

YMAA NEWS



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EDITOR'S CORNER

Ten years before I retired from my civil service job, I had to drive through downtown Boston at 6:30 a.m. When the weather was warm, as it usually is around this time of year, there were a number of things that made my ride more interesting; listening to the birds chirp, smelling the fresh air and feeling alive ready to tackle the challenges of a new day. Just before I reached the heavily populated Chinese section of Boston, or as most people call it "Chinatown" I looked to my left. I was somewhat surprised to see the outline of at least ten people standing on the Boston Common circling and coiling their arms in different directions. Their ages, I believe, ranged from 22 to 73 respectively. I assume that the older folks were the teachers. They had a contented look on their faces.

I was so mesmerized by their choreographed movements that I sat there and watched. I was jolted out of my reverie by a grizzled driver in a car behind me who was more eager than I to get to wherever he was going. He honked his horn several times and pointed to the green traffic light, a sign for me to proceed.

The following morning, I left for work a little earlier than usual. I wanted to see that same group of people perform their graceful movements. This time I pulled over to the curb, out of the way of the cars behind me and waited until those same "early birds" appeared.

Five minutes later they arrived in two groups, first the teachers, then the students. It was time for me to ask them about their exercise.

I rolled down my car window and called out. "Sorry to disturb you sir, but do you mind if I ask what the name of that exercise is that you do every morning?"

The older participants gave me quizzical looks as if I should have known. A much younger man approached my car and simply said, "Qigong."

"Oh. Is that anything like Tai Chi?"

"It's the root of Tai Chi," he answered.

I thanked him, but I was still a bit confused. The root of Tai Chi. Just what did that mean? It all became very clear as soon as I became an YMAA student. To my ears the word "Qigong" had a relaxing, almost mystical sound to it. At the time I didn't know that it consisted of many healthy and beneficial internal and external movements. The first time I did Qigong, I felt pins and needles in my arms and feet after only 10 minutes and my body felt warm all over. It was an exhilarating feeling.

Qigong is now part of my every day life. Combined with Tai Chi and meditation, anyone can experience a relaxing and more wholesome feeling. If you want definite proof that the mind is stronger than the body, you might want to consider attending one of Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's Qigong seminars in the near future. Trust me; you'll not only benefit from what he teaches but his lesson will last for a lifetime.

Dan Hood

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The YMAA Newsletter Wants to Hear from You!

As the number of YMAA Schools throughout the world continues to grow, Dr. Yang believes that it is important to promote a spirit of unity. One of the ways we can do this is through the YMAA Newsletter and the YMAA website. We invite all YMAA Schools to submit articles on any Martial Arts and Qigong topics, including moral stories, training ideas, and health information, as well as anything concerning the YMAA organization. Photos to accompany the articles are also encouraged.

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Foreword

by Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming



Dear Friends and Readers,

There's a Chinese story about six blind men who touch an elephant to determine what it looks like. The first one touches the elephant's ear and says, "An elephant is like a large fan." The second one touches the side of its body and says, "No, it is like a wall." The third one describes the leg, "No, the elephant is a pillar." The fourth one touches the nose and shouts, "The elephant is like a big, hanging branch of a tree!" The fifth one touches the ivory tusk and says, "It is a large horn sticking out a huge mouth." The sixth one touches the tail and says loudly, "No, the elephant is a large swinging broom sticking out of the wall."

If they were to put all of this information together, they would have a pretty good description of the elephant. This story shows that we should not stubbornly insist that there is only one viewpoint, as we often see only part of the story. There is always more to learn.

Don't waste time in just theoretical research. Practice and theory should go together. From practice, you gain experience, and from theory, you have a clear guideline for practice. Some people hesitate because of the danger involved in martial arts, qigong or meditation, accomplishing nothing and simply wasting time. Be cautious but also be determined to learn. Learn from the experience of others and you will find the right path.

Study the Classics passed down in the lineage of your art. Find a good teacher and practice, practice, practice.

Buddha traveled the countryside one day and came to a river. An old qigong master who lived there asked him, "You are the Buddha? If so, can you do the same thing I can? I cross the river by walking on top of the water." Buddha said, "That is very impressive. But how long have you practiced it?" The old man replied proudly, "It took me nearly 40 years to achieve it." The Buddha looked at him and said, "It took you 40 years? It takes me only a few coins to cross the river on the ferryboat."

We often spend too much time on unimportant things. Treat your time precious and use it efficiently. Get rid of your dignity. If you take your dignity too seriously, you will not find a sincere teacher willing to teach from the heart.

A young Samurai swordsman entered the house of a famous Zen master. He looked at the master, bowed and said, "Master, I have reached a deep level of Zen, both in theory and practice. I have heard you are great, so I came here to bow to you and hope you can teach me something. The Zen master looked at the proud young man. Without speaking a word, he went into the back room and brought out a teapot and a teacup. He placed the cup in front of the young man and began filling it with tea. The tea filled the cup quickly and soon began to overflow. The young man looked at the

old man with a confused expression. "Stop, master," he shouted! The teacup is overflowing." The old Zen master put the teapot down and smiled. "This is you. You are too full already. I cannot teach you. If you wish to learn, you must first empty your cup." Can you be humble?"

When you find a qualified teacher or source of learning, treat it precious; don't miss the opportunity of learning. This chance may not come again. Traditionally, it was difficult to find a qualified teacher. Even if you found one, you would not necessarily be accepted. Today, it is easier to collect information since there are so many books and DVDs available. But the guidance of an experienced teacher is crucial to reach the final goal. Subtle advice can save you a great deal of time and effort and sometimes even money. When you are lost in a big city, even though you have studied the road map, guidance from a passerby could save a lot of effort.

A young man had already spent more than seven years searching for a good master. He came to where a great teacher lived deep in the remote mountains with a few students. He was received kindly and expressed his intention of learning from the master. The master

looked at him for a while then brought out a teapot and a teacup. He poured tea into the cup, stopping when the tea reached the brim. He put the teapot down with a smile, hinting to the young man that the place was already full. He could not accept another student. The young man hung his head in sadness knowing exactly what that meant.

Noticing a rice straw on the floor, he picked it up and carefully stuck it into the tea. The tea did not overflow. He looked at the master's face with hope, showing him, "Look, there is still space for me. The tea did not overflow."

Through this silent communication, the old master realized the young man was one of those rare intelligent persons who could comprehend the profound feeling of the art. He accepted him with delight. It is difficult to find a humble and intelligent student able to comprehend and develop the art. When a teacher finds this kind of student, it will be like a precious pearl in his hands.

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming is a world renowned author and teacher of Chinese martial arts for more than thirty five years. He founded the YMAA organization, which maintains over 55 schools in 18 countries, and is now building a new project in the mountains of California. For more information about this project, please visit www.ymaa-retreatcenter.org.

Using Daoist Wisdom

An excerpt from Aihan Kuhn's book *Tai Chi for Depression*.

by Aihan Kuhn

Learning Daoist philosophy and living with Daoist wisdom can help you to become natural and spontaneous. You then become more relaxed, accepting, tolerant, appreciative and positive.

Chinese people have used Daoism for centuries. In almost every field, people use Daoism to find the right answer for their own needs. The military uses the Dao to make correct battle strategies. The scientist uses the Dao to figure out how to make things happen. Chinese doctors use the Dao to help patients to get well in the most efficient way. Teachers use the Dao to provide quality teaching. Astronauts use Dao to stay focused and do better science. Farmers use Daoism to predict the weather and follow the weather pattern to prepare for planting. Chinese believe that if you use Daoist wisdom, your success rate

occupation, any age, and the truth is you can be happy anytime.

Continue learning and keep your mind open. The more you learn the greater understanding you will have. The day you stop learning is the day you are dead. Knowledge has more value than money. This has been a tradition in China and Europe for many years. Since I was a child, I always liked to be around people who had vast knowledge, or who knew more than me. I felt like they were a source for me, teaching me to do things right, understanding that things happen for a reason. I love to learn anything that can enrich the mind

learn from many different sources and learn from the past (but don't stay in the past). This will help you understand life more completely. Cherish love and friendship in your life.

"Love comes when we take the time to understand and care for another person."

—Janette Oke.

I believe that sharing love, being honest with each other, forgiving each other, understanding each other, helping each other, taking care of each other, caring for each other, giving to each other, supporting each other, all help in avoiding having a broken family. If we always think only about "me," "my comfort," "my sleep," "my pleasure," "my life," "my needs," without thinking much about our partner's comfort, sleep, pleasure, life, or needs, then we will have many failed marriages. Even though being married to a person with depression is not easy, with love, compassion, conscientiousness, and moral strength, the relationship can endure and the person suffering from depression can be helped. I believe if we all try to love others, think about others more than "ourselves," things will be very different.

"We can do no great thing, only small things with great love."

—Mother Teresa.

We all have the ability to give love and enjoy being loved. Love can be interpreted

"...One obstacle that many people have is a closed mind. People were taught in a certain way and continue this way generation after generation..."

is higher.

Why don't we take advantage of this philosophy and use this ancient wisdom to help ourselves and others? This wisdom does not directly tell you what to do, but it does give you a light and direction to help you to see things more clearly. It teaches you to unload yourself, free your mind, and let things happen spontaneously and naturally. Generally speaking, the natural way is the correct way. If you are against the natural way, you may live with much "obstacle". Daoist study and practice does not mean you have to be poor. You can be rich or poor, any intellectual level and

and help my understanding of things. One obstacle that many people have is a closed mind. People were taught in a certain way and continue this way generation after generation. Willingness to change goes together with a willingness to learn. Change is not a bad thing. In the past 100 years, we have changed so much, some things change into good and some things change into bad, or unpleasant, but eventually things change to good again. Everyone has changes as he or she matures. Some people are happier than others and some people are more successful than others. Learning is an important aspect in changing for the better. Open your mind,

in different ways other than just for couples. Love between mother and daughter or son, love between husband and wife, love between friends, love between teachers and students, love between siblings, and love between you and your pet. All these kinds of love can be appreciated and cherished. There is an old saying in the Chinese culture: once you become a friend, you are a friend forever. I go to China every year. I have so much joy meeting many of my friends. Friends continue to help you in any way you need. They nurture you in a different ways and they talk to you without restriction. On my last trip to China, one of my friends gave me a big punch as soon as she saw me, because I hadn't told her sooner that I was coming to China. I had to apologize ten times while laughing hysterically. This kind of feeling is hard for me to find in the United States. Living in this country for sixteen years, I feel friendships in many cases don't last. People moved away and never stay in touch. Even within families, some family members hardly ever talk to each other. Sometimes, people don't cherish friendships and may even abuse a friendship. Friendships are likely to be short, quick, or temporary. Remember, if you give love, you also receive love. If you abuse friendships, you will never have true friends. A rule of thumb is: If you don't like other people to treat you unpleasantly and with disrespect, you should not treat them that way.

TIPS FOR IMPROVING STRESS MANAGEMENT

People live different life styles; have different cultures, different occupations, and different personalities. We are all different, but we can also be happy with who we are, what we have, and with whom we deal.

1. Avoid flying off the handle.

When a person is upset or angry, seeking temporary distance can give this person time to quiet their mind. Time is part of healing. If you try to argue or "clear" yourself, it might make things worse, especially when you argue over something that was your

mistake. Even if you are right, arguing is still not the best way to solve the problem. If it's about something you did not do, but you are getting blamed, you can always explain things later. If it can't be explained, it's not crucial. Not everything can be clear. People shout and yell to make statements clear. Just because you raise your voice louder doesn't mean that you are right. Nor does it mean you can solve the problem. Learn to use a soft voice, speak slowly and clearly. Sometimes a soft voice is more powerful than a louder voice. As long as you are honest, things can be straightened out without arguing.

2. Take time to think over your situation.

We often tend to blame other people. Blaming other people is not the best way to

"...Sometimes, right could be wrong and other times, wrong could be right in a different situation or a different time.."

solve the problem. In many cases it might make the situation worse. Before you speak out, or blame others, ask yourself "what can I do to change this situation?" Very often, you are the one who can change the situation. If you change yourself, you might be surprised to find that others change too.

3. The art of communication

There are many broken families, due to a lack of good communication skills. Language is an art. You need to speak in a peaceful way. Sometimes it makes miracles. Not everyone is trained at being able to understand the person rather than the language. People misunderstand quite often and the misunderstanding causes many problems. Speak in a way that is positive, peaceful, and harmonious. Learn to say, "I think..." "I feel..." "I would like..." "I hope..." "I wish..." "I would prefer..." It is better to say something about yourself than to criticize or to blame. Avoid making vague requests. Say what you mean, and mean what you say, but in positive way. You should not expect others to read your mind. Sometimes, you think it is common

sense, but it's not common to other people. People, including your family members, are too busy to read your mind. Nowadays, a lot of common sense is not common anymore.

4. Try to appreciate the fact that people are different.

Different perspectives and ways of reacting do not necessarily mean that one person is right and another is wrong. Sometimes, right could be wrong and other times, wrong could be right in a different situation or a different time. This is the philosophy of the Yin and Yang, and of nature, the Daoist. Remember the fact "nobody is perfect," and nobody is right all the time. If you disagree with something but have no choice, it might become a good learning experience. Avoid participating in an intellectual argument that goes nowhere (don't spin your wheels trying to convince others of the "rightness" of your position). Agree to disagree.

5. Avoid being over sensitive.

If someone is unfriendly one day, it does not mean he or she doesn't like you any more. It only means he or she has some problems at that time. These problems can be either physical or emotional. If you also have a problem, you need to think that their problem is bigger than yours. Being over sensitive can only hurt you. Trying hard to guess what's in another's mind is very tiring and stressful. In many cases, your assumption may be wrong and make you act inappropriately. Just be natural and relaxed, and your life will be much easier. On the other hand, when people find you are over sensitive, they are less likely to tell you the truth, because they don't want to hurt you. Then you are facing an unrealistic life, a truthful life. If you want truth, you have to be able to handle the truth, which involves some things you may not like. If you have the right attitude, you will have a realistic life.

6. Do recognize each person is responsible for her or his own behavior.

You cannot change people unless they are willing to change themselves. You assume if you help someone whom you care about,

things will be better. You might be surprised by the results. Things do not always happen the way what you want them to happen. You might get frustrated from trying so hard and not seeing any results. You might be hurt, and you might be depressed. It is wise to just let the person wake up by himself. Healing is from the inside. There

not return the money. If this person returns it, that is good. If this person does not return it, and you are not prepared, you will be upset and lose sleep, and eventually lose the friendship. The worst thing is to lose your health. If you cannot be prepared for the worst, or cannot take the worst, you should not go down that road. When you

want to ask a favor from a person, just ask. The worst thing is getting a “no” response. That is not a

big deal. (“No big deal” has become my favorite phrase.) If you cannot help others due to limited ability, you can say “no,” too. It is not a big deal.

9. Focus on the present.

We have too many distractions in our lives. It seems like the more you have, the more stress you have too. We get distracted by too many bills, by being overloaded with work, by vacation planning, by children, by how to save money, by how to invest money, by how to find the right lover, by so many things. When we are driving, we cannot just focus on the road, but have to call someone on the cell phone. When we are doing one thing, our mind is in a different place. Many traffic accidents are caused by distractions, many mistakes at work or at home are caused by distractions; many delays in progress of projects are from distractions. All these things happen because of the distracted mind and life. If you want to be productive in everything you do, you need to focus on the present. Focus on whatever you are doing at the moment. Worry about other things later when they happen. This way you will be able to accomplish the work you want



to accomplish with much less stress. I sometimes have to remind myself to focus on the present; you can do the same thing too. Just remind yourself: focus on the here and now. All Daoist and Buddhist practice requires that the mind be focused on the present. People can reach enlightenment with this kind practice.

10. Appreciate a good night's sleep.

Try not to let things interfere with your sleep. A good night's sleep can restore your energy and help you to let go of the things that happened yesterday. Appropriate rest is part of healing. Some people have physical problems that affect their sleep. Some people have too much on their mind and it affects their sleep. We all think too much, and we all worry too much. It turns out everything is fine and we just waste our energy worrying. If you have no apparent reason for insomnia, you need to find a good doctor, either western or eastern, to help you. A good night's sleep can help you to start a new day, a new life.

Aihan Kuhn, C.M.D., is a Chinese medical doctor trained in both Western and Traditional Chinese Medicine. She is a graduate of the Hunan Medical University, Changsha China. Dr. Kuhn is the director of Chinese Medicine for Health, Inc., Holliston, MA.

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is an old saying: when a person wants to be healed, the healer arrives. There is another expression: you can lead the horse to the water, but you cannot make the horse drink.

7. Good things take time.

Don't get discouraged if you fail several times as you try to put theory into practice. You will have many opportunities to get back on track and be successful. Even the most successful business takes time, from many failures to success. Time allows you to learn, time allows you to heal, time allows you to forgive others, and time allows you to find happiness. Time gives you plenty of whatever you need for nourishing your spirit. But don't waste time, use it wisely. It is too valuable. Time is like water, it flows only in one direction.

8. Don't always expect a positive response. Be prepared for a negative answer.

Being prepared for the worst situation is always wise. Prepare for the worst situation so you will not be surprised. If someone borrows money from you, you need to be prepared that this person might

Seminars, why now?

by *Connie Forbes*



AS STRANGE AS IT MAY SOUND, WE SEEM TO VALUE THE MOST WHAT WE CANNOT HAVE. An opportunity that has already passed is the best one, but there's no way of going back. Books are a great source of knowledge. Add to that supporting video, and you can learn a lot. Yet through the years Dr. Yang, Jwing Ming, YMAA president and founder, has successfully hosted seminars which have drawn attendees from all over the world.

WHY DO THEY COME?

Many of those who have read and studied Dr. Yang's works are more than likely looking for greater depth and understanding directly from the source. They come filled with questions and ready to learn.

WHY DO THEY RETURN?

If all learning material were found only in his published works that would not explain why so many attendees have returned throughout the years. For those of you who have attended one of Dr. Yang's seminars you may find yourself training with someone from any number of places. Participants from New England, New York, Florida, Wisconsin, or California may meet participants from around the world; places such as England, Ireland, France, Portugal, Belgium or even South Africa to name just a few. Attendees also come from many diverse backgrounds including medical practitioners, martial artists, and laypersons.

HOW DOES DR. YANG DO IT?

Over the years he has established himself as a traditional martial arts master willing to share his knowledge with those who are interested in learning and teaching. The martial arts are alive, and Dr. Yang continues to merge Western and Eastern knowledge, and pass along his understanding and methodologies as different concepts evolve.

WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND A SEMINAR?

There are always reasons or excuses not to do something. But if you find a way to attend one of Dr. Yang's seminars consider it a worthwhile investment. You'll learn internal and external strategies to support your training. You'll also hear philosophical stories that lend perspective to your training. Most importantly, you'll have the opportunity to ask questions and hear the response to questions asked by other participants.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Dr. Yang will be relocating to California next year and cutting back on seminars. That's why everyone should take the opportunity to attend one of his seminars now while they're still available. Acting now will give you a chance to learn an existing Kung Fu style such as tai chi, qigong or chin na. You can benefit greatly from his teachings.

Connie Forbes is a YMAA martial arts public affairs coordinator.



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Teaching Kids Can be Child's Play

by Ben Warner

Any successful martial arts school can be enhanced through the development of a children's program.

As an instructor of the children's program at YMAA Headquarters, I have found several keys to classroom success—a solid foundation of basics; understanding the age and maturity of the students; realistic expectations of behavior and performance; high-energy activities; and parental involvement. Other key components to a successful program: knowing yourself as an instructor and understanding your class as a dynamic whole.

In my conversations with parents I have learned that one of the main reasons they enroll their children in martial arts is the hope to develop their child's focus and discipline. Quality martial arts will always emphasize the development of the mind and spirit as much as the body. All kids are different; age, personality and physical and mental development all factor into their ability to learn. With this in mind, how does one instill discipline and focus in young and seemingly un-trainable minds?

Basics are an important part of adult's martial arts training. Kid's training is no different. The structure created by a core set of basic drills will give them something to expect and to focus on each class. Regular practice of fundamentals enables an instructor to set clear, achievable goals. A standard warm up and basic stance practice makes up about a third of any kid's class I teach. Knowing that other projects and fun activities won't happen until the basic drills are finished and finished well gives the kids a goal to achieve and a standard with which to achieve it.

Basics will also provide an instructor with a platform from which to expand. A variation on a known skill set can be stimulating and can inspire excitement for learning newer and more difficult forms. Sometimes we practice basic stances combined with jumping drills or with different hand forms, we might do our kicking drills with focus pads or while walking backwards. These types of variations give the kids a chance to think creatively about their practice.

At YMAA headquarters we train all age groups together. This is an effective way for younger kids to learn from their peers. It



Ben Warner teaching kids class at YMAA Boston World Headquarters.

can be difficult to keep classes interesting for all different age groups but peer involvement is a handy technique to keep everyone interested. We train our stances, kicks and hand forms as a group. New students are often paired with advanced students so they have a good model to copy. This motivates the advanced student to perform at his or her best as well. During our stance practice students who do a good job are selected to demonstrate in front of the class. Some kids jump at the opportunity to show off while others are more reticent. By being in front of their peers extroverted kids will be motivated to set a good example while introverted kids have a chance to overcome their fear of being in front of a group.

Age and maturity level are important factors to consider in a child's ability to focus and learn. The attention span and learning style of each child affects his or her ability to focus and learn within the greater whole. As the instructor, this is something to take into consideration when giving both whole class and individualized instruction. Some kids learn well from verbal instruction while others learn visually. Demonstrating a certain move from a different

...other projects and fun activities won't happen till the basic drills are finished and finished well gives the kids a goal to achieve...

angle can sometimes help a child to better understand the angle or direction. Sometimes physically

placing a kid's limbs in the right place is much more effective than any amount of verbal explanation.

Keep in mind each child's level, and set appropriate goals. A complicated movement or form may be right for one student but



Jameel Emanuel training with Jim Noble at YMAA Boston.

may be too advanced for another. The elder child can be given highly technical corrections while the younger can be encouraged and rewarded for approximating the same maneuver. For example, coordinating the hip and shoulder to properly manifest power in a strike may be as challenging for an older student as learning how to perform a basic toe kick is for a younger one. If a child is praised for his or her personal accomplishment he or she will continue to make progress.

Classroom management is as important to the class as the material being presented. Rewards and punishments should be well defined and appropriate. The promise of a game or other type of fun activity is a reasonable reward for accomplishing a goal and is a reliable way to stimulate interest in a given project. Punishments, or consequences, must be realistic. Years ago it may have been acceptable to use corporal punishment but today it is not. If a child is given a choice, to do the work or loose out on a reward (i.e. not to play today's game), he will often choose to stay with the class, opting for fun.

Acknowledgment is one of the best tools for maintaining a child's interest. Addressing each student by name and recognizing their effort is often enough of a reward to stimulate further interest. Children want to be noticed for doing things right. Likewise, calling attention to inappropriate behavior in a non-threatening manner can be enough get a child refocused on his or her task. A hand on the shoulder; a stern look, or even a quick "time out" are other successful methods of correcting undesirable behavior.

Should a consequence be needed, the instructor needs to stay firm and consistent; students will consistently push the limits of what is accepted classroom behavior. This can be the most challenging aspect of a successful program. Above all it is imperative that an instructor keep his temper. To loose one's temper is to loose control and this leads very quickly to chaos in the classroom.

Parental involvement makes an instructor's job much easier. The few hours a week a child spends in class, while helpful, have far less effect on a his or her development than those hours spent

at home. A parent who is involved in their child's progress is a tremendous asset. Regular meetings with a parent, even quick after class chats, are valuable. Involve family members, they are paying for their child to learn and can be very willing to motivate their child with some reward. A promised trip to the ice cream shop or some such reward for a job well done in class can greatly boost a child's attention level. Likewise, a parent's unhappy reaction to a bad behavior report and loss of a privilege at home is usually a greater threat than a set of pushups or any other punishment an instructor can administer.

As important as an instructor's techniques and methods is his or her ability to understand the energy of a class. The energy of a class can change depending on the instructor's mood, the weather, and the amount of sugar the children have ingested that day. Early in my career I came to class one day and found every kid frenzied and wild. I couldn't understand the mayhem until I realized it was Valentine's Day and they had been eating candy all afternoon. While mildly traumatized that day, I was well prepared for Halloween several months later.

The ability to guide and control a class is directly linked directly to one's ability to understand its mood. If a program is working, stay with it. While it is a good idea to approach each class with a plan in mind sometimes the best solution to a difficult day is to scrap the plan completely and improvise. On Valentine's day for example, I remember we did little more than run and jump in circles for the entire hour.

An instructor's personal energy will have a direct effect on the class. Kids feed off enthusiasm and energy. This doesn't necessarily mean being loud (although it usually helps), but rather keeping things exciting. Kids learn well when having fun and they usually enjoy moving. When in doubt I usually return to running and jumping drills. We jump like frogs and monkeys, we crawl like lizards and run like horses. Sometimes I let the kids create their own animal forms, this exercises their imaginations as well as their bodies. Kids search daily for role models. By training with enthusiasm an instructor can be a very positive example from whom to learn. My enthusiasm usually builds with the kids' and in the end I enjoy the class as much as any student.

Working with children can yield tremendous personal rewards. By watching a child approach his training one can learn how to view one's own training through fresh eyes. As a teacher one often needs to simplify complicated things to make them understandable to children. I've found that working with kids has helped me develop the ability to distill simple lessons from complicated forms or movements. I've come to understand the basic movement principles of long fist kung-fu better by learning to explain them in uncomplicated ways to young kids. Above all else I've learned how to have fun while training. While always a challenge, working with children will always offer a chance to learn and feel young again.

Ben Warner is an YMAA Shaolin instructor teaching at YMAA Boston World Headquarters.

The Power of the Drill

by Lewis Paleias

1) Twist Body, Deflect Downward, Parry & Punch. 2) Speed drilling pizza box.



Regardless of the many differences between the internal and external, or hard and soft martial arts, there are basically only three ways that force can be generated: linear, torque and as a wave.

You can think of them as the hammer, the drill and the whip. In physics, they all have their own mathematical equations to predict the amount of power produced. In reality, the forces can be mingled to produce many different outcomes. Linear force, familiar to all hard stylists, is based on using your large muscles (usually the shoulder and arm muscles) to propel the fist forward into the target. This math equation is easy: power equals mass times the square of the speed. It shows that the force can be increased by either increasing the mass (i.e. heavier fist or shifting/lunging the weight forward) or by increasing the speed (remember: its power squares, so modest increases in velocity greatly affect power outcome). For comparison sake, we can assume that this kind of strike might produce around 100 to 150 foot-pounds of power per square inch. Don't think that only external styles use linear force; Xing Yi's Beng Chuan (wood fist) is an elegant, direct way to put an end to a fight.

THE TWIST

Besides the linear strike, most Oriental

martial arts also teach their practitioners to corkscrew or twist their punches as they hit (just think of the as a reverse punch in Karate.). This "Drilling Jing" (power manifestation) twists as it penetrates, taking the first equation and adding the power of "torque". When your hand touches your opponent's body, your arm and hand rotate clockwise or counterclockwise in a screwing motion, which makes the power penetrate deeper than a linear attack. This aggressive power, which is generated by the turning of the waist and shoulder, is usually directed forward, although it can also be used sideward.

The corkscrewing motion increases the distance the arm travels, magnifying speed and mass - thus increasing torque. This is exactly how increasing the torque on the drive shaft of your car increases the car's forward motion. This added torque in martial application could quadruple the impact of the punch to as much as 400 foot-pounds per square inch. In the internal arts, where power begins with and is rooted in the feet, generated in the legs, directed by the waist and expressed in the hands, there

is additional force generated. As each part receives the energy and torque from the preceding joint it transmits that energy plus its own to the next segment. By the time it finally emits out the hands, the power has increased logarithmically. This power add-on from segment to segment (what Dr. John Painter calls entrainment) multiplies the 400 foot pounds by a factor of three, or as much as 1200 foot pounds per square inch. Just like the rifling in a gun barrel, the number of degrees of twist and the direction of the twist proposes an infinite combination of variables. Compare Xing Yi's Zuan Chuan (water fist), where one hand twists forward 180 degrees from palm down to palm up while the other twists back palm up to palm down, with Tai Chi's Deflect Downward, Parry and Punch, where the right fist drills forward in a lazy 45 degree palm up to vertical fist as the left pulls your opponent into the blow. Compare them both with the twisting drills of Ba Gua's Hawk Flies to Heaven. Drilling Jing is also occasionally used to pull your arm out of your opponent's grasp. Here too, the shoulder and waist are the source

of the power. Since the arm is shaped like an oval, you can deflect an oncoming fist away via centrifugal force by drilling away from your body.

HAND FORMS

In drilling, the fist, finger, knuckle, palm and arm can all be used for attack, frequently against vital cavities. The most common hand form, however, is the Phoenix Eye fist. To form this weapon, make a fist while leaving your index finger forward. Closing it last will leave the second knuckle jutting forward around 1/2 inch. As all the power is directed through a small point it has great penetrating power, destroying nerves, blood vessels and internal organs. My teacher, Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming, likens it to

phalanges strengthens both the bones and connective tissues. Massage Dit Da Jow liniment both before and after training.

My favorite method (because I live on the beach) is sand Conditioning. Drill your knife hand (palm up to palm down) in loose sand (you could use a pail). Close your fist and withdraw your hand (twisting to palm up) while squeezing handful of sand. Now drill your arm forward (twisting palm up to palm down), rapidly extend your fingers and fling the sand away from you. This exercise strengthens the skin, bones, and grip while increasing speed.

Punching bags are also popularly used for drilling training. Start with your fist or knuckles lightly touching the bag. Suddenly generate the Jing from your waist

It is desirable to also practice extending your qi by punching at a candle. When you can extinguish the flame without touching it, shorten the distance between your fist and target.

SPEED TRAINING & TESTING YOUR DRILLING JING

Hold half of a sheet of newspaper suspending freely from one hand. From about 6 inches away, drill your other hand forward, piercing the center of the paper. This is done without withdrawing your hand. Once you can do this easily, move up to a single sheet of bond paper. Lastly, you can also progress up to striking a suspended pizza box (eat the pizza first). When you can successfully penetrate this with your phoenix eye fist, shorten the distance between your fist and the target. The main trick for increasing your hand speed is to go from a totally relaxed state (Sung)

...when you can extinguish the flame without touching it, shorten the distance between your fist and target...

a dum-dum bullet; from a small entry point the destructive energy spreads throughout the body. The muscles must be tensed somewhat to direct the Jing and insure that it penetrates, and also to protect the hand against injury. In Tai Chi Chuan, the time you are tensed is kept as short as possible. Also, your Yi must be concentrated inside your opponent's body in the organ or cavity being attacked.

CONDITIONING METHODS

Because Drilling Jing is used in both external and internal styles, many training methods have been developed. One of the most common ways used in external styles is to drill your fist or knuckles into a basket of mung beans. (Mung beans are used because of their medicinal properties). Later, sand, pebbles and iron filings can be used in place of the beans. The easiest way to strengthen your fingers is by slow finger pushups, first against the wall and then on the floor.

To strengthen the phoenix eye fist you push the middle knuckle of the index finger against the wall while holding a phoenix eye fist. Do not push on the tip of the bent index finger or you will injure the joint. Pushing on the flat second bone of the

and shoulder and drill your hand forward to bounce the bag away. Once you get the motion, make the wind up shorter and shorter, until there is no visible preparation for the punch. The goal is to have the body and fist move only a very short distance. Always use Dit Da Jow liniment both before and after all hand training. Its purpose is threefold: it increases the qi flow to the hand, it heals blood clots and bruises, and it strengthens the bones. Rub it on the whole arm, not just the hand. Though there are quite a few commercial bottles available, I find that nothing beats what you can make at home.

THE TAI CHI WAY

Tai Chi uses less muscle than external styles, so the training approach is different. One method uses a thick layer of soft material, for example, paper napkins, on a table. The fist is pushed down with a screwing motion. The muscles should be relaxed as the Yi (concentrated mind) strives to extend the Jing to the surface of the table. When you can bounce the Jing off the table, increase the thickness of the material. The thicker the material is, the greater the drilling power required. It is also important to do this exercise horizontally.

to exploding into your strike. When you strike, keep your hand-form loose until just before the target and tighten your muscles just prior to impact. Your body weight will be driving just behind the fist. Remember, the longer you practice, the stronger your power, and the more natural and smooth your power generation will be.

THERE ARE NO SECRETS

Mastering drilling power is like mastering anything else. There is no magic. There are specific recipes and principles that must be understood. Then comes the hard part: Kung Fu (time and effort). When you can easily penetrate a pizza box you will have successfully developed the ability to generate all the force needed to seriously injure an opponent. But, don't get complacent; the power of the Wave must still be perfected, let alone the footwork to get you through your opponent's empty door.

Lewis Paleias is a YMAA Coach Instructor and teaches Qigong, Tai Chi, Xing I and Ba Gua in NYC.

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Muscle Memory: An Update

by Daniel Hood

In my last Editors Corner, a few comments about the health benefits derived from practicing tai chi were not mentioned. David Silver, YMAA student and publications coordinator, has added the following with regards to the sentence that read, "... Western medical studies are underway to better understand how tai chi works to heal cancer and other disease."

There is a lot of evidence - here's one example. And of course, there is Rami Rone's work for the last decade: Science discovers how Tai Chi works.

Scientists have been able to discover why this ancient but simple set of exercises provides such healing benefits to the body. Traditional exercise helps us to loose weight and build muscle. Whenever we exercise, our body produces chemicals that are not produced when we are still. Most exercise causes the body to damage some muscle. When this is repaired the muscle grows back stronger. The chemicals produced by the body are the medicines that allow the muscles to heal.

When Tai Chi is practiced, the movements are so gentle that muscle isn't damaged. However, the body still produces the same chemicals as it does during normal exercise. Since there is no damaged muscle that needs healing, the healing chemicals can be utilized by the other parts of the body. Our bodies produce the very medicine needed to heal itself. Normal exercise produces them and uses them up. Tai Chi releases the healing chemicals but doesn't use them up.

Another important ingredient in Tai Chi is the utilization of oxygen's ability to heal. During normal exercise we breathe hard and increase our intake of oxygen. The hard work causes cells in the muscles to become oxygen starved. The deep breathing provides the needed healing oxygen. Part of Tai Chi practice is to breathe deeply and slowly while performing the gentle movements. The same principle again applies. The deep breathing provides more oxygen than the muscles need. The extra oxygen is available to the other cells. This also helps the heart, brain and other organs to receive a double dose of oxygen and the healing chemicals, increasing the healing power of both.

Dr. Roger Jahnke has written two books from the perspective of a medical doctor who has grown up in the west. His knowledge of both contemporary western medicine and ancient eastern healing arts is impressive"

NEW AND HELPFUL READING MATERIAL

In the first paragraph of this story, Silver mentioned the work and life-long research Martial Arts Practioner Rami Rones has done on mind and body connections with regards to healing.

Recently, he and Rones, along with Rones' wife, Ilana and YMAA martial artist Axi Breen, collaborated to put Sunrise Tai Chi (Simplified Tai Chi for Health and Longevity) into book form.

Here's what Cathy Kerr, Ph.D., Instructor, Harvard Medical School had to say about Rones' book:

"In his twenty years of study with some of the world's great masters of the Asian mind-body arts, Rami received a rare immersion in the Inner teachings of Yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong, Meditation, and various martial arts. He has integrated these inner teachings into a powerful balanced mind/body program contained in the Sunrise Tai Chi book and DVD.

These exercises are the result of years of testing and refining these deep teachings during Rami's private clinical practice working with students facing life challenges, from maintaining general well-being to surviving cancer. This program is so useful for students at any level of health, whether they are healthy athletes looking to balance their training, or elders who wish to avoid and reverse unnecessary aging.

In Sunrise Tai Chi, you will benefit from his clinical experience. He has done the work of determining what works best, and here he has set out an integrated, easy to use set of mind-body practices that allow the student to draw on the best of Eastern meditation and internal bodywork traditions.

In my own experience working with Rami, I have learned so much about how to lead a balanced life while coping with a challenging, potentially life-threatening illness. With Rami's help, and through the exercises he has taught me, I have learned how to energize my life, deal with stress, and stay healthy."

You can read more about Dr. Kerr's battle with cancer in YMAA Newsletter, Sept. 2003, "Qi vs. Cancer, Tackling a centuries old disease", and in YMAA Newsletter 68, Dec. 2003, "Discovering Qigong's benefits". Both are available for downloading.

Dan Hood is the long time practioner at YMAA Boston and Editor of the YMAA News.

TRUE MARTIAL ARTIST

The Path of a True Martial Artist: Fine-Tuning, Balancing & Harmonizing Body, Mind, Breathing, Energy and Spirit

By Bob Ellal and Ramel Rones

What makes a true martial artist? Is it just the ability to fight well and defend themselves against an attacker? It cannot be that alone; many street fighters can also do this, and they do not deserve the title “artists.” It is far more than fighting skill; it takes a much greater commitment at many levels to be a true martial artist.

“You must learn to first fine tune, then balance all five aspects of your being: body, mind, breathing, energy and spirit—then harmonize them with the three forces of Earth, Heaven and Human Nature,” says Ramel Rones, master teacher of Northern Shaolin, White Crane, Chin Na, Weapons, Tai Chi Chuan and Chi Kung.

Rones, a disciple of Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming, YMAA founder and Kung Fu grandmaster, has learned his lessons well. With more than 20 years under his belt training full-time with Dr. Yang and other renowned Eastern martial arts masters, he has won gold medals in solo form as well as fighting competitions in the U.S, Europe, and China.

He has used his chi kung knowledge to help cancer patients survive and has helped the elderly cope with what he calls “unnecessary aging.” He has also developed and tailored a mind/body approach, based on the principles of various martial arts, for debilitating diseases such as cancer and arthritis.

“Fighting and forms successes are only the external manifestations of the arts, which is needed at a certain step of the

path of a martial artist,” says Rones. “After all, the real goal of martial arts is a life-long journey of self-discovery and self-mastery. If you learn martial arts only for the purpose of fighting, you will probably lose interest at some point or another—you will have achieved mastery only over the first building block of our being, the body; and nothing more.”

Rones believes that as you age, you will naturally be more concerned with health and longevity, and perhaps the goal of enlightenment (or at least intensive sitting or standing meditation) so that’s where the other building blocks—mind, breathing, energy and spirit come into play.

“The martial arts journey,” says Rones, “is one in which you strike a balance between external and internal work and developing the mind and the body. By doing so, you will not only be on the right path to achieving great fighting skills, but maximum health and longevity and a better quality of life for you as well as the people around you.”

But how do you fine tune the body? “You begin to fine tune the physical body through finding a balance between strength and flexibility. One way to achieve this is by doing forms and drills,” replied Rones.

“Relaxing the body is the first step in fine tuning it. Only when you are relaxed are you able to find balance and find your physical body’s center. Once you find your center, you’re closer to finding your roots. And from there, you are just one step away from feeling an increased energy flow.

That’s the right path to achieving a high level of martial skills and a better quality of life.”

Sound a bit confusing? Really it’s not, said Rones. “The five building blocks are all interrelated; you use your mind to help relax your body, and you use your breathing to help focus your mind while tapping into the energy and spirit to boost and upgrade them all. For example, proper breathing helps prevent tight muscles or having lactic acid build up in them before you spar or fight. If you take several deep breaths your mind relaxes, and sends signals to your muscles to relax also. They become supple, and you are able to better sense your opponent and strike more quickly and with much more power.”

Here are some additional concepts and skills Rones says are needed for fine-tuning the body, for both martial and health purposes besides finding a balance between strength and flexibility:

Free the skeleton from being a prisoner of soft tissue

1. Proper alignment is the first step toward achieving the art of “effortless power” or giving your body the feeling of “transparency.” We must understand and achieve alignment in our different postures throughout life; these postures include: lying down, sitting, standing and moving slowly.

2. Maintaining a full range of motion in the joints by stretching the various soft tissues around them; muscles, fasciae, skin, ligaments and tendons. This way you

learn to pump and pulse the ligaments that boost our energetic system, and “fill” the whole body with abundant energy. Using resistance to increase muscle mass, prevent Sarcopenia (the loss of muscle as you age) thus increasing bone density.

3. Creating “space” and constant movement, for the internal organs to function maximally. You accomplish this first by alignment and then by massaging the internal organs through self-massage and movement.

4. Physically aligning the “qua”—the area from the belly down to the hips and groin.

5. Creating the “dam” effect for both the blood and energy—learning to tense and relax different muscles. This effect is present in different philosophies, which use different techniques to achieve it: in yoga through asana, holding postures for a long time; and in Chinese arts through tensing and relaxing different groups of muscles repeatedly.

6. Embryo breathing—controlling abdominal and lower back muscles, in and out, as you breathe. Then using the mind you learn to tap into the center of gravity energy center and pituitary gland energy center or what the Chinese refer to as the lower and the upper Dan Tian, or “field of elixir”. The lower visualization: the area two inches beneath your navel and is your being’s center and the upper the area at the base of the brain, the area where the pituitary gland is located.

7. The major up and down forces—properly understanding them and then achieving proper alignments through the head, neck, shoulders, 3 sections of the spine and sacrum.

8. Bow breathing—the long “bow” of the spine as it moves forward, backward, up and down and the cross “bows” of the shoulders as they arc and expand. Includes action like: bowing, pumping and pulsing.

9. Self-massage, tapping, slapping, brushing and kneading the entire body and the internal organs.

These fine-tuning exercises will make you more than just a better martial artist; they will increase your health and put you on the road to greater longevity.

FINE-TUNING THE MIND

Have you ever practiced standing post meditation, one of the fundamental practices of the internal martial arts as well as some Yoga styles? If you have, you’d know or experience the difference between your emotional mind, or what is metaphorically referred to in the art of Chi Kung as the monkey mind (in Chinese, Xin), and what we in the West refer to as our logical mind, referred to metaphorically in Chi Kung as the Horse mind (or in Chinese, Yi).

Your horse mind is the part of you that makes the decision to take on the rigors of standing meditation. It “tells” you on a physical level how important it is to your training to squat in a high horse stance and hold your arms in an arc in front of your chest until you can hold the posture for over an hour. Your horse mind tells you that you will be building a strong root, integrating your body as a unit, and developing tremendous chi. On a mental level it “tells” you not to think throughout the task so you can achieve a meditative mind, with brain waves between awake and asleep to activate a positive hormone production versus a negative one.

Your monkey mind, or our emotions, is the part of you that wants to quit after five minutes because your thigh muscles and shoulders burn from the constant pain

visualizations. Some typical visualizations are the image of the Moon or with religious individuals, the image of the Buddha, or Jesus Christ. You can also repeat a prayer or a Mantra. By focusing or visualizing on a person, a sound, movements or an object you will be able to lead your mind into a steady, calm state and use your wisdom, Yi, to conquer your emotions, Xin. This method is called Guan Xiang, “observe thinking.” You need first to quiet and observe the thoughts in order to achieve control. There are many methods to achieve this skill.

FINE-TUNING THE BREATHING

“To have good health and be a good martial artist you need to develop your lungs and that is achieved through good cardiovascular training or another method referred to in Yoga as Pranayama or the science of breath. Then you will not lose your breath when you are fighting. Jumping, kicking, punching and wrestling require a great deal of energy and good cardio skills. Another reason for having bigger or stronger lungs is it helps you to “capture” the monkey mind. The lungs are metaphorically compared to a banana that has the potential to capture the monkey, so through developing the lungs we will have a bigger “banana”, quieting the monkey mind will lead to greater success at health and martial arts levels. However, you

You must pace yourself—that’s the “banana” we use to capture the monkey mind.

caused by the horse posture. Thus, the Chinese say you must seize the monkey and tame the horse if you want to achieve health and be a successful martial artist. The Xin or monkey mind is emotional and excitable and must be harnessed so it can be controlled or even seized. The Yi horse mind is strong and powerful but you must also harness or train it to use it effectively.

That means in order to succeed balancing the mind you have to fine-tune the horse mind, logic, to “capture” the monkey mind, emotions. When the emotional mind is under the control of the wisdom mind, you will be calmer and more focused. Different styles use different methods to train this skill through different tricks or mental

also must fine-tune your breathing to stay in focus when you fight. If your breathing is wild or out of control, your mind will race and you will burn up your energy quickly and will not be able to continue. You must pace yourself—that’s the “banana” we use to capture the monkey mind. When your breathing is measured, your thoughts are too. That’s the connection. Then you will stay calm and in control of the situation, whether it is a sparring match, a conflict on the street or a conflict in life—such as a health problem,” says Roness.

Using your breathing (the banana) to capture the monkey mind, he said, is also vital to qigong training, which every martial artist should do to both strengthen his or her

martial arts or just to improve their health. It allows you to breathe deeply and calmly to relax, which keeps your mind clear and fills your lungs with plenty of oxygen so you have an adequate supply. Also, deep breathing enables the diaphragm to move up and down, which massages and stimulates the internal organs, making them operate more efficiently as well as releasing a positive hormone release; endorphins and serotonin versus a negative one—adrenalin from the adrenal glands.

Rones said a basic way to develop the lungs and then use your breath to capture the monkey mind is center of gravity energy center breathing or Embryo breathing. Embryo breathing is divided into two parts: The physical, and the mental. “Physically, when we breathe we make a conscious decision to notice the diaphragm descending while coordinating each breath with the movement of the abdomen and the lower back muscles. Mentally we “put” our thoughts or mind in our center gravity energy center (remember, the monkey mind will find ways to distract the mind and pull it away from residing in this energy center, or lower Dan Tien).”

To practice and achieve success using these methods, Rones believes that you

as Buddhist breathing.”

The second is for manifesting energy or expressing power away from the body. When you inhale contract inward the lower back and abdominal muscles, empty moon, as you exhale expand them, full moon. That is Taoist breathing. In addition, in both breathing methods you should gently coordinate the movements or “pulsing” of the Huiyin cavity; the area between the groin and the anus, with the movements of the lower back and abdominal muscles.”

FINE-TUNING THE ENERGY AND THE SPIRIT

Your vital energy—that which animates you and keeps you alive—is known by many different names to many cultures. The Chinese call it chi; the Japanese ki; the Greeks pneuma; the Indians call it prana; the American Indians called it the Great Spirit. In the East, as opposed to the West, studying the energy is actually a science. It is a force that can be cultivated through proper direction of the (body,) mind and breathing through eastern arts such as yoga and Chi Kung. Through proper training of the five building blocks, you will be able to raise or “cool” your spirit and accomplish incredible things.

Physically, when we breathe we make a conscious decision to notice the diaphragm descending while coordinating each breath with the movement of the abdomen and the lower back muscles...

must first use your hands to control or mold the movements of the muscles in your lower back and abdomen since we do not use those muscles or specific movements. “We may have lost the control over them; usually a few years after we are born; that is why the exercise is also called “back” to childhood. There are two ways to perform this mind body prescription: One for relaxation and circulating energy internally when you inhale, intentionally expand your abdomen and back muscles, full moon, and when you exhale, let them contract, empty moon. In the art of Chi Kung, this is known

“We’ve all witnessed martial artists who have seemingly transcended the laws of physics by breaking stacks of bricks or ice with a single blow or even a single brick within a stack. The same great feats can happen within the healing side of the martial arts. “I work with cancer patients who have recovered from hopeless cases of Stage 4 disease because their spirit was strong and it enabled them to train hard in qigong and build their energy. Also, I have seen people whose spirit wasn’t strong who wouldn’t train hard and didn’t survive,” says Rones.

“Having a strong spirit is metaphorically speaking, like being in a forest. In the daytime, we can see our way clear. At night, when darkness falls and the mist rises visibility is bad. That is when we need faith and belief to keep us going. Having a strong spirit is like having a compass in this dark, misty forest. Our spirit needs to be trained through philosophies which include energy work so we can raise it to full strength when we need it.”

HARMONIZING THE FIVE BUILDING BLOCKS WITH THE THREE FORCES —EARTH, HUMAN AND HEAVEN

Once you fine-tune and then find a balance among the five building blocks, you need to harmonize them with themselves and with the forces around us. For both seekers of the martial arts and health, to achieve optimal success, we have to live in harmony with the constant changing of our forces and the forces of the universe.

“For example, for both the health and martial arts: First you must fine-tune the body, breath, mind, energy, and spirit and then balance among them; to be able to act while setting in motion each one of them in real situations. That’s harmony of the five building blocks with our force or energy,” says Rones.

“Then you must “go” to the next level to tap into the Earth and Heaven energies which for the martial artist can generate tremendous power and for the health seeker abundant healing energy. You should also tap, specifically, into the sun as well as the moon energies to use their powers to achieve specific Yin and Yang goals with your energetic system. That is harmonizing the three forces of Earth, Human and Heaven. Through harmonizing the five building blocks with the three forces, you “recognize” how to take advantage of the energy within you and around you. That is why the Chinese do not believe in, or include the word “luck,” in their vocabulary, but only “destiny.”

For more information about specific exercises to fine-tune the five building blocks with the three forces, go to www.ramelrones.com and check out Rones’ Sunrise Tai Chi DVD.

WORLD TAI CHI & QIGONG DAY OPEN LETTERS

*from Bill Douglas, World
Tai Chi and Qigong Day
organizer*



The messages we are getting in are moving and inspiring to us. Most of the photos (we've received) are up for viewing, and hopefully they will inspire everyone who reads them. Because when anyone writes to thank us, or is inspired by World Tai Chi & Qigong Day, they are speaking directly to you. For, we are doing this together. Without the entire world participating, each one of our individual events is so much less, and in turn each one of us, together, becomes the entire world. The letter on the left is one note we got from South Africa's WTCQD organizers:

World Tai Chi & Qigong Day Supporters

New Zealand, in the Earth's earliest time zone . . . began the global wave of "healing energy" [reference citation from International Herald Tribune article] . . . and as our precious planet turns throughout the next 24 hours, mass health & healing events will unfold in hundreds of cities, spanning 6 continents, and over 60 nations.

In the last few days we've gotten calls from The Washington Post, the Seattle Post Intelligencer, and The Wall Street Journal. A major French media has reported on our global event as well, as we got nearly 700 visitors to our website to view the "History of World Tai Chi & Qigong Day" PowerPoint presentation in French. AND as mentioned previously an international television network will carry WTCQD, from their base at the Los Angeles event coming up in a few hours.

Ancient Chinese wisdom tells us that we are not just individuals on this planet, but that we are

part of a collective consciousness . . . or "field energy."

Today, once again, participants in World Tai Chi & Qigong Day 2007 . . . contribute our part to elevating the "field energy" of our precious home, called Earth. Together we unveil a wish, a hope, for a planet of calm, clarity, health, and mutual healing for all the corners of our human family.

New Zealand Begins the Global Wave of Health & Healing

Clubs young and old came together as one family to breathe out a pulse of healing energy we know will be taken up and passed around the world. Great fellowship was enjoyed with different Tai Chi styles and forms presented. The spirit of fellowship was so great that members of different clubs came out to perform behind the demonstrations of others even though they knew not the form.

Something to think about

Imagine if the entire world taught mind/body technologies like Tai Chi & Qigong for one hour per day as a PE/Health Science course. After 12 years of education every child would be graduating a Tai Chi and Qigong master. Individuals calm and clear, able to control their own heart rate and blood pressure naturally. Able to maintain clear minds with less depression, anxiety, and the violence that can come from troubled youths.

Imagine how many hundreds of billions of dollars society could save in lost health care dollars each year, year after year. Imagine how many hundreds of billions of dollars in police, courts, and prison spending we could save every year. Imagine how much less violence there would be in the world. Imagine if every United Nations meeting, Congressional session, court proceeding, corporate meeting, school day began with Tai Chi and Qigong exercises to clear the mind, and calm the heart.

How would that affect the decisions that are made that shape our world?

If you think this is pie in the sky thinking, you

Dear Bill & [World Tai Chi & Qigong Day Organizers]
I thought that I would send you some pictures of World Tai Chi Day celebration in Cape Town, South Africa. After three days of rain, here I was thinking that we would have rain on our parade, but imagine our surprise when we were greeted by a bright sunny day!

I invited our local councilor who had declared Edgemoor part of World Tai Chi & Qigong Day and, together with locals and visitors he participated in Qigong, followed by a short Tai Chi demonstration by my students. Participants of this special event were further treated to tea and Chinese bow ties.

Thank you for all your assistance and useful advice from your website in promoting the event and of course I ran out of your t-shirts. Next time I will definitely order a whole lot more. This event really inspired other Tai Chi clubs to do the same next year.

My students and I are deeply grateful to your and all your support in promoting Tai Chi & Qigong.

Yours in health and kind regards

Renate Jacobs

Tai Chi Instructor for

THE INTERNATIONAL TAI CHI SOCIETY
Edgemoor & Cape Town
South Africa

are wrong. We are closer to transforming the world than we let ourselves believe. There have been Qigong classes in the United Nations. Corporations worldwide are beginning to incorporate mind/body health techniques into their health programs.

World Tai Chi & Qigong Day has helped event organizers to get national media coverage, including 8 minutes on National Brazilian television, and Dutch National Television, as well as CNN, and FOX News in the past. Major media has covered this magical event worldwide, including massive coverage by Italian media, etc. Humanity is looking for simple elegant solutions to the complex problems facing us. Tai Chi & Qigong have much to offer the world. We are at a tipping point, where with a little bit of effort, we can do something together that can do the world a lot of good.

Please encourage everyone you know to join us in this healing effort, and to do the above actions to help us engage, more and more and more individuals, schools, groups, organizations, federations, etc. worldwide to come play with us in World Tai Chi & Qigong Day 2008, 2009, and on and on.

The Origins of Taijiquan

by Angela Laughingheart

In addition to the Daoist methods of Qigong, around 500 AD there came to China an Indian monk named Da Mo. Based on Indian traditions of yoga and medicine, he developed a series of exercises for harnessing and strengthening Qi for purposes of health and enlightenment for the monks at the Shaolin Monastery where he stayed. His writings were entitled “Muscle/Tendon Changing-Marrow/Brain Washing Classic.”

Some of the Shaolin monks were also training martial arts and they adapted these exercises for increased power in fighting and to speed up the healing of their injuries. As martial artists had previously only been concerned with muscular strength, the harnessing of yin energy for fighting was the start of internal martial arts. Over the centuries, many styles were created and discarded. Around 1100 a.d. a Daoist monk named Zhang San Feng is credited with creating a document about an internal martial art that still exists today. He

called it “Taijiquan Treatise.” In it, Feng outlines the 5 stepping and the 8 directions that make up the “Thirteen Postures of Taijiquan.” He describes the art this way. “Entire body must be light and agile especially it should be threaded together by Qi which is full and stimulated. The spirit should be retained internally.”

Today, 900 years later, many people practice Taiji for health. Some teachers are still aware of the martial applications. Qigong continues to evolve as well. Today it is being investigated by Western practitioners who are able to monitor bio-electricity or Qi with very sensitive equipment, such as Kirlian Phototgraphy, Biofeedback and MRI's.

Hopefully this article will help our readers to understand the origins of Qigong and Taijiquan, and pivotal in incorporating it into your long term fitness plan.

Unlike Taiji, Qigong will not make you a fighter, but it could help in healing your body. One thing for sure, Qigong practice is never going to make you lazy or boring.

Angela Laughingheart is currently a YMAA member in Hawaii.



QIGONG SEMINAR

Dr Yang, Jwing-Ming, YMAA president and founder, conducted a two-day Qigong level 1 workshop at the Heights of Wellness Studio in Hartford, Conn. Spokesperson Zoe Macerollo said that more than 40 people attended the informative workshop held April 22- 23.

“Dr Yang gave us an informative and insightful introduction to the background and philosophy of Qigong, an ancient health exercise passed down from generations for over 3000 years. He explained that not only has Qigong been found to be particularly beneficial in treating deep-rooted chronic illnesses such as asthma, arthritis, hormonal imbalances, but also has a place in science

and sports.”

Macerollo said that Dr. Yang explained how Qigong can keep the mind calm and the body stable.

“We were shown how Qigong movement and breathing techniques help the Qi flow along the channels, strengthening the body and mind to promote vitality. The different types of training within Qigong were described: Mind training, Breathe training and Body training.”

Macerollo, like many other people who have attended one of Dr Yang's seminars agreed that he is a great communicator with a wonderful sense of humor.

“He has the ability to take a complex subject and to present it in an interesting

and accessible way. As a beginner it helped me to understand the basic theories of this wonderful health exercise.”

During the afternoon sessions, Macerollo said seminar participants did exercises for feeling chi and also for relaxing the spine.

“On Monday morning I felt wonderful,” Macerollo said. “Energy levels were up and my body was definitely less tight and less painful than usual! Dr. Yang loves red traffic lights as it gives him the opportunity to practice subtle Qigong movements behind his steering wheel. I have decided to adopt the same attitude.”

As Dr. Yang says “Do you control your life, or does life control you?” It was a workshop well worth attending.

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

A recently released movie now available on DVD is “Down the Rabbit Hole,” made by the same producers that made “What the Bleep Do We Know?” The film shows how a global wave of good intention may influence not just participants but the entire planet. Treat yourself to a movie experience that is life altering, by renting it. World Tai Chi & Qigong Day's ongoing experiences of people in 60 nations that flow around like a global Tai Chi or Qigong movement, may have more impact than one first suspects. “Down the Rabbit Hole” explains how.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Walter Wong continues to latch on to movie rolls. His latest, currently being shot in and around Boston, Mass., is "Twenty One" starring Academy Award winner Kevin Spacey. Wong, a student of Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's since 1996, and a Screen Actors Guild member, has studied Long Fist and White Crane under Dr. Yang since 1996. He is available for private lessons in Liu He Ba Fa and can be contacted through the e-mail renblade2000@yahoo.com or 617-470-4468.

Dan Rothstein a YMAA student for 15 years recently joined Heights of Wellness as a tai chi/qigong instructor. Heights of Wellness is located at 1477 Park Street Suite 14, Hartford, Conn. If you happen to be in the area drop by and say hello. Rothstein can be reached at (860)951-1110 or you can e-mail him at www.heightsofwellness.com.

Leslie Takao, well known for her tai chi teaching methods and her extreme knowledge of the art has opened an YMAA provisional school in New Hampshire. The setting is ideal. Located near beautiful Lake Winnepesaukee at 33 North Main St., in Wolfeboro, Leslie offers training in Yang Tai Chi, Qigong and Taiji Qigong. For more information you can call 617 899 2281.

GOING NUTS

Recent research provides more evidence that nuts help keep blood vessels healthy, and thus may reduce the risk of coronary artery disease. In a study from Loma Linda University in California, pecans helped protect arteries against the damaging effects of LDL ("bad" cholesterol) while a Turkish study found a similar effect with pistachios. In a Spanish study, walnuts helped reduce inflammation and maintain elasticity of blood vessels. All nuts which contain healthy fats, fiber, and a variety of vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals

appear to be beneficial. But nuts are high in calories (about 160 to 200 per ounce), so they should be eaten in moderation.



NAP-STERS

Many societies schedule an official siesta time each afternoon, and for good reason. Research shows that a short nap improves alertness, sharpens memory, and reduces symptoms of fatigue in many people. You can nap a number of ways: Pre-emptive napping for example is beneficial if, for any reason, you'll be losing sleep (a late party in the offing, say, or a long trip), a nap in advance can help. Another is power napping where you're in a position of power such as Winston Churchill, JFK or Reagan. All believed that a napping helps to benefit a nation, a company, family, etc.

HEALTH IN GENERAL

Also called *Psoralea corylifolia* (Leguminosae), Bu Gu Zi in Chinese, this herb is used to strengthen "Kidney" energy, especially "Kidney Yang". Combined with other herbs, *Psoralea* treats arthritis, low energy level, impotence, back pain, knee pain, incontinence, infertility, etc. It also helps to strengthen the bone and prevent osteoporosis. Chinese herbal medicine is

used mostly in combinations to be effective and balance the body's energy. This is the major difference between Western herb and Chinese herb and why it takes a long time to become a Chinese herbal doctor. You should always consult your Chinese doctor before using Chinese herbs.

Emerging medical research indicates that an ancient health therapy may be the prescription for the future. Increasingly the menopausal problems of hormonal imbalance, often resulting in bone loss, are also affected by depression and stress. Change is stressful for all of us, even good changes, like changes of life. Maturity is



a good thing, yet the stress of major life changes can result in stress and depression, which according to emerging research may further aggravate the uncomfortable symptoms of menopause. Is there any escape from this catch-22? Yes, although this may seem overwhelming in its scope, there may be great news. Tai Chi may help alleviate many of the aggravating symptoms of menopause in profoundly healthful ways.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services NHIC included World Tai Chi and Qigong Day in its 2007 National Health Observances Calendar. NHIC is a service of the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

YMAA SCHOOLS

楊氏武藝協會

For a list of officially recognized YMAA schools, please visit
www.ymaa.com/training/schools

Any school that is not listed on that webpage **IS NOT AFFILIATED NOR RECOGNISED** by the YMAA organization.

All current YMAA school directors are encouraged to open a web account at YMAA.COM to manage their school webpage information autonomously. This will also enable the creation of a good communication channel: keeping you updated with the latest information and events of the organization.

YMAA INSTRUCTORS

To view a list of qualified assistant instructors, instructors, and master of the YMAA program in Shaolin (少林), Taijiquan (太極拳, Tai Chi Chuan), Qin Na (擒拿, Chin Na), and Qigong (氣功), please visit the webpage located at

www.ymaa.com/training/instructors

Only the listed persons have been qualified by Dr. Yang and the YMAA organization. All active qualified instructors are encouraged to maintain an account on the YMAA website.

YMAA SEMINARS

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming travels extensively throughout the year and around the world offering seminars about martial arts, Qigong and meditation. For the latest information about the location, topics, and person to contact, please visit

www.ymaa.com/seminars

For seminars held twice a year (Summer and Winter) at YMAA Boston Headquarters, please contact Mrs. Mei-Ling Yang.

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YMAA CALIFORNIA RETREAT CENTER

楊氏武藝協會加州特訓中心

A new project for the preservation of traditional chinese martial arts has been initiated by Dr. Yang. Currently, the Retreat Center is accepting students applications for the 10-year program. To find more information or view the latest news, please visit

www.ymaa.com/retreat-center

www.ymaa-retreatcenter.org

Email: ymaaboston@aol.com

YMAA PUBLICATION CENTER

楊氏東方文化出版中心

YMAA Publication Center has been a leader in publishing quality books and DVDs about martial arts, qigong, meditation, philosophy, and martial history. With more than 20 years of publishing experience, YMAA Publication Center continues to seek manuscripts on Martial Arts and Qigong. Interested authors can write or email:

David Ripianzi

YMAA Publication Center, Inc.

Po Box 480

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At the YMAA Publication website

www.ymaa.com/publishing

you can find the latest books and DVDs produced by Dr. Yang, or other renowned authors, teachers and masters of martial arts (Gong Fu, Taijiquan, Karate, Tae Kwon Do, etc.). Every month, the Publication Center promotes a "Deal of the Month" where you can get books, DVDs, videos, traditional chinese silk training uniforms, music CDs at high discount rates or bundled with other offers.

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