Editor's Corner

Time goes by so fast. It seems like only yesterday that I wished all of my colleagues and instructors “Happy Holiday(s). And here I am, doing it again. I have no idea how many of our readers, if any make New Year resolutions, but this year I plan to make one. I would like to help someone outside of my immediate family enjoy Christmas next year. I haven’t yet figured out how to do this, but I will be working on a solution. I enjoy the end of the year holidays and I hope that everyone is able to enjoy them as much as I.

YMAA News

Winter-Spring 2004

Dear Friends and Readers

The first time I met my White Crane master, he told me I wanted to be successful in learning Gongfu or accomplishing any other task, I must first learn patience, endurance, and perseverance. I must also learn how to conquer the biggest enemy of my life; my latency. I asked him, how do I train and cultivate all of this? He said different people would find different ways of discipline and gradually there would be ability to build up these virtues of life. Then, he said: “I think fishing is able to cultivate your patience and endurance.”

In the beginning, I was very excited and felt it would be fun to catch something. I set up a line. No matter what, I must fish for five hours each day. During winter, I did not catch any fish. My enthusiasm had lessened significantly. The honeymoon period was over. I began to struggle deep in my heart. Should I quit or continue? I knew one thing. If I quit, I would have surrendered to myself and would never face myself again. I would be facing failure. After a couple of weeks of inner struggle, I set up an ad: “If I quit before three months, I would jump into the lake and kill myself.”

I never did actually kill myself. I knew I had no other choice but to try for three months. Weeks passed. Amazingly, I learned to calm down internally. When I was peaceful and calm, my mind became clear. I started to see my past and learned to analyze it. Gradually, I started to understand my life and make sense of it. Then, I began to search for my future. What is going to be the meaning of my life? I learned how to keep myself calm and ponder. I soon realized that I had changed. My family and my friends saw the difference in me, especially in my expression.

After that summer, I started to plan for my life. One of the most important plans was meditation. I searched for documents about meditation and also asked my master about the methods of meditation. The knowledge I obtained was limited. One spring day, when my family was cleaning the house, my grandfather brought out an old book that had belonged to my grandmother. I was surprised to find many ancient Qigong documents. I was so happy that my grandfather had also been interested in Qigong meditation. Unfortunately, I could not understand most of the documents since they were written in old Chinese styles. It did not matter how much information I could get. I would ponder and ponder until it made sense to me. I became interested in collecting ancient Qigong documents and trying to understand them.

In 1974, I came to United States to study for my Ph.D. During the 1980s, many old books were released both from Taiwan and Mainland China. In addition, my understanding of ancient Chinese writing was also improved.

Today I have gradually advanced my meditation and I apply what I have learned from ancient documents into my practice. After so many years of study and practice, I started to realize the importance of the “Embryonic Breathing” meditation. This breathing is the most vital way of meditation that leads my mind into the path of preserving building up, and storing Qi in the body. The most important part of this practice is cultivation of the internal mind. I discovered that the “Embryonic Breathing” concept was originally written in Lao Zi. Here, I would like to offer you this chapter and see if you are able to comprehend it. If you are interested in “Embryonic Breathing” please refer to my new book: Qigong Meditation – Embryonic Breathing.

YMAA News

YMAA News is a quarterly publication. Back issues are available for free download at www.ymaa.com

FOREWORD

By Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming

Approach (Follow) the nothingness (emptiness) to its extremity and maintain calmness with serenity. Millions of objects (lives) are in actions which allow us to determine our direction, yet many objects, each individual, must rapidly return to its root (origin). When it returns to the root, it means calmness. “When it is calm, then it means reformation of all.” When the life repeats, it means constant natural routine. If one knows this constant natural routine, then his mind is clear (enlightened).

If (one) does not know this constant natural routine, then various unfortunate dangers could occur. If one knows this constant natural routine, then (life) is imper- fected. When (life) is perfected, then it is simple. If it is simple, then it can be completed. When it is completed, then it is clear. When it is clear, it is the Dao. If the Dao, then it can be understood and the body will not be near.

All lives originated from nothingness; therefore, in order to see the repetition of life, we must first reach this nothingness. This nothingness is called the state of ‘Wu’ (Nothing). When there is no discrimination of Yin and Yang, it is a natural state of everything. Therefore, nothingness here means the emptiness of the emotional mind and material world. In order to reach this state, the first step is to maintain extreme calmness of both mental and physical bodies. Then you will be able to see the actions of all lives and understand their repetitions. Even though there are millions of various living objects, each individual, at the end, must return to its origin (root). It is from this origin that the initiation of life begins again.

When one has returned to this origin, it is calm, quiet, and peaceful. When new life is initiated again, the natural routine (Chang) will be repeated. If you know this constant natural routine, then there is no doubt about life and you will have become enlightened and understood the meaning of life. If you do not know this routine, then you run against nature and consequently various disasters may occur. If you are able to follow the natural routine and way of nature, then your physical and mental health will be kept.

The Embryonic Breathing (approach) to keep the mind in the Wu and state. In order to trace back our origin, we must first know how to keep our mind at the center. This center means the center of the Qi (Tai Low Dan Tian), and also the center of the spiritual being (Upper Dan Tian). As mentioned earlier, one of the two Qigong circle of Yin and Yang. The Tai Low Dan Tian provides the quantity of Qi; as the physical body can perform its life with vigorous energy and physical strength. The Upper Dan Tian (spiritual center) governs the usage of the Qi and improves the quality of the Qi manifestation. These Two Polarieties are connected through specific line (Chong Mai). Physically, there are Two Polarieties, but in function, they are one, and cannot be separated. When your mind is able to remain in these Two Polarieties (Embracing Singularity)(Bao Yi), then you are able to con-
In 1998, Rami was chosen by the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute to lead a study to look at whether qigong or low-impact aerobic exercises strengthened the immune system to resist relapses of cancer. Donna Neuburger, the very smart biostatistician at Dana-Farber who designed the study, told me she saw qigong as exercise plus mindfulness relaxation, which might convey the benefits of both. This study was deep and thorough, but it also became a source of frustration to me. According to Neuburger’s hypothesis, any relaxed or fluid, rhythmical type of walking should work as well as qigong.

The problem, it seemed to me, is that researchers at Dana-Farber and elsewhere were looking only for “hard” changes in physiology, measurable changes in the ratio of various components of the immune system, ignoring the experience of qigong. It seemed what I saw in my friend John Bianco. For instance, it does not capture the practical ways in which the patients helped each other and the way they felt about each other. 

Researchers have not asked people about the texture of their experience. How do they feel when they are engaged in therapy, such as taking a pill or practicing qigong or medication? How does it change their understanding of themselves and their condition? How does it change their ability to practice yoga or taiji? I have taken these questions as my own challenge. With the help of Professor Byron Good, a medical anthropologist at Harvard, I studied the qualitative methods and theoretical concerns of medical anthropology, and I have brought these concerns to a new working group at Harvard Medical School chaired by Ted Kaptchuk, a doctor of Oriental medicine and assistant professor.

I became an investigator in a randomized controlled trial of acupuncture for repetitive strain injury. An article of mine on the Dana-Farber trial was accepted by a well-regarded journal. And I became a coauthor of a paper by Harvard’s Plastic Group addressing some major controversies in the field. By this time, I had been working with Rami for more than five years. I practiced meditation and qigong about three hours a day.

Turning To Treatment

Last year, as I was reviewing the collected, espoused, and new knowledge about my new research, I had to face the limitations of these practices and my own ability to control the disease. After five years of watchful waiting, my disease began to stir, and for four days every month I began taking high doses of a steroid called dexamethasone, which I took by mouth. I hated this. However, when I was supposed to be battling cancer, universal desire to gain a deeper, more meaningful understanding of the disease. My experience with patients, oncologists, and psychiatrists, psychological disturbances resulting from steroid treatment are surprisingly common. For me, the qigong exercises have helped tremendously. Although on the phone I am treated with steroids for a meeting in years, as an author, as a researcher, I have used Embracing the Tree and other exercises to stay connected to myself — to feel my feelings, control my appetite, and let me sleep. I have had very few problems with the steroid therapy. I learned, first as I avoided treatment and then as I dealt with its effects, that emotions and physical symptoms and that practices such as qigong affect both. This should not have surprised me — the local PBS station broadcast testimonials to the mind-body connection every week. But reading or hearing that mind and body are connected is not the same as visceral experience.

On a blindingly cold day last winter, over coffee, I asked John,

Taylor Francis Group

Discovering Qigong’s benefits

RAMESH RAMI

In part 2 of her article Cathy tells us about new challenges she faced while battling cancer. Kerr practiced qigong at YMAA under the watchful eye of Tai Chi instructor Rami Rones. This interview was originally published in Spirituality & Health Magazine, April 2003, and is reprinted with permission from Betsy Robinson, associate editor.

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The engineer turned patent attorney, how the practice helped him.

His answer was simple. “Whatever exercise Rami told me to do, I focused on 100 percent. I did every exercise, including the little things no one else did.”

Rami was the most important exercise in the world. I was completely mindful and tuned in to each exercise, no matter how small and unimportant it seemed.”

I envisioned John going through his routine, checking off each finished exercise, with a focused mind, but without much interest in the underlying principles.

My own answer to the question is more elaborate. When I started qigong, I was emerging from a major depression, bursting with a lifetime’s grief over hiding my daily sadness and fear from myself. Although I could keep the sadness under wraps for much of the day, if I engaged in simple exercises — letting the arms up and down rhythmically — could leave me in tears. Indeed, just being.

Ultimately, bringing my awareness to my throat or my heart generally produces almost unbelievable waves of feeling. Master Liang’s Universal with Heaven and Earth tapped most deeply into this mind-body-emotion field. I still don’t understand the depths in the protein lead this practice seemed to elicit. I have no proof of the link and haven’t been able to replicate the delights. These changes, which helped me face the day-to-day for so long, are the lingering mystery: gifts of grace, providence, the Tao. It is difficult to say more.

Rami likes to think of John and me as testamentary opponents. John simply did the exercises that Rami told him to do; I created my routine daily based on my assessment of that day’s needs. Making my own decisions created inconsistency; jumping from one exercise to another, trying to follow what I was lagging in my seminar with Master Liang, I have now come to see the importance of the qj exercises that Rami dictated. I don’t need to see that the quality, in my meditation, as I become more focused, it seemed to offer a unique opportunity to center.

In Brazil, 25,000 people
did a feature article on World Tai Chi and Qigong Day’s birth in 2003, in a Brazilian newspaper, the main story was that the event united all of humanity.

These worldwide mass events provide a uniquely photogenic story. The New York Times, The South China Morning Post, and other media outlets worldwide report on the event. This coverage is important for the media to cover which in turn makes organizers able to provide T’ai Chi/Qigong medical research on health benefits to the public.

The event is covered by the media. As long as they look halfway decent while practicing their gong fu, everything around them appears to be moving in the right direction.

Almost every person that I’ve ever met during my 10 years of martial arts training seemed to be searching for some sort of spiritual enlightenment. I always wondered how long it would take them to reach their lofty goal.

By contrast there were others who really didn’t seem to care as long as they looked decent while practicing their gong fu, everything around them appeared to be moving in the right direction.

Kathy Yang, the daughter of Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming certainly wasn’t, by any stretch of the imagination, in that category. She continuously excelled in everything she did, not only during her high school and college years, but long after.

There came a time when she had to temporarily “sever” her ties with the school and strike out on her own. And even though she had departed, it didn’t seem that she hasn’t forgotten the training of two important words: dedication and devotion.

Kathy explained in a postcard received at YMAA several weeks ago, what she is searching for and soon hopes to find:

Dear YMAA,

In a recent interview I left for Europe, a man said, “There is no light without shadow.” I am only beginning to understand the depth of these words.

It is in a small, quiet cafe in Amsterdam, Holland, as I write my heart to you. There is much I am learning about my self here. In this dryly, the idea of a drug and abuse agent, I am learning that life is mostly just made up of “right” and “wrong”, “good” and “bad”, “light” and “darkness”, and “positive” and “negative”.

I am teaching Taiji sword on the weekends. With each movement of the blade, I am practicing this art of truth.

I am aware that the martial arts were created to fight only one thing: the ignorance of our minds.

The world is a weapon of light.

My natural hope for my spiritual journey is that I may break out of the darkness in my mind, out through ignorance and with the presence in my heart.

This is through training! However said, the Guong Fu of the mind, and it has been the greatest joy of my life.

I wish you all the very best hard training! Kathy

The huge snowstorm that dumped nearly twenty four inches of snow on Boston and surrounding communities several weeks ago didn’t stop two well known Tai Chi practitioners from traveling.

That huge snowstorm that dumped nearly twenty four inches of snow on Boston and surrounding communities several weeks ago didn’t stop two very well known Tai Chi practitioners from traveling.

“Whatever exercises you’ve been doing during the winter that made you think the outdoor training was impossible?”

Those of us who teach T’ai Chi and Qigong have all had students who have been searching for some sort of spiritual enlightenment. I always wondered how long it would take them to reach their lofty goal.

Two of the greatest weapons that the study of a fighting art provides are a developed sense of awareness that teaches us to be not only in tune with ourselves but also our surroundings and the ability to develop physical responses to dangerous situations. Both can help us greatly in dealing with potentially dangerous situations should we be forced to.

When I consider some of my past “street experiences,” even with all the knowledge available today and with all the instructors out there teaching some great T’ai Chi, I’m still a firm believer in the fact that you can walk away from the best one of all.

Regardless of the continuing legend of the combat training value in dealing with self-defense scenarios? Yes it can, provided that we stop for awhile to analyze our training and take time to understand what we may or may not encounter in the street.

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Is there such a thing as a fair fight?

I had been done, the end of every long night. My shift at the bar, where I worked as a bartender started 12 hours ago, but it seemed like an eternity had passed since then. During the evening, my partner and I had broken up several altercations between intoxicated customers, thwarted the attempts of several individuals to fight with each other and helped to calm a number of our clients. Although our job was not glamorous, it was a great opportunity for us to develop our skills as martial artists.

Later as I stood at the bar's front door watching patrons stumble out into the cold morning air, the one thing I wanted most was to just get home and climb into bed. I was exhausted from the long hours—more than from the altercations and in a sour mood due to our clientele—a mixture of middle-aged men, drug dealers and unruly college kids. Not to be overlooked was the group of bikers who usually dropped by for a beer and a bite to eat. Ironically, they were the best behaved of the lot.

Standing beside me was Brian, a tall lanky bartender whose expression barely hid his contempt for those who had served that night. Just as the last customer was leaving, he shouted. “Fight like theirs a fight out there.” However, I rushed out the door and there, right in front of me, were two inebriated middle-aged men, fighting over a young lady.

As I circled around the man standing on the lower end of the sidewalk and quickly steered him away from his adversary. In doing so, I became the target of his attack.

The Illusion of Ease

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As I circled around the man standing on the lower end of the sidewalk and quickly steered him away from his adversary. In doing so, I became the target of his attack.
In the Street

Is there such a thing as a fair fight?

I was 3:00am, the end of a very long night. My shift at the bar where I worked as a bouncer started 12 hours ago, but it seemed like an eternity had passed since then. During the evening, my partner and I had broken up several altercations between intoxicated customers, thwarted the attempts of many intruders trying to enter the bar, and even helped a couple of armed carjimmers get away from their victims. I was tired, but I knew that I had to stay alert for any potential trouble.

Later, as I stood at the bar’s door watching patrons stumble out into the cold morning air, the thought of Judo and karate skills kept me alert. I was exhausted from the long hours—since from then on, I would never again let myself be caught in such a situation.

The U.S. National Health Institute is investing $500,000 to research qigong health benefits this year. As research expands, media coverage will also expand. The Hong Kong Martial Arts Association, The Canadian Taiji Federation, The European Taiji Federation, The T’ai Chi Union of Great Briton, The National Qigong Association, and many others World T’ai Chi/Qigong Day has sought to support the efforts of T’ai Chi/Qigong publications, organizations, and practitioners worldwide.

However, as he tried to get up, I punched him in the jaw and then managed to roll over on his chest in what is known today as the “mount position.” I was finally able to choke him by using the lapels of his coat.

The Illusion of Ease

One common belief is that a trained fighter is always in control of the situation. However, there is a tendency to overestimate one’s abilities in a street-fighting situation. This illusion of ease is also presented these days by many that teach martial arts.

Another factor to be considered here is the kill radius of an explosing hand grenade. Most have a 50-yard kill zone, which means that anyone more or less than 50 yards away is definitely killed or wounded by the grenades explosion. This can become even more complicated when you consider that some grenades are fragmentation types, which spew out pieces of metal while others may be incendiary models that use phosphorus to burn. In this presentation of grenade explosion, running away can never be considered an option, which by the way would have been my first choice.

This illusion of ease is also presented by many that teach the ever-popular “pressure point” attacks. While this can prove to be a very effective weapon against an unarmed opponent, it may not be as effective against a weapon-wielding opponent. Is there such a thing as a fair fight?

Yet, before I could render him unconscious, a smashing weight fell upon my back, and from somewhere behind me I heard the bar manager scream, “Get rid of that biker! It was either kill him or let him take all of the confusion that the biker, a big man who weighed dozens 300 lbs. ran out and sat astride my back. Beneath me lay my drunk然然 opponent who not only had to contend with me but the manager’s extra weight. He begged for breath, groaned, and then finally screamed, “Oh, God get of me!” Except for my pride and dirty clothes I was uninjured. I had been brought to the hospital for several fractured ribs. What had begun for me as a very chaotic event, one I had gained some control, quickly ended up as a roar out of the key story.

Whenever a martial artist asks me about street fighting and what may or may not be the best tactics I always tell them this story because throughout the years it has served as a good example just how much tact and uncontrollable a street alteration can be.

A martial artist must be able to fight in an unpredictable situation. Fighting is a very physically demanding endeavor, where one time is measured in split seconds not minutes. When it comes to street fighting and street self-defense there is no illusion, it’s tough, demanding and at times downright dangerous.

Weapons

In keeping with our hand grenade scenario the issue of comparing an armed opponent should always be kept in mind. If you can defend against an armed opponent more than likely your chances against an unarmed opponent Double. However, what we often fail to understand is that, whenever a weapon is used, then your chances for survival diminish as much as 50 percent depending upon the skill at which the attacker can use his weapon. Should a knife be used, your chances may decrease as much as 50 to 70 percent. If it is a firearm and your opponent is a range of say 30 to 50 feet, your chances for survival may decrease as much as 80 to 90 percent. These depressing facts, but they need to be kept in mind.

If your object is to plan an effective strategy against an armed opponent. All factors need to be considered because you may have only one opportunity to exploit an opening in your opponent’s plan. Weapons are not to be taken lightly. You might be able to take a punch to the face or an elbow to the stomach. This is very easy for most of us, but weapons, especially a gun or stab wound the effects can be fatal. Also in teaching weapons defense we sometimes forget that running is a valid and effective option. Even the most skilled warriors in ancient times knew when and when not to fight. The caliph al-Mustansir was hard more than once in the fighting art long history. He had a times could not overtake especially in this day and age of automatic weapons.

Your training/hard is the fight. Far too often you will see the practitioner trying to make the fight fit their training instead of vice versa. This is very easy for most of us, but weapons, especially a gun or stab wound the effects can be fatal. Also in teaching weapons defense we sometimes forget that running is a valid and effective option. Even the most skilled warriors in ancient times knew when and when not to fight. The caliph al-Mustansir was hard more than once in the fighting art long history. He had a times could not overtake especially in this day and age of automatic weapons.
**AROUND THE GLOBE**

**T'ai Chi Known No Boundaries**

Early one morning, a group of about 200 New Zealanders quietly began doing their T'ai Chi. However, what they were actually doing was spearheading an unprecedented global T'ai Chi movement that would include 700 events in 56 nations, on 6 continents. The global event unfolded on Saturday, April 12th, 2003, as World T'ai Chi and Qigong Day efforts unleashed a myriad of health benefits across the globe.

In Brazil, 25,000 people celebrated World T'ai Chi Day.

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**HEALTH CORNER**

The engineer turned patent attorney, how the practice helped him. His answer was simple. "Whatever exercise Ram said to do, I focused on 100 percent. I did every exercise, including the little fine movements. As far as I am concerned, it were the most important exercise in the world. I was completely mindful and tuned in to each exercise, no matter how small and unimportant it seemed." I envisioned him going through his routine, checking off each finished exercise, with a focused mind, but without much interest in the underlying principles.

My own answer to the question is more elaborate. When I started giging, I was emerging from a major depression, burdened with a lifetime grief over hiding my daily sadness and fear from myself. Although I could keep the sadness under wraps for much of the day, during simple exercises — lifting the arms up and down rhythmically — could leave me in tears. Indeed, just being in front of my awareness which my heart or my heart provokes almost unrelenting waves of feeling. Master Lungsanians Unit with Heaven and Earth tapped most deeply into this mind body-emotion division. I still don't understand the divide in the protein lead this practice seems to elicit. I have no proof of the link and haven't been able to replicate the elders. These changes, which helped my mental day treatment for so long, are a lingering mystery: gifts of grace, provided by the Tao. It is difficult to say more.

Rami likes to think of John and me as temporal opposites: John simply did the exercises that Rami told him to do; I created my routine daily based on my training and understanding of what I may or may not encounter in the street.

**THE WEI OF THE WORLD**

**TWO OF THE GREATEST WEAPONS**

Two of the greatest weapons that the study of a fighting art provides are a developed sense of awareness that teaches us to be not only in tune with ourselves but also our surroundings and the ability to develop physical responses to dangerous situations. Both can help us greatly in dealing with potentially dangerous situations should we be forced to. However, when I consider some of my past “street experiences,” even all the knowledge available to me with all the instructors out there teaching great self-defense skills, I’m still a firm believer in the fact that you can walk away from the best one of all.

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**YMAA AROUND THE WORLD**

**KEEPING EVERYONE INFORMED**

Almost every person that I’ve ever met during my 10 years of martial arts training seemed to be searching for some sort of spiritual enlightenment. I always wondered how long it would take them to reach their lofty goal.

By contrast, there were others who really didn’t seem to care. As long as they felt good while doing it, while practicing their gong, everything around them appeared to be moving in the right direction.

Kathy Yang, the daughter of Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming, certainly was not by any stretch of the imagination. In the letter, she continuously excelled in everything she did, not only during her high school and college years, but long after.

There came a time when she had to temporarily “sever” her ties with the school and strike out on her own. And even though they may have departed, it should not that she has not forgotten the training of two important words: dedication and devotion.

Kathy explained in a postcard received at YMAA several weeks ago, what she is searching for and soon hopes to find:

**Dear YMAA,**

In a recent interview I was told I was the only yoga instructor in Amsterdam, Holland as I write my heart to you. There is so much I am learning about my self here. In this dry world where the sick and drug abuse prevail, I am learning that life is actually made up of two words: light and dark: “too” but of “light” and “darkness” and positive and negative.

I am teaching Taiji sword on the weekends. With every movement of the blade I am practicing the art of truth.

May I have all that I need for successful art were created to fight only those that arefined the grandparents have. The sword is a weapon of light.

My spiritual hope for my spiritual journey that I may seek out the darkness in my self, cut through ignorance and the phobias in my heart. This (though short training) however faced the Gong Fu of the mind, and it has been the greatest joy of my life, I wish you all the same hard training.

Kathy

This huge snowstorm that dumped nearly twenty four inches of snow on Boston and surrounding communities several weekends ago didn’t stop how well known T’ai Chi practitioners from travelling.

Jeff Rosam, YMAA t’ai chi instructor, and Atalian Weaver, former student, bumped into each other on a train heading to The Big Apple. While in New York City, Weaver, a Simmons College professor, gave a talk on the Daoist arts and health as part of an exhibit at the San Francisco Music School, where it was part of a symposium on responses to therapies such as acupuncture and qigong. Her email is: katherivel@jhu.edu.

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Michael Rauscher is the author of two books: “Diniwad Complete Karate System Inihandy” and “The Fighting Arts Their Evolution from Savate to Modern Times.”

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Cathy Kerr practices qigong in Watertown, Mass. She is a lecture at Harvard Medical School, where she investigates somatosensory responses to therapies such as acupuncture and qigong. Her email is: catherine_kerr@hms.harvard.edu.
In part 2 of her article Cathy talks about some new challenges she faced while battling cancer. Kerr practiced qigong at YMAA under the watchful eye of Tai Chi instructor Rami Rones. This article first published in Spirituality & Health Magazine, April 2003, and is reprinted with permission from Betsy Robinson, associate editor.

In part 2 of her article, Cathy talks about some new challenges she faced while battling cancer. Kerr practiced qigong at YMAA under the watchful eye of Tai Chi instructor Rami Rones. This article first published in Spirituality & Health Magazine, April 2003, and is reprinted with permission from Betsy Robinson, associate editor.
Dear Friends and Readers

The first time I met my White Crane master, he told me that I wanted to be successful in learning Gongfu or accomplishing any other task, I must first learn patience, endurance, and perseverance. I must also learn how to conquer the biggest enemy of my life; my bad habits. I asked him, how do I train and cultivate all of this? He said different people would find different ways of discipline and gradually become able to build up these virtues of life. Then he said, "I think fishing is able to cultivate your patience and endurance."

In the summer, when I was sixteen, one of my big projects was ‘going fishing’. I started with a bamboo stick from my backyard, found some line and hooks and I went fishing at the Green-Grass Lake about 45 minutes away by bicycle.

In the beginning, I was very excited and felt that I would be able to catch something and test my patience. No matter what, I must fish for five hours each day. Days passed, I did not catch any fish. My enthusiasm had lessened significantly. The honeymoon period was over. I began to struggle deeply in my heart. Should I quit or continue? I knew one thing. If I quit, I would have surrendered to myself and would never face myself again; I would be a failure. After a couple weeks of inner struggle, I sat up at 3:00 am, 'If I quit before three months, I would jump into the lake and kill myself.'

Calmness was firm. I knew I had no other choice but to stay for three months. Weeks passed. Amazingly, I learned to calm down internally. When I was peaceful and calm, my mind became... I soon realized that I had changed. My family and my friends also saw the difference in me, especially in my expression.

After that summer, I started to plan for my life. One of the most important plans was to meditate. I searched for documents about meditation and also asked my master about the methods of meditation. Unfortunately, I could not understand most of them since they were written in old Chinese styles. I made sure to find many ancient Qigong documents. I was so happy that my grandpa had also been interested in Qigong meditation. Unfortunately, I could not understand most of the documents since they were written in old Chinese styles.

Today I have gradually abandoned my meditation and I apply what I studied from ancient documents into my practice. After so many years of study and practice, I started to realize the importance of the ‘Embryonic Breathing’ meditation. This breathing is the crucial key of meditation that leads a Qigong meditator into the path of preserving, building up, and storing Qi in the body. The most important part of this practice is the cultivation of the internal mind. I discovered that the ‘Embryonic Breathing’ concept was actually originated from Lao Zi. Here I would like to offer you this chapter and see if you are able to comprehend it. If you are interested in ‘Embryonic Breathing’, please refer to my new book: Qigong Meditation – Embryonic Breathing.