things are done, come to the WTBA.

Myself and family will now be staying permanently in the UK as this is now our home and so much is opening up for our children in this area of the World in the way of Martial/Healing arts as well as music.

Last edition of Combat & Healing saw around 75,000 downloads! And that does not count those who then pass it on. So we are becoming a force to be reckoned with. Although we aren't really a 'force' just a bunch of friends training together.

I have a renewed interest in my own training and also in my own teaching. Don't know what it is, maybe something in the water here? Or perhaps those cups of Turkish coffee? In any case, I am now back to full teaching mode after an awkward start when we first moved to the UK, changes and getting used to a new country etc., Took their toll on my own motivation to teach.

So 2007 will see me back into full workshop mode covering Italy, France, Germany and Spain as well as many weekend workshops in the UK. And maybe Canada.

I am having a great time releasing all of the Yang Family so-called Secret Houses, stuff that mostly I have taught on and off for years but with nothing formal put down onto DVD. We are up to MTG302 at present the 'Silk Reeling Yang Lu-ch'an form final volume.

My sons, Ben and Eli are moving around the world teaching what I teach as well as teaching music. And Kathleen is also teaching guitar and getting back into her Tai Chi and Bagwa training as I knew she would.

We still need articles by WTBA members for this magazine as I cannot do it all myself, ... Well I could but it would become a little boring. So please, if you wish to be famous, just send in articles on any subject related to Bagwa, Taiji, Healing, Acupuncture, Chinese Medicine in general, Qigong etc.

I will be holding our now annual International Summer Camp in Rostock Germany again in 2007 in August, so please get in early so that we can book you in as spaces are limited. Information about this is elsewhere in this magazine and also on our web site www.taijiworld.com or www.erle.co.uk

WTBA Instructors!

If you are a WTBA instructor and advertise using our association,

please be in touch at least once in the year! Or come to a workshop or two. Not being like other more strict instructors, I treat our WTBA instructors as equals and adults. But sometimes, some do take advantage of this and I never see them again once they can advertise under our heading.

So from time to time, I will be going over our International Instructor lists to take out those who have not been in touch or have not been seen for some time or who have moved and have not let us know etc.

Bagwa or Taiji?

They are equal. However, as I grow older, am tending towards Baguazhang, maybe it is because I have spent so much of my early life with Tai Chi that now, Bagwa is giving me a renewed interest? I really enjoy the slightly more energetic moves and relaxation that it gives even though it is a little faster etc.

And so to reflect this, I am teaching more Bagwa at my workshops, but always teach some Tai Chi as I still love that as well. But with so much to practice, I just don't have 50 hours in the day!

Visitors to Wales from Overseas

Brian Alexander, is now the WTBA representative for the State of Maryland (MD) USA after he completed a grueling 12 day, 4 hours per day private tu-

toring with Eli Montaigue with occasional intervention by Erle Montaigue.

Brian has progressed sufficiently to have been graded up to 2nd degree and representative for the State of MD in the USA.

He has 30 years of martial arts experience and is the successor president of Parks Martial Arts www.ParksMartialArts.com founded by the late Master Sung Hong Park who passed away suddenly in 2003. Park's Martial Arts is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year and offers several styles of martial arts including a one of a kind Hapkido lineage/program.

Brian's efforts to improve upon his martial arts education resulted in becoming a student of the WTBA in 2002. He now teaches the complete Yang Lu-ch'an's system as well as beginning on Baguazhang.

We welcome Brian into the WTBA as our newest representative, he passes all criteria for this being a good bloke and as a side line is a great rock drummer! Brian accompanied the Moontagu Band to a performance in one of our local villages on his last evening with us in Wales.

