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## FOREWORD

By Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming

### Dear Friends and Readers

We all know how precious time is and how we all have the same opportunity to use it over the course of our lives. Some people like to accomplish something meaningful. Others will just let time slip through their fingers while continuing to live in an unrealistic dreamlike and/or fantasy world.

None of us can deny that we all did some daydreaming when we were young. However, if the dream is not practical and cannot be fulfilled, then it will never become a reality. After many years, our dreams begin to accumulate and we start to realize that even though they're important, reality is even more important.

Before turning 35, I mixed my dream with heavy doses of reality. However, when I turned 40, I became more conscious and aware of the fact that if I continued on the same path the dream would be more important than reality – little or nothing would change before I died. Gradually, I learned how to adjust my dream and also learned not to be disappointed when I failed. I kept trying and relied on a strong will and perseverance. I knew the biggest obstacle in fulfilling my dream was laziness.

My White Crane master reminded us repeatedly, "You are your biggest enemy. If you learn how to conquer yourself, you can accomplish almost everything you wish." The first step towards conquering your emotional bondage is to conquer your laziness. It is amazing that when I discussed this with all of my students, everyone seemed to know about this, but not too many actually accomplished it.

From my own personal experience, there are three things that have helped me to conquer myself. The first is meditation. Through meditation, I learned to strengthen my wisdom mind (Yi). And the more I meditate, the more my mind is clear about this. Second, never allow your emotional mind (Xin) to enter the controlling territory too far. Whenever my emotional mind started clashing with my wisdom mind, I gave it a chance to listen. If the emotional mind started to repeat itself once the decision had been made by the wisdom mind, I simply shut it off. For example, often before running to the mountain for my routine practice, my emotional mind would try to argue why I should skip that day. The excuses would range from too much homework, too tired, sick, my mother needs me, etc. However, I knew that if my wisdom mind surrendered even once, then the second would follow. Third, set up an appointment time so your emotional mind cannot persevere. Often, I would set up practice sessions with my classmates. To fulfill my promise, I was always there. Fortunately, we did not have cell phones as we do today. So, once we arranged for an appointment, it was hard to break.

I realize that each one of us has a different path of life to follow. I also know that we must face life's challenges and solve the problems encountered. It is through this experience that our spirits grow and mature. If we do not encounter some difficulty along the way, then life will not have much meaning.

There is an old saying: "Those who grow up in heaven will never know they are in heaven and thus will not appreciate it."

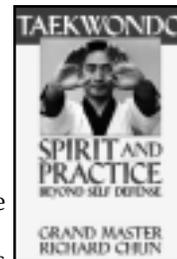
We all live in a matrix. Do we dare to jump out of it anytime we want or be satisfied in living our lives without making positive changes?

## Book Review

*Taekwondo Spirit and Practice*

By Grand Master Richard Chun

\$15.95 177 pages ISBN 1-886969-22-1



This is a book that adults and children alike should enjoy immensely.

Dr. Chun begins his adventurous martial arts journey by telling the reader what prompted him to pursue Taekwondo.

He takes the reader to Seoul, South Korea just before the start of the Korean War. From there, he explains eloquently why Taekwondo is a noble and positive recreation for children offering them challenges and lessons that they will reflect upon for their entire lives.

When writing autobiographies, some authors often have trouble deciding whether to write about every experience and encounter they've had over the course of their lives. And that's where Dr. Chun shines.

He says, "Just as it was necessary to highlight certain experiences that related to my life as a martial artist, there are specific people that I must acknowledge. Without these people in my life, this book would not have come into fruition."

This is not Dr. Chun's first literary accomplishment. His book *Taekwondo*, written in 1976, was published at a time when this little known martial art began making some inroads across America.

According to Dr. Chun, there were over several hundred Taekwondo schools as well as many university and college martial arts clubs, yet it (Taekwondo) still was not officially recognized as a sport in this country.

Many of Dr. Chun's observations about martial arts and Taekwondo in particular reflect a positive attitude towards the meaning of life. He believes that there are universal values in human nature – inner strength, a positive self-image, and a strong moral character, that when sufficiently developed in an individual, keep one's life always in an evolutionary direction.

To be a true martial artist, he added, you must be aware of the completeness of the tradition and philosophy and develop both these inner and outer aspects.

Read how Taekwondo played a major role in Grand Master Chun's pursuit of life in America. You'll cheer him on as he overcomes the difficulties a non-English speaking immigrant encounters in the USA. And you'll admire him for sticking with his strong belief in what martial arts can do to nurture one's desire to pursue a better way of life.

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# The Illusion of Rank

## What does a title really mean?

MICHAEL ROSENBAUM

Not long ago I ran into an old karate friend of mine. We met while working out at the same dojo back in the 70s. Since then our paths have repeatedly crossed for almost three decades. On this particular day, we bumped into each other in the public library. After a quick handshake our conversation turned as it always does to martial arts.

I was curious and asked him about his training and if he still worked out with the same instructor. "No," he answered. "Funny thing about that, my sensei got promoted to sixth dan and then insisted that everyone call him master."

At first I thought he was joking, but his facial expression told me otherwise. After being promoted to sixth dan, his sensei did indeed request that all of his students address him as master. I thought to myself: "How bizarre." Especially when I took into account that my colleague had almost 40 years of martial arts experience and had started his training long before this newly promoted master was born.

After listening to his story, the only thing that I could think of to say was, "I'm sorry to hear that."

"Me to," he replied. "But there's always someone else out there."

In 1976, when I began studying Isshinryu Karate, the title of "master" was usually reserved for Tatsuo Shimabuku, the system's founder. For everyone else the title of master was used and sometimes replaced by the term "Sensei" as in Sensei Bohan or Sensei Long. However, times have changed. The term master is used quite frequently today and with this change has also come some questions concerning the use of this word.

In my first book: *Okinawa's Complete Karate System Isshinryu*, I stated the following about our preoccupation with rank: "With very few exceptions, our ranking structures and political organizations are more concerned with organizing tournaments and not the development of the individual. It does not matter if a practitioner has been involved in the martial arts thirty years. If this person walks into a tournament without that black, or red and white belt around their waist, they will more than likely find themselves on the sidelines instead of their expertise being called upon to help officiate". (Page 105) I still stand by my statement and firmly believe that many of the issues surrounding the Kyu-Dan ranking system need to be addressed.

Far too often you will see high-ranking practitioners abusing their positions, which in turn creates disharmony and fallout amongst the system's rank and file members. Unfortunately, the fallout often taints the positive contributions made by those who have justly earned their rank through decades of hard work and devotion. Not only does this apply to Isshinryu, but the martial arts community as well.

The problems we find associated with our modern ranking

structure have been greatly accentuated by Westerners, but they are not new to karate, or the history of the fighting arts.

**The beginning of the Kyu-Dan ranking structure:** The Kyu-Dan ranking structure is not an ancient warrior tradition as many have been led to believe. In fact the system itself is more than 100 years old. It didn't evolve from a classical martial arts system like the koryu bujutsu nor was it developed by the Samurai. Today's kyu-dan ranking structure was developed instead by modern Judo's father Kano Jigoro. Kano was of the peasant class, his family owned a saki mill and they were considered at the bottom of the Japanese society because they were merchants. (*Draeger p.1 Ranking Systems*) As a youth, he was not in robust health. Seeking to improve his health, he embarked on a physical fitness routine that included baseball, hiking and gymnastics. After seeing much improvement due to these activities, he decided to begin jujutsu training.



Photos: Kodokan Judo Institute

**Kudos for Kano: Professor Kano Jigoro,  
founder of Kodokan Judo College**

Kano soon proved himself a dedicated and hearty student. During the course of his training he studied various forms of jujutsu as well as other classical bujutsu styles. Jujutsu however, during this period, was in a state of decline due to misuse by many of its exponents who either used their skills on the untrained or else exhibited them to crowds of people for a fee. (*Draeger Modern Budo & Bujutsu p.113*) Kano sought to correct these shortcomings and restore a positive image to jujutsu. He envisioned a system, that would not only encompass elements of self-defense, but would also develop health and spirit in its practitioners; a system that would appeal to people of all walks of life. His creation was called Kodokan Judo and it was an eclectic blend of all the systems he had previously studied.

In developing his Judo, Kano also sought a method to judge the proficiency of his students and yet at the same time a way in which to allow them to compete with one another in a fair manner without mismatched skills. To accomplish his goal, he devised the Kyu-Dan ranking structure (kyu being lower ranks and dan being those of the upper ranks) commonly known as black belt today.

Kano's standards were as high then as they are today even though the competitive element has often taken precedence over others stressed in his original teachings. In addition to helping him establish a competitive form for his students, the kyu-dan ranking structure also aided Kano in the promotion of his Judo.

Unlike the classical bujutsu systems, which may require up to eight years training before the first level is reached, the modern budo forms such as judo and karate a shodan (first degree black belt) level can be reached in as little as two, or three years. Thus you have a criteria that appeals to the masses as opposed to the classical methods whose rigid requirements did not. Many classical systems such as the koryu bujutsu in fact discouraged mass marketing approaches and instead preferred to focus on small groups of highly dedicated individuals.

When Okinawan Karate was introduced to Japan during the early 20th century, it adopted the kyu-dan ranking system in an effort to facilitate a criteria for qualified instructors. This was

because of requirements laid down by the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai concerning the teaching of Karate in Japan. These requirements also resulted in training attire being worn by karate-ka, along with the use of standardized kata and techniques all of which made the Okinawans fighting art more uniformed in nature. The Butoku-kai also for the first time issued the titles of, Hanshi, Kyoshi, and Renshi to those budo practitioners considered distinguished in their particular fields. However, as well intentioned as this approach was it did not put those Okinawans who were the most qualified to teach their native fighting arts into positions of issuing these ranks.

Patrick McCarthy in his book: *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts*

*Volume 2* points out that the Butoku-kai designated Konishi Yasuhiro as an official to issue these certifications even though Yasuhiro had been a student of Motobu Choki, Funakoshi, Miyagi Chojun and Mabuni Kenwa. McCarthy adds that: "The move was supported by most karate-ka, but did not sit well with everyone, especially Funakoshi and Miyagi." (p.27) McCarthy also points out that there was then, just as there is today with some upper ranking karate-ka, ill feelings between some of the Okinawans who brought Karate to Japan. Concerning this relationship McCarthy says of Motobu and Funakoshi that: "Regarded as a master fighter, Motobu Choki insisted that the scholar Funakoshi Gichin was an imposter whose karate, although elegant, was ineffective because he had no idea of its applications; however, because of his tricky behavior and eloquent explanations, Motobu felt Funakoshi was able to deceive many." (p.131).

Likewise the long held belief by many Americans that the guidelines of the kyu-dan ranking system were strictly enforced and that there were no premature promotions in the early days of karate is also in question.

Famed Goju-ryu practitioner, Gogen, Yamaguchi, began his karate training in 1929 under the tutelage of Chojun Miyagi but by 1935, with only 6 years of training, Yamaguchi had organized the All-Japan Goju-Kai Karate Do Association and was its chief instructor. (Corcoran and Farkas p.396). Likewise Eizo Shimabuku younger brother of Isshinryu's founder Tatsuo was named grandmaster of the shobayashi sect of Shorin-ryu at age 20 by Chotoku-Kyan and was later promoted to the rank of 10th dan at the age of 34 by Kangen Toyama. (Corcoran and Farkas p.377) When examining historical events it appears that human nature recognizes no boundaries be they of race or nationality when it comes to rank and title. Today the Kyu-Dan ranking structure is used not only by Japanese Budo practitioners but a host of other styles and systems many of which are not of Japanese or Okinawan heritage.

*In part two of this article, Michael J. Rosenbaum writes about how titles were earned and the respect that went along with them. Rosenbaum is the author of: Okinawa's Complete Karate System Isshinryu & The Fighting Arts Their Evolution From Secret Societies To Modern Times.*



**No way out: Once Professor Kano slapped a hold on his opponent, the match usually ended**

## The Best of the Best Know your instructors

DAN HOOD

Carol and Joseph (Joe) Best have more in common than just their last names. Not only did they meet at the same martial arts academy in 1975, marry in 1986, and become the proud parents of two lovely children, Zenzele, 8, and Ayinde, 3 but today they teach Tai Chi at Yang's Martial Arts Academy in Jamaica Plain, Mass.

I had a chance to sit down with this "dynamic duo" recently to discuss what it's like trying to balance parenthood, their careers and teaching.

**WHEN DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN THE MARTIAL ARTS?**

**Carol:** *In the mid-seventies, my parents started me in Karate as an extra-curricular activity. I tried it for one summer in my early teens, and returned when I entered my senior year in high school.*

**Joe:** *I dabbled in Judo in the late '60s, but began to study Uechi Ryu Karate-Do in earnest in the summer of '70. I did this in order not to get beaten up by my friends and associates during the first week of high school initiation.*

**WHERE DID YOU MEET AND WHEN?**

**Carol:** *At Mattson Academy of Karate on Hancock Street in Boston's Government Center. It's no longer there.*

**Joe:** *We met there in 1975, became a couple in '78, and got married in '86.*

**WHAT CITY OR TOWN ARE YOU FROM AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED THERE?**

**Carol:** *I'm a Bostonian born and bred. I split my college years between Babson in Wellesley and U-Mass Boston.*

**Joe:** *I spent my developmental or "wonder years" in Cambridge, Mass., right through college.*

**HOW MUCH OF AN EFFORT IS IT TAKING CARE OF TWO CHILDREN, HAVE OTHER JOBS AND STILL TEACH TAI CHI?**

**Carol:** *It varies. When Zenzele was very young, I used to put her on my back and teach. Now, I have to adjust my teaching schedule to coordinate with their school schedule, so lately that has limited my class time at YMAA. As far as work goes, I'm lucky on*



**Proper form: Joe Best (right) guides a student through twist body, parry and punch**

two counts. First, I work at YMAA Publication Center in Roslindale so I'm involved in the martial arts community at work. Second, my job is flexible and I was able to telecommute until our children

started school.

**Joe:** (Smiling) Remember that guy on the Ed Sullivan Show? (if you're old enough), The one who would balance and spin dozens of plates in the air that



Best time: (clockwise) Joe, Zenzele, Ayinde and Carol relax at home

were supported by long flexible sticks? Well, (compared to parenthood) he had it easy.

DO YOU SEE AN EFFORT BY YOUR DAUGHTER TO PURSUE MARTIAL ARTS?

**Carol:** Zenzele's at the age where she's trying many activities. She does train some martial arts at home with us, but she has not expressed interest in formal classes yet. She's had dance classes, but right now she takes swimming classes and does some Yoga at home. Ayinde's following in her footsteps; he likes to copy her every move.

**Joe:** Both my daughter and son appreciate the physical aspects of the arts, and at this stage of course, it's all a game to them (as well as it should be). But as time goes on, I think they'll learn to understand the more subtle and profound attributes involved. The idea presently is to provide a home school environment where we can practice together as a family and share our knowledge and experiences. If after this initial introduction, either of them wishes to focus on a particular style or art wherever or whenever, then that's great. We only hope to establish a strong foundation on which to build upon. So, to answer your question more succinctly, I recognize more of a curiosity as opposed to an effort on their part in pursuance of the martial arts.

WHO, IF ANYONE, INTRODUCED YOU TO MARTIAL ARTS?

**Carol:** George Mattson and Bob Campbell were the head and chief instructors respectively at Mattson Academy. My training in the Chinese martial arts began at the Chinese Wushu Research Institute, with Master Bow Sim Mark and her sister Su-Yin Mark. (Smiling) It was great to study at a school with a female in charge.

**Joe:** No one person in particular. The mysticism, athleticism and precision that I observed at a young age as well as the sense of poise that was often exhibited by those who practiced the martial arts commanded my attention. I've been hooked ever since.

## Island paradise offers more than just tourism

**L**isa Williams was born in the United Kingdom, introduced to yoga at 14, in 1984, and then to Tai Chi at 25, in 1995. But that's only a brief part of her story. Somewhere along the way she found her island in the sun. Williams says there's a good reason why she loves Grenada.

"I came to Grenada in 1993 with my parents, as my mother is originally from the island. So I've been here for ten years now."

Not many people know about her style of Tai Chi so she provided a brief history.

"I learned Tibetan Tai Chi from Jean-Pierre Crameri right here in Grenada. I have been teaching beginners' Tai Chi now for 7 years. I try to allow people to experience their body in a different way than they may have been used to, with pure awareness that comes from deep concentration and with no judgement of their capabilities or emotions."

No matter what the style is, there's always one energy force that Williams says should never be overlooked.

"I hope that people can connect with the feeling of the chi flowing more freely around their body and enjoy the sense of peace and calm that can come from movement with awareness.

It can be so useful because it allows a person to experience mastery over their movements in such a gentle way, appreciating what the body can do."

Williams likes working in groups because she finds it interesting. "People learn to adjust to others differences in speed, ability etc. Just simply slowing down is a big adjustment for people in the beginning, and becoming aware of where they hold on to tension in the body. It helps you to let go of psychological barriers to your own happiness and brings you nearer to an appreciation of the Universe as vibrating with energy."

What is the difference between Yoga and Taiji? "Yoga has many different styles and approaches, just like Tai Chi does. There are "softer" and "harder" approaches. The physical form of yoga, known as hatha yoga can take the form of static postures or flowing ones. The flowing ones are more similar to Tai Chi in that their is a constant flow from one movement to the next with no gaps. Yoga of course was not developed as a martial art, but its similarities include the fact you are working with the energy field around the body and the energy (known as prana in yoga) flow within the body, though there are differences in emphases about how and where the energy flows."

According to Williams Tibetan form is closer to the Indian traditions of yoga and meditation. Because of the lack of visibility and relative secrecy of the practioners, not much has been written down and there are only a few teachers in the U.S. in places like New Mexico. Lama Pai, as it is known, is the practice of the Tibetan monks. There have been many different lineages with different styles. Circular movements are common, and there are 24 different sections to learn. (See page 5 of the April 2003 YMAA newsletter for more information)

Williams' hobbies include writing fiction and building up her charity, the Grenada Children's Library Project, through which she collects books and computers for distribution to schools and libraries throughout the island.

She and her husband have a 6-year-old daughter.

## What is “root”?

### Time to ponder in search of an answer

BY JEFF PRATT

Several weeks ago in a Push Hands class, a student asked me if a person should be “rooted” all the time. My response was “Yes, A person should root constantly.” I was then asked how could a person move, let alone fight if he or she was “rooted”? I replied that according to Taijiquan theory you could not effectively fight unless you were rooted. If you are not rooted then offensive and defensive techniques are severely limited. The entire class seemed to share the puzzlement of the first questioner. I realized that when I said “root” the class did not understand what I meant. People who had practiced Taijiquan for a long time and who possessed good root were confused. We spent the rest of the class discussing “Root.”

What is “root”? Traditionally “rooting” is a stable and firm connection with the ground. The mind (Yi) develops this connection by leading the energy (Qi) from the “Bubbling Well” cavities (Yong Chen) in the soles of the feet into the ground. When this connection is established, the center (Dan Tian) of the Taijiquan practitioner links to the ground. This “root” permits the effective use of the various martial techniques (Jin), either offensive (Fa Jin) or defensive (Hua Jin). The deeper the “root” the greater power in Fa Jin and easier neutralization in Hua Jin. The depth of the “root” increases through relaxation of the body, concentration of the mind, strengthening the spirit, and practice. Regular practice of the Taijiquan solo form, fundamental stances, and Push Hand drills are valuable for “rooting” training.

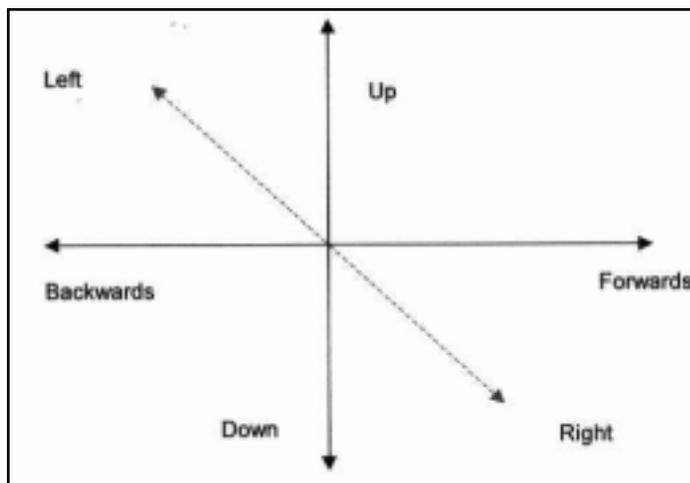
My own definition of “root” begins with the traditional meaning and then adjusts according to my experience. I can not in all honesty say that I feel my Qi leave my body through the Bubbling Wells. When I stand, I can not feel this happen. (I hope I will someday.) However, I can feel my relationship to the ground. I know when I am stable and in control of my motion. My definition of “root” is a stable balanced connection to the earth that allows agile movement, explosive power release, and effective neutralization of incoming force.

The difficulty that arises for people is mistaking stagnation for being “rooted.” In the discussions that followed the initial questions about “root,” I came to the realization that many of my students were associating a heavy, weighted feeling with their “root.” This feeling is merely dead weight. It’s the resistance of a stone sitting on the ground to movement. This was my fault. I had not been clear enough in teaching them the underlying concepts of Taijiquan. “Root” is dynamic and organic. The adaptability of a living being is necessary to “root.” A tree’s root system grows as needed to anchor against the pull of gravity. Its roots also anchor it against the force of wind. If you carry a heavy weight up or down stairs with confidence and do not drop it or trip, then you get the feeling of rooted movement. Moving Push Hands is merely a more complex use of the same skills.

Some of the clues for discerning the difference between “root” and stagnation are in The Eight Energies and The Five Strategic Steppings. The Eight Energies are the fundamental kinetic expressions that are inherent in all of the Taijiquan martial applications. They are Peng, Lu, Gi, An, Tsai, Lie, Tso, and Kao. The Five Strategic

Steppings are forward, backward, look to the left, beware the right, and central equilibrium. In this discussion, we are more interested in the Five (Strategic) Steppings. It is sufficient to say that the Eight Energies require a good “root” for effective use.

The clues are hidden in the Five Steppings. On the surface, these Five Steppings appear as simple vectors for movement and taken individually that is what they are. However, when considered as a whole they indicate a much deeper level of possible understanding. Consider them as pairs, forwards and backwards, look to the left and beware the right and central equilibrium (or for this argument “up and down.”). Each is paired with its opposite and if one were to illustrate these they would appear like this:



Taken in this fashion the three vectors fix a point in three-dimensional space. This point is the Taijiquan practitioner’s center of gravity and energy (Dan Tian). When you find your center, it’s possible to form a “root” relative to the earth. The “root” is the connection from your center to the earth. Once a “root” forms it is possible to move the entire body along any of the vectors in a smooth controlled fashion. The martial application used dictates movement along the vectors. An interesting point here is that movement can mean movement of an individual part of the body or movement of the whole body. The latter interpretation provides more insight into “root.”

Consider again the Five Strategic Steppings, in particular “look to the left” and “beware the right”. Besides physical movement, what do they mean? Taijiquan is a martial art; injunctions like the ones above could mean, “Be aware of your surroundings.” Since the martial application dictates the movement, what in your surroundings dictates the application? Several things, first, the opponent; what is he doing? Second the immediate conditions of the terrain; is it a small confined space or out of doors. Is the ground wet or dry? Finally your intentions; is the best option to escape? Do you attempt to kill or merely subdue the opponent? All these considerations affect tactics.

Since either my own definition of “root” or the traditional understanding of “root” require it for effective fighting, the previous interpretation of The Eight Energies and the Five Strategic Steppings lead me to the following conclusions. Application of Taijiquan requires motion. Motion manifests relative to the practitioner’s center (Dan Tian) and in context to the opponent. Situation and surroundings dictate the specific type of motion. Stagnation impedes motion so “rooted” motion can not be stagnant.

Inertia is the resistance of an object to a change in its state.

Unless affected by an outside force, stationary objects usually remain stationary and moving objects continue to move. In our discussion, inertia for a taijiquan practitioner at rest is stagnation. Inertia in a practitioner in motion is momentum. Stagnation slows our responses and momentum causes predictability. So avoid stagnation at all costs, but be precise in your movements so momentum does not control your action and signal your intention. Instead of momentum in your movement, you can find the rhythm in the moment. Allow correct tactics to flow from the situation. Be spontaneous as a child at play. Momentum is seizing the moment and acting accordingly. This kind of momentum is desirable. Stumbling ahead because you have lost your balance is not. Discern and utilize advantages for yourself, or weakness in your opponent. Remember what Sun Tzu said, "Victory can not be manufactured it can only be discerned."

The key to "rooting" is sensitivity. If you are sufficiently sensitive then the precision necessary for "rooted" action is possible. Dealing with those situations that life thrusts upon us requires adaptability; "Rooted like a mountain." and "Fluid as water flowing through rocks." are achievable goals. They are the result of precise "rooted" movement.

Here are several good ways to develop root:

**Train your fundamental stances.** Regular stance training is essential to developing a good "root." Stance training builds leg strength and an awareness of correct alignment.

**Practice the solo form.** Form practice done properly is excellent for developing "root." Proper form practice means slow relaxed movement done at a height that the individual finds challenging, in co-ordination with proper breathe techniques. Over time to improve "root", lower stances and slower movement build strength and endurance. Once you are comfortable and "rooted" throughout your slow form, try going faster. Go as fast as you can and remain "rooted." Gradually increase the speed over time. Combat is not done at a slow pace.

**Taiji Ball Qigong,** the weight of the ball in Taiji Ball Qigong simulates the demands that Push Hands puts on the body. Taiji Ball Qigong will provide the best "root" training that an individual can get without a partner.

**Push Hands.** A lot. This is my favorite way to build "root." Push Hands is the best way to experience "root." It is a controlled situation where risk is minimized while still providing the challenge of working with a partner.

**Meditation.** Provides the reservoir of Qi and the inner sensitivity that are vital in all aspects of Taijiquan. The previous techniques done in conjunction with meditation provide the best results.

There are other ways to improve "root." Each practitioner needs ways of his or her own. Varying techniques keep practice fresh and stimulating. "Root" and its ramifications on Taijiquan need to be studied by everyone. I offer the following quotes from Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*: "When the strike of a hawk breaks the body of its prey, it is because of timing." And "When torrential water tosses boulders, it is because of momentum."

Jeff Pratt is the senior YMAA Taijiquan instructor



Pratt

## YMAA AROUND THE WORLD

### A REMINDER

Because of its overwhelming success, World T'ai Chi and Qigong Day will be held the last Saturday of April every year on the FraminghamGreen, Framingham Mass. Visit [www.worldtaichiday.org](http://www.worldtaichiday.org) for details.

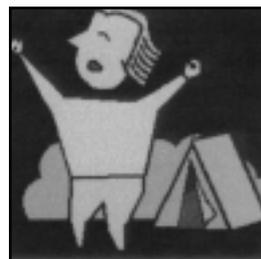
In his book, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to T'ai Chi & Qigong*, the last chapter *Do T'ai Chi - Change the World*, Bill Douglas writes about how tai chi & qigong can be effectively used in education, health care, drug and prison rehabilitation, and at all levels of society. Douglas, a well known Taijiquan practitioner, is instrumental in organizing the annual World T'ai Chi and Qigong Day.

### IS A NEW TAI CHI FARM SPRINGING UP?

The Tai Chi Qigong Healing Center in Holliston, Mass., is planning a summer camp in the Berkshire Mountains July 11- 13, 2003. According to **Aihan Kuhn**, director and organizer, those who are interested in attending will have a chance to practice their forms, go hiking and be treated to entertainment and good, healthy food. For more information log on to [aihan@taichihealing.com](mailto:aihan@taichihealing.com).

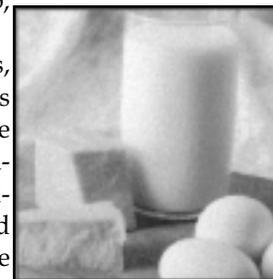


### HEALTH TIPS



The School of Public Health at the University of California Berkeley reports that many studies have found that weight-bearing exercise can boost bone density by 2 to 9%. The latest, a small study from the University of Florida, looked at healthy women (average age 69) who started on a combination program of strength training, stair climbing, walking and calisthenics for 60 to 90 minutes, three times a week, for 3 weeks. It found that this regimen boosted their bone density, as measured at the hip, by 11%.

If you take calcium supplements, don't take more than 500 milligrams of elemental calcium at a time. The body absorbs larger amounts less efficiently. If you're taking 1,000 milligrams a day, divide the dose and take half later in the day. Taking the pills with meals also improves the absorption of most calcium supplements, especially calcium carbonate; vitamin D boosts it, too.



NOTE: This column is for everyone who has a brief story or message that they would like to share with their colleagues. So don't hesitate to send in your vignettes. Thanks. Dan Hood.

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### Editor's Corner

Despite the drismal weather, *World Tai Chi and Qigong Day* in Framingham, Mass., April 12, 2003 was not a washout as most people feared it would be. This very important annual event designed to bring practitioners together turned out to be a successful affair. The mass events that were held in cities worldwide provided a uniquely photogenic story to cover, which in turn enabled organizers to provide T'ai Chi information to the media to share with the larger public. Bill Campbell, Tai Chi practitioner and local organizer said, "This translates into hundreds of thousands and even millions being exposed to T'ai Chi camp, helpful qigong information and healing benefits." You'll be hearing more about *World Tai Chi and Qigong Day* in YMAA's September newsletter. (Also see page 6 of this newsletter.)

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YMAA Publication Center continues to seek manuscripts on Martial Arts and Qigong. If you've got a book to publicize, let us know.

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