When I was a child, I remember being taught that whenever something bad happened to a person, it could have very well been their own fault. That lesson in obedience served as a constant reminder that I should focus more on myself internally and review all of the daily events that happened around me. This internal evaluation rewarded me with a solid foundation; a foundation that I believe helped to make me mentally aware of how to mold myself into a better person. For many people, this self-observing and blaming process that I mentioned earlier is sometimes painful and often makes them feel guilty. However, in my opinion, it is this guilty feeling that awakens them to the fact that their moralities have been upgraded and their personality has been modified, hopefully for the better.

When you compare yesterday to today’s education or public influence, it seems this kind of self-observing and self-discipline has all but disappeared. What the new generation appears to have learned is whenever there’s a problem, first blame someone else, and then act innocent, like nothing ever happened. For instance, hardly a day goes by when you don’t pick up a newspaper and read about the increasing number of attorneys who encourage their clients to sue each other. Some people may be justified in seeking restitution or damages, while many others are not.

Spiritual growth is achieved from making mistakes. However, if you refuse to admit that you made a mistake and learn from it, the spirit will remain the same or it may even stagnate. My master once told me that a smart person is not necessarily a wise person and a wise person is not often a smart person.

Forty-two years have passed since I started learning martial arts. Now, I can see what my master meant. It is clear that those who are smart sometimes lack patience, perseverance, endurance, and a strong will. However, those who are wise always remember their mistakes and are determined not repeat them. Wisdom is generated from an accumulation of mistakes.

There are many paths that one must take to reach the goal of understanding the meaning of life. However, it does not matter which path you decide to take if you are not able to face the mistakes you have made. Take the wrong path and you will lose a chance to refine your spirit and allow it to grow. In this case, the meaning of your life is shallow.

If you make a mistake, and you atone for it, then move on with your life. Learn by your mistakes.

However, we must also remember why we made those mistakes and not commit them again. After all, no one is perfect. If we were, then none of us would have any meaning in our lives or any goals to reach.
It might come as a big surprise if you met someone who knew the names of every martial arts style in existence. Personally, I never have. However, that does not take away from the fact that there may be someone out there who is extremely knowledgeable of the many different martial arts styles and forms. And let’s not forget that many of these styles come from different parts of the world.

For example, take Capoera, Nuay Thai and Kalaripayat-tu. Do you know from which countries these martial arts originated? Their names might give you a small clue, but even if you only got two out of three, I’d consider that very good.

Since YMAA is a Chinese martial arts school, there are some more styles that are offered, all of which fit well into the Kung Fu/Taiji learning process. Woven together, the results can be very beneficial. Here are some that you might be interested in pursuing:

**Xingyiquan**

Xingyi (Hsing-Yi) means the “mind fist” and is one of the three internal systems, along with Taiji and Bagua. Xingyi tends to be performed somewhat faster than Taiji and with more vigor, but it can also be practiced slowly and smoothly to suit those practicing. When practiced slowly, the aim is to build energy and nourish health. Fast and explosive execution of Xingyi is for self-defense, fitness and to build explosive internal energy.

**History:** Xingyi is the oldest of the three internal systems, some 900 years old and was originally developed by China’s most famous general to teach to officers. Later in history, it was the favored art of the convoy guards who protected the silk and spice caravans. It was the job of convoy guards to protect the caravans from bandits who regularly attacked them; one of the most dangerous jobs in ancient China.

Xingyi is one of the most secretive of the arts, which harnesses the power of the mind to use the internal energy for powerful self-defense and good health.

**Baguazhang**

Baguazhang means Eight Diagrams Palm and is probably the most mysterious of all the Chinese Martial Arts. It is based upon the ancient Taoist I Ching (Book of Changes), martial system.

The movements of Bagua mimic the mystical dragon, which the ancient Taoists viewed as a snake with wings, constantly twisting, coiling and circling.

The Bagua system is excellent for developing fitness, stamina, good health and a powerful self-defense.

**History:** Bagua emerged out of the Taoist monasteries in the mountains of Northern China and was popularized by Tung Hai Chan, from whom the style is descended.

Bagua training consists of the Circling Dragon Form, which has several levels, Pushing Hands, Qigong, self-defense and at advanced levels, weapons training.

**Kung Fu**

Shaolin Kung Fu was developed at the Shaolin temple and originally based on the fighting techniques of the Tiger, Crane, Snake, Leopard and the mythical Dragon. The aim was to develop strong bodies, as well as a strong mind, of the monks.

Certain schools also teach monkey boxing, to mimic the ability and cunning of the monkey.

**Northern Shaolin** - the emphasis is on long range kicks, strikes with the hands, elbows and joint breaking techniques. Its repertoire includes flying kicks, sweeps and is noted for its elegance and power. Northern Shaolin develops tremendous strength, agility, fitness and coordination.

**Southern Shaolin** employs powerful strikes with the hands and elbows, allied to low, fast kicking maneuvers. Its approach is direct and assertive, with the aim of controlling and engaging at close range.

Southern Shaolin will develop strength and endurance in your legs and upper body. The monkey boxing taught will develop tremendous strength in the legs and great agility.

Zheng style Taijiquan is a variation of Yang style developed by Master Zheng Manqing. It is perhaps the most widely known style in the United States and is suitable for practice by everyone.

**Chen style Taijiquan** is a large and strong style of taiji. People who practice Chen style usually develop excellent strength in their legs and flexibility in their joints. The powerful twining actions of the gestures in Chen style sets and the complexity of the movements appeals to those who want a more athletic approach to Taiji.

**Sun style Taiji** was created by Master Sun Lutang. This style combines the elements of Taiji, Bagua and a third internal art called Xingyi. Sun style is very lively and quick.

**Hao (Wu) style Taijiquan** is a small, compact style of Taiji. The movements are very subtle and the system can be difficult for beginners to learn. People who have practiced Yang and Chen styles tend to have a greater appreciation of the fine points of Hao style and can see the large movements of those styles in the tiny movements of Hao style.

**DAN HOOD in Boston.**
Internal Energy
How powerful is your fa jin?

Master Liu Jishun is one of the world's leading experts on the Wu (Hao) style taijiquan and he has more than 40 years of experience in the practicing and teaching of the style. He is frequently invited to Chinese national taijiquan events as the spokesperson for the Wu (Hao) style, which is one of the five major traditional styles (the other four are Chen [including Zhaobao], Yang, Sun, and Wu [Chien Chuan] styles) of taijiquan.

Fa Jin means issuing or dispatching (fa) of strength or energy (jin) in Chinese and is part of the (advanced) practice of taijiquan. The people in the pictures (left) who Master Liu is demonstrating fa jin include Ugur Osman and Andy Harris from Wu (Hao) Taijiquan Association UK. (others not named).

Jin is the result of combining hardness (bones) and softness (tendons and qi) accurately. It involves the loosening of muscles, sinking of qi, contracting of tendons, and the extension of bones all at the same time, and at the moment when they can work together to produce powerful force. As such, it requires a lot of techniques and responsiveness be able to control so many things so fast, and timing has to be very precise. Jin is an essential element of most internal martial arts.

Note that most internal martial arts focus on the training of tendons, as opposed to muscles. Even though tendons might be considered just a special form of muscles by medical professionals, they're vastly different from muscles when it comes to internal martial arts training. Many high-level martial artists don't appear to be very muscular due to their focus on tendon training.

Watching Master Yang, Jwing-Ming, YMAA president, perform Tai Chi using Fa Jin is like watching the end of a whip snap out and suddenly stop just before striking its target.

However, Dr. Yang cautions those who intend to practice Fa Jin not to over practice because it can be stressful on the joints and requires a tremendous amount of internal energy to be emitted from the body.
World Tai Chi and Qigong Day
Yearly event spans the globe

RAMINGHAM: More than 100 people converged on this Western Mass., town on April 24, 2004 to participate in World Tai Chi and Qigong Day (WTCQD).

Unlike last year, the weather cooperated. Instead of cloudy skies and a steady downpour throughout the day, it was sunny and mild, although a bit breezy. And much like last year, most of the participants came from the New England School of Tai Chi in Holliston, Mass.

Dr. Aihan Kuhn, the school's founder and director, and Gail Preston, WTCQD organizer, put together a lively, well organized and informative event on the Framingham Green that consisted of Yang and Chen Tai Chi, pushing hands, and Qigong.

Dr. Kuhn is director and owner of Chinese Medicine for Health, Inc. and also a master of Tai Chi and Qigong, experienced in both traditional and modern methods of healing and prevention. A 1982 graduate of Hunan Medical University in Changsha, she practiced as an OB/GYN in China prior to coming to America in 1989. Since coming to the US, her focus has been on the use of Traditional Chinese Medicine for healing and disease prevention.

Her focus is on the diseases that are not easily treated by conventional medicine. She has helped thousands of people feel better with various illnesses such as neck and shoulder problems, back and leg problem, headache and migraine, arthritis, neuritis, hemorrhoids, skin diseases, allergies, hypertension, arhythmia, high cholesterol, asthma, bronchitis, sinus problem, anemia, tendonitis and bursitis to name just a few! Dr. Kuhn also has a great deal of experience with women’s health. She successfully treated people with endometriosis, fibroids, irregular bleeding, perimenopause syndrome, mood swing, and other hormone imbalance related problems.

Dr. Kuhn is a natural psychologist who helps people improve their mental health by using Taoist philosophy and natural ways of thinking and helping them to balance their energy between body and mind. People feel good, renewed, focused, happier in their life, more relaxed, more determined, more energetic and less stress.

She spends time expanding her knowledge of energy exercises including: Tai Chi Chuan, Tai Chi Sword, Tai Chi Fan, Tai Chi Staff, Qigong, and Ba Gua Zhang. Not only so she can provide high quality teaching, but also to continue her study under famous grand masters in mainland China to maintain her high quality exercise programs. Her mentors include Grand Master Feng Zhi Qiang, who is considered one of the best Chen Style Masters and Duan Zhi Liang, who is one of the best Qigong grand master in China. The study and use of these martial arts helps the practitioner to reach a deeper understanding of the “Qi” or “vital energy” which is in all of us.

So what is it that makes her therapy so effective? “My exercise programs mainly focuses on healing and disease prevention.” Perhaps that’s why many people have stated that they found relief from symptoms of various ailments after participating in her classes. This reinforces Dr. Kuhn’s belief that, “natural balance keeps illness away.”

Dr. Kuhn offers instructor training programs for Tai Chi and Qigong in order to have more people teach correctly and more efficiently. She has trained many high quality instructors to teach both Tai Chi and Qigong in Mass.

In January 1998, the Tai Chi & Qi Gong Institute, was founded by Dr. Kuhn. As president, she has worked with the board members to make this a successful and vibrant organization.

“The purpose of this institute,” she said, “is to foster a better understanding of the Tao philosophy and the healing power of energy. Members of the institute learn how to follow natural patterns of healing and use human energy to heal both the mind and the body’s problems in order to make a better life.”

She also serves as an educator in numerous community-based health-promotional activities, such as massage class for self-help, how to use food as supplemental therapy, the way to health, natural healing and longevity.

Dr. Kuhn’s success has come from her dedication to study, her hard work, and her kindness to people. She has a good moral character and a close relationship with her patients and students. And she has a reputation for being a loving, caring doctor.

“I believe strongly that it is very important to see the body as a whole. The main purpose of treatment must be to restore the natural balance that exists within us. The benefits received from this kind of approach to healing are both physical and psychological.”
Jonathan (Rowdy) Yates looked like he never wanted World Tai Chi Qigong Day to end. And he wasn’t alone. In fact quite a few people mingled on the Framingham Green long after WTCQD had ended. Among them was William Heinold, president of the Heinold Language/Culture Corner in Sterling, Mass.

“Not only did we have great weather,” said Heinold, “we also had wonderful participation by everyone who attended.”

Heinold has studied martial arts both here and abroad for many years.

“I started as a collegiate wrestler and boxer at U-Mass and Penn State, competing in the 177 lb class. But my real test came when I competed in the Hawk Mountain Bowl held annually in Pennsylvania. It consisted of three martial arts, boxing and fencing.”

It was that rather informal introduction to martial arts that later took him to Huaibei City, (Anhui Province) in China where he studied Yang style Tai Chi for several years at Huaibei Teacher’s College.

But Heinold wanted to refine his Taiji even more so he traveled to Shanghai where he hooked up with Master Liu Wan-quan. It took three years for Heinold to reach his goal. Under the watchful eye of his master, Heinold became a teacher himself.

He holds a master’s degree in sport psychology and a doctorate in health, education and linguistics.

“WTCQD was a real eye-opener to me,” intoned Yates, a Sudbury, Mass. native.

“Being a part of the positive energy from more than a hundred students and teachers, representing different schools from North Andover, Acton, Somerville, Marlboro and Hopkington was a unique experience.”

He added that despite his relatively short Tai Chi experience, being a part of WTCQD put him right at ease.

“I liked the way the day unfolded with everyone invited to do Qigong and the Yang long form. This was followed by explanations and demonstrations of various styles of Tai Chi (Yang, Wu, Chen and Sun) as well as sword, staff and fan forms.”

Yates also said that he enjoyed seeing Dr. Aihan Kuhn perform. (See related story on page 4.)

Although Yates has watched many Tai Chi experts on video, the only other world class Tai Chi player that he has had the pleasure of seeing live, is his instructor, former YMAA alumnus Narcyz Latecki, at Chinese Martial Arts in Acton. He describes that experience as a bit like learning to play tennis when you have only seen one real tennis pro in person. “There were several times during Dr. Kuhn’s demonstration when a light bulb went on and I experienced that wonderful moment of ‘I get it.’

The demonstrations were followed by his favorite part of the day. Instructors, from the half dozen schools represented generously offered free mini-lessons in forms, push hands and Qigong. Tai Chi players and interested spectators were invited to participate, and share their knowledge.

“I was introduced to my first push hands experience by Dan Hood from Yang’s Martial Arts School in Jamaica Plain. His patience and expert teaching style kept me fascinated for the entire session. Experienced players came by to push hands and enjoy Dan’s demonstration and lessons. Everyone offered assistance and exchanged thoughts.”

Yates admits that at one point he became so immersed in push hands that he didn’t want to leave and never got a chance to see what other schools were doing.

“Seeing how many choices there were and how much I personally need to improve was a humbling and motivating experience,” he smiled.

Onlookers dropped by seeking information on schools near their homes that offer instruction on various styles while others purchased Tai Chi tapes and clothing. Some even enjoyed a free “open air” massage from Tai Chi Master Martin Liu from Sun Garden Herbs.

The real message of the day was to find a Tai Chi school nearby and just try it. Everyone left with a positive feeling of having attended a joyous event, one that they will long remember.
Here's Something You Won't Want to Miss

A seminar for the ages

Thinking about having some fun in the sun this summer? If so, then you may want to give some serious thought about attending the upcoming YMAA International Camp 2004 in South Africa. This seminar takes place from July 9 to July 18, 2004 at the Alpine Heath Resort in Drakensberg.

1. Shaolin Gongfu, 18 hours
2. Taijiquan and pushing Hands, 9 hours
3. Qigong White Crane, 9 hours
4. Qin Na (Chin Na), 6 hours
5. Taiji Qin Na, 3 hours
6. Taiji matching set, 12 hours
7. Taiji Staff, 6 hours
8. White Crane, 12 hours

Chief Camp Instructors: Grandmaster Li, Mao-Ching
Dr. Yang studied traditional Shaolin Long Fist with Grandmaster Li at the Tamkang College from 1964. Grandmaster Li will supervise Shaolin and other classes.

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming: President, YMAA International
Author of 30 books on Taijiquan and external martial arts. He will supervise the entire program and instruct meditation, Qigong, the Taiji Set and Taiji Staff. He will also supervise Shaolin, Taiji and other classes.

Taijiquan Jeff Pratt: YMAA qualified Taijiquan instructor.
Jeff has been practicing Taijiquan with Dr. Yang for more than 15 years. He will also supervise Shaolin, Taiji and other classes.

Shaolin - George Dominguez: YMAA qualified Shaolin instructor.
Dominguez has been practicing Long Fist and White Crane with Dr. Yang for more than 15 years. He has won several championships in various tournaments.

White Crane, Taiji Staff: Aaron Damus
Chin Na: Jim Noble

The scheduled sightseeing tour will include activities such as visits to the Camorhi White Lion Game Reserve, where lions can be fed, and wildlife can be viewed. A visit to the Basotho Cultural village is also on the agenda, for an African shopping experience.

Evenings of drumming, Zulu dances, traditional barbecues and bonfires will help build a unique camp spirit. Leisure activities around Alpine Heath include tours into the mountains, various hikes that will take you into the golden indigenous grassveld, bird watching, trout fishing and horse riding trails.

Cost of sightseeing (per day): Approximately Euro 60.00 per person. Final prices to be established. NOTE: All Rand/Euro rates are subject to change due to currency volatility.

Non YMAA Students  R 125.00  Euro: 14.00
YMAA Students  R 80.00  Euro: 9.00

Red Stripe YMAA Students  R 65.00  Euro: 7.50
South African YMAA Students  R 55.00  Euro: 6.00
YMAA School Directors  R 27.00  Euro: 3.00
Meditation classes are free for everyone

Discount structure
12 hours and under  - no discount
13 to 21 hours  - 10% discount
20 to 30 hours  - 15% discount
31 to 42 hours  - 20% discount

The resort offers facilities such as a gym, sauna and steam room, games room, squash and tennis courts as well as volley ball, golf and mountain biking. A pub, food and clothing shop are all conveniently situated in the resort. Buffet meals are 5 star three course meals that will cater for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians.

Cost of Accommodation (meals included) R 450.00 Euro: 50.00 per person per night sharing.

How to get to the camp: Alpine Heath is a resort, situated about 340km away from Johannesburg International Airport. On the 9th of July two buses will transport camp participants from Johannesburg International Airport to the resort. Camp participants will be met at the airport by YMAA South Africa members, and directed to the buses which will depart from the airport in the afternoon and evening. Cost of bus transport will be separate and determined closer to the time.

Payment is secure and online with a credit card.

Visit these websites for more information:
www.alpineheath.co.za

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A Little History Goes a Long Way

The Chinese Five Word Song was written by Master Li Tung Fung during the early part of China’s Sung Dynasty. Master Fung learned Hwa-Yu Tai-Chi Chuan (Liu Ho Pa Fa Ch’uan Fa) from Master Chen Hsi-I, creator of the martial art and health exercise.

Master Fung took refuge in the mountain of Yun, south-east from the Lok district. While living there, he authored the famous Chinese Five Word Song, which serves today as the only extant treatise explaining the principles of the original Liu Ho Pa Fa.

Hwa-Yu Tai-Chi Chuan was a closed-door martial art for almost 1,000 years. Master John Chung Li opened the door to hundreds of students in China, the United States and Europe.

Master Li translated The Chinese Five Word Song and added his commentary to each of the 134 verses to help students understand the truth within Internal Martial Arts.
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There are quite a few things happening at YMAA schools that we here at YMAA Headquarters seldom hear about. For example, when I browse our web sites, I run across stories about various seminars that have taken place at YMAA Branch Schools all over the world, but I never receive anything in writing about their success. Usually I don’t like to browse web sites because it’s time consuming. So, if you have anything that you would like to see published in YMAA Headquarters newsletter, please e-mail or send it to me. This includes address changes, new telephone numbers or a human interest story that you’d like to share. Believe me, I enjoy reading and publishing them, something Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming encourages. Thanks.

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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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