

MEDICAL, HEALING & SPIRITUAL
COMPONENTS OF ASIAN MARTIAL ARTS:
A PRELIMINARY FIELD STUDY EXPLORATION

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Longevity Hill – located within the Summer Palace outside of Beijing.

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MEDICAL, HEALING & SPIRITUAL COMPONENTS OF ASIAN MARTIAL ARTS

A Preliminary Field Study Exploration

I am greatly indebted to Jeremy Waletzky, M.D., and the INSTITUTE OF NOETIC SCIENCES for support of this research venture as well as the many contacts in the United States and abroad which made the investigation a fascinating and fruitful endeavor. Without the cooperation of all parties involved, this project would have never been completed.

by Michael Maliszewski, Ph.D.

Much of our recorded history reveals that combat and warfare have left a lasting mark on the evolution of mankind. In Asia, martial traditions often reached a level of complexity, sophistication and effectiveness seldom matched in other parts of the world. Unique to much of this part of the world, however, was the close association that combative forms had to spiritual and medical traditions. In addition to physical skills, sophisticated healing practices, complex "energy-based" systems and religious-philosophical teachings comprised many of these martial disciplines—factors which often distinguished them from their Western counterparts.

As I was completing a book on the history and philosophy of Asian martial arts which I researched over the past ten years, it became quite clear to me that there was virtually no written information available concerning the healing practices, energy systems or meditative practices associated with these martial traditions. Further, the access to available information was different for each of the arts found in different countries. A number of reasons account for the lack of information on this subject. For purposes of secrecy, these advanced aspects of martial practice had not been committed to print, but were passed on orally from teacher to worthy student. (Documentation of physical, combative practices constituted merely the first stage of learning.) In other cases, the information was exclusive to certain family lineages and not open to people of Caucasian descent. Many traditions had begun to disappear (e.g., in India), their teachings being lost upon the death of the respective teachers. By and large, the general public as a whole had displayed little interest beyond the physical aspects of the arts. Teachers attempting to discuss healing, "energy" or Asian philosophical teachings of non-violence generally found that students lack motivation and commitment to learning these more advanced phases of training. Students' preferences have been for quick, demonstrable (physical) gains in a discipline to which teachers themselves had committed a lifetime of practice.

The purpose of my research venture was to document the healing rituals and systems, energy concepts and medical practices, and spiritual teachings of martial arts traditions found in some twelve different Asian locations. Since there was little documentation of these practices, much of my data consisted of audio recordings and videotapes collected in these various countries. As to the formal writing of this report, information collected on this trip has been integrated into what limited information had been available in the West up to this time. The term "healing" has been used in the broadest sense possible, referring to the process of curing or restoring to health. The word "spiritual" relates to religious or sacred matters which, in some fashion, are concerned with experiences which alter man's awareness of himself and connection with the universe at large. While many contacts in these Asian countries were set up prior to my arrival with an explanation of my research objectives, one could not determine in advance how much information was actually available at a particular site or country. To a great extent, this depended upon the knowledge base of the informant, the skill or quality of the interpreter/translator, and the prevalence of specific martial traditions in a particular region. Aside from procuring information about martial healing and spiritual practices in each country, my approach was also to highlight commonalities and differences in practices across the various countries, taking what could be called a comparative-analytic stance to the investigation. In this report, countries are discussed in the order in which they were visited. Hence, our discussion will begin with Thailand.

*Below:
Sculpted warrior guarding
the entrance to the Dusit
Maham Prasad, the king's
audience chamber located in
Bangkok's Grand Palace.*



Photo by M. DeMarco

THAILAND

Most writings to date suggest that the Thai race originally emigrated from central China. Earlier combative encounters were primarily with the Chinese and Mongols (thirteenth century A.D.) though later encounters with the Burmese people continued over many years. It is regrettable that with the Burmese invasion of Thailand's ancient capital of Ayuddhaya in 1767, many religious relics and records concerning the origins and practices of martial activities (boxing, sword and club fighting, dancing, etc.) were destroyed. However, in many dance forms today, one can observe the use of swords, lances, krises, sticks and shields. Two primary combat systems found today in Thailand are *krabi-krabong*, a weapon system of sword and staff fighting, and *muay-thai*, a unique form of Thai boxing.

Krabi-Krabong constitutes one of Thailand's oldest martial arts. While its origins are unknown, it is said to have originated during the fourteenth century at a time when idle warriors devised a fighting system for entertainment during peaceful times. It is actually composed of several different weapon systems which were integrated together and tested in contests designed to assess endurance, skill, and fighting spirit. For these events, real weapons were not used; rather, imitation weapons made of wood, bamboo or rattan were used as substitutes. Among the weapons used are the *krabi*

(sabre), *plong* (bamboo pole or quarter staff), *ngow* (halberd), *dadb* (Thai carved sword), and *maisun* (a pair of wooden clubs). Matches are held on even ground and accompanied by music derived from *glong kaek* (a pair of drums), *ching* (brass cymbals) and *pi'chawa* (a pipe). The function of the music is to put contestants into various moods through alteration of volume and tempo (*Muay Thai*, 1990a; Stockman, 1982).

A match begins with two contestants dressed in historical costumes kneeling at opposite ends of an arena. More advanced fighters wear around the head a sacred cord known as *mong-khon*. It purportedly contains magic spells designed to ward off injuries and evil spirits. The music begins, and with ritual weapons at their sides, fighters pay homage to their teachers by making various gestures called *wai kruh*. The contestants then take up their weapons and start the *khun prom*, a slow dance which moves in each of the four directions. This ritual calls upon guardian spirits for protection. It ends in the center of the arena with opponents facing one another. Another dance then starts which takes the fighters to opposite corners of the combat area; at the end they return to the original kneeling position. The competitors demonstrate their favorite techniques during this dance. Experts are able to judge the skill as well as the school of a fighter by this performance (*Muay Thai*, 1990a; Stockman, 1982).

Later, the ritual weapons are replaced by contest weapons. The music plays again and the fighters perform the *dern plaeng*, a demonstration of reverence to the opponent. They move quickly but carefully towards and past each other and, when in striking range, attack suddenly but immediately walk back to their original place. At this point, the actual fight starts. All preliminaries so far are regulated by strict rules, but during the fight anything can occur. Kicks are used freely, and one can see the occasional judo throw, especially when a fighter has lost his weapon. The matches have no time limit. He who holds out longest will be declared the winner. For the most part, *krabi-krabong* is viewed by Thais as a traditional Thai sport often taught within the country's educational curriculum at various colleges and universities (Stockman, 1982).

It can be seen from its ritualistic components that *krabi-krabong* evolved from an older discipline which had strong spiritual roots. While much of this early spiritual component has been lost with the passage of time, an opportunity arose to interview seventy-five year old Samai Mesaman, the only living grandmaster of *krabi-krabong* (*Muay Thai*, 1990b) to learn what remnants of spiritual and healing techniques were known to him.

According to Master Samai, strong spiritual roots originally comprised the practice of *krabi-krabong*. Within this tradition, concentrative meditation was practiced prior to physical performance. The actual meditation practice involved concentrating on a point on the middle of the forehead, visualizing a Buddha image, imagining oneself as a Buddha image, and reciting Pali Buddhist chants which involved repeating the word "Buddha" over and over again. Breathing practices were also used with concentration at the navel; the practitioner would inhale and exhale diaphragmatically, circulating energy (known as *palay chil*) from the navel up the back to the top of the head, out toward any external object of meditation, and then back to the navel. Meditation could be practiced with eyes opened or closed primarily to quiet the mind. With this spiritual emphasis and background, a practitioner of *krabi-krabong* was more interested in learning to protect himself from harm than in destroying an opponent. To this end, healing practices also comprised this system of combat. Utilizing the mind, an individual could use *palay chil* to heal an injured person. The practice could be done through direct physical contact or at a distance (non-tactile). One could also prevent injuries from occurring. Should injuries occur, massage and the use of special oils can assist in healing. As with many other martial arts traditions, mention was also made of utilizing this same energy to cause injury by pointing one's finger at a particular part of an opponent's body. Regrettably, Master Samai lamented that *krabi-krabong* has degenerated into a "sport form" in which the older spiritual component is no longer emphasized, a finding echoed repeatedly by many masters in various countries.

Turning to the other major Thai martial art, *muay-thai*, one finds similar spiritual connections in this tradition as well. Much of the information available today concerning earlier aspects of *muay-thai* is often derived from contradictory information found in the

writings of early European writers as well as Burmese, Cambodian and Chinese sources. Disputes of national importance appear to have been settled by deeds involving unarmed combat in the form of boxing, dated reliably back to the early 1400's. In the early part of the seventeenth century, *muay-thai* comprised a part of military training. The popularity of *muay-thai* reached its zenith during the reign of Pra Chao Sua, the "Tiger King" (1703-1709), when it became a favorite pastime of the people. At this time, many of the teachers were Buddhist monks who viewed training in the sport as one aspect of the educational curriculum. In its earlier years, the Thai boxer might bind hands and forearms with horsehide (later replaced by hemp or cotton) as self-protection as well as to inflict damage on an opponent. Groin guards consisted of tree bark or sea shells held in place by a piece of cloth. In the 1930's and 1940's, modern modifications were introduced when rules and regulations from international boxing were introduced as were modern boxing gloves and other protective equipment. Some older practitioners have argued that this development led to the death of traditional *muay-thai* and the emergence of a new overly-commercialized sport form. Presently, *muay-thai* is a hard, external art which makes use of punches, elbow attacks, knee kicks, foot techniques, holds and throws (Stockmann, 1979).

A connection between Buddhism and *muay-thai* can be seen today in many of *muay-thai*'s traditional customs and rites. Before an individual is allowed to join a boxing camp today, the entrance ritual known as the *wai-khru* ceremony must be performed, as is also the case with *krabi-krabong*. The ceremony is held before a shrine (allegedly housing the guardian spirit of a particular compound) and flanked on either side by *muay-thai* equipment where a student makes offerings of joss sticks, a piece of white cloth, flowers, candles, coins or small presents before reciting a pledge of loyalty. This is followed by a period of meditation (*phaw-wa-na*), chants (*suad*) and Buddhist rituals, and talks by the teacher and master of ceremonies. Before an actual fight, a fighter performs the *wai-khru* to music, kneeling in the ring and facing the direction of his camp, home or birthplace. He then covers his eyes with his gloves, reciting a short prayer while boxing three times so that his gloves touch the canvas. The boxing dance known as *ram-muay* follows. The *ram-muay* can be performed in a variety of ways and serves as a warm-up exercise and to keep evil spirits away. Silent prayers (*wai-phra*) and recitation of magic formula known as *mon* (Sanskrit, *mantra*) may accompany the *ram-muay* performance to assist in fighting performance and self-protection. At this time, the boxer also wears the *mong-khon* which belongs to the fighter's teacher and is considered to be sacred. During an actual fight, a boxer may wear around one or both biceps a string or piece of cloth known as *khruang-rang* which contains a picture of a saint or the Buddha, protective charms, or an herb said to have magic properties. Today, in rural settings, some Thai monks will teach fighting skills for purposes of discipline and self-defense in monasteries to young boys who live with them. While enlightenment (*kham-ru-chaeng*) is a goal of the monk, *muay-thai* is not viewed as a vehicle by which this goal can be attained. The practice of formal meditation such as *samathi* (one-point concentration) is reserved for the monk, although lay individuals as well as Thai boxers can become monks. To the extent that modern innovations have been introduced, the importance of religious associations appears to have been minimized (Maliszewski, 1992). Thai boxing is the country's foremost sport form today with fights drawing huge crowds nightly at various stadiums. To probe the roots of *muay-thai* further, an interview was conducted with Thawon Chaipong, an old Thai boxer knowledgeable in this little-known spiritual component. Echoing the position of Sumai, Thawon indicated that Thai boxing training today is largely superficial. Esoteric practices have all but disappeared. Historically, magical practices could protect a fighter from injury. In addition to what has been described thus far, two types of massage were used. One type involved stimulating various points in the body for aid in healing injuries. Another, more basic type of massage was used to loosen up muscles to assist in fighting skill. Herbs could also be employed. No formal description of "internal energy" was given, nor was there any specific type of breathing regimen practiced. Thai Buddhism is largely animistic in nature with a strong belief in spirits. Meditation practices largely involved praying to spirits to derive

additional strength. In select cases, it was held that the spirits of deceased practitioners could enter the body of living practitioners to aid in martial performance. However, true belief in spiritual practices was important to effect the goals sought through such practices. The practice of empty rituals when the fighter lacked true faith in their efficiency would not lead to fruition. All in all, both martial forms found in Thailand reflect an altogether too common observation today: All that remain of spiritual and healing practices are remnants of a once vital spiritual tradition.

MALAYSIA & INDONESIA

In reviewing the martial arts of Indonesia and Malaysia, it is best to consider them together. The dominant self-defense system is generally known a *silat*. In Indonesia, the national defense form is called *pencak-silat*, while in Malaysia, the term often used is *bersilat* (meaning "to do *silat*"). The forms of these systems are highly similar since the Indonesian form was introduced to the Malaccaro court and probably influenced the development of *bersilat*. As many sources suggest, the Malay people originally came from present-day Sumatra (part of Indonesia), and the fighting form originally came from Indonesia. Our discussion will begin with an overview of developments in this country.

Though little is accurately known of its ancient history, the import of both cultural and combative influences into Indonesia from other countries such as China, India and Indochina has been widely documented. Migrations among peoples of the 3,000 islands comprising this country have been frequent and of long duration, and the combative and mystical elements which continued to evolve over time developed into highly sophisticated fighting arts. Three major combative forms are presently found in Indonesia: *pencak-silat*, *kun-tao* and a variety of "endemic" forms. It is generally conceded that *pencak-silat* is the best known self-defense discipline and the one which has the strongest association with spiritual practices. Many theories exist concerning its origins. However, a commonly held view suggests that the art first developed in the Minangkabau kingdom on the west central coast of Sumatra. While it is likely that it still existed in a relatively crude form during its formative development in the eleventh century A.D., by the fourteenth century it had become a highly refined and sophisticated technical art that belonged exclusively to the Majapahit sultans and their court officials. Over time, the practice of this combative art was open to other social classes. Combative influences derived from Indian, Chinese, Arabic and later Japanese sources as well as travel among the various islands led to rapid diversification of varying styles currently exceeding over 150 in number (Draeger, 1972). Combatively speaking, the term *pencak* generally connotes a variety of skillful body movements for self-defense, while *silat* refers to the fighting application of *pencak*. While these two components can be

In Southeast Asia, intricate dance movements are stylistically flowing and graceful and are customarily accompanied by a hypnotic blend of percussion and other classical instruments. Great similarities exist in martial arts of the region.



Photo by M. DeMarco

demonstrated separately, neither can be said to exist authentically without the other. In *bersilat*, a similar distinction also exists. *Pulut* refers to a dance-like series of movements found in public display. *Buah* is a realistic combat method seldom displayed publicly. Among the most eclectic of fighting arts, *silat* styles make use of both armed and unarmed techniques, employing fast, deceptive movements, blending with an opponent's force and directing it along specific channels where it may then be controlled. Weaponry includes numerous blade, staff, stick and projective instruments, and unarmed techniques include hand strikes, kicks, grapples and methods of falling. Technical characteristics of the respective style are determined by physical abilities and cultural mannerisms of the people of a particular area, and major characteristics can be ascribed generally to specific regions.

As a formal tradition, spiritual components of *pencak-silat* are known to have developed through contact with Hindu and Islamic religious teachings. Styles will vary as to the degree that spiritual elements are stressed. The use of deep breathing techniques (*menarik napas dalam*) is central to attaining spiritual capacities and insight. Capabilities reported by these practitioners include mystic healing, mind reading, precognition, the ability to touch and disable an opponent, identification with and emulation of the characteristics of certain animals, the ability to place spells on enemies, combat invulnerability and even the ability to "kill at a distance." However, a strict ethical code underlies all defensive and offensive actions. Moreover, the spiritualistic element takes precedence over physical technique (Draeger and Smith, 1969).

The final stage of training in many styles of *silat* is often referred to as *kebatinan* (*batin*, inner, internal, in the heart, hidden and mysterious; *kebatinan*, the science of the "batin"). It is important to note that mysticism in this part of the world generally lacks a systematic theology, this observation stemming from the view that the practice of mysticism remains an individual endeavor with great importance placed upon one's own personal revelation and inner emotional experience. Hence, as with the various styles of *silat*, pursuit of the mystical path incorporates methods and practices which will be different for each sect. Philosophically and experientially speaking, non-martial methods of spiritual development resemble the path of *silat* in many ways, such as the completion of a series of stages on the mystical path, moving from external concerns in the world to inner development, the importance given to the role of *guru*, and the significance attributed to moral and ethical conduct. The path of *kebatinan* seeks to develop inner tranquility and the *rase* (intuitive inner feeling) through the use of a method known as *sujud* (self-surrender). By ridding himself of bodily desires and other impulses through this self-surrender, one may experience intuitively the divine presence of "God" residing within the heart (*batin*). While this conceptual framework may prove useful in conveying the distinct cultural imprint associated with mystical-religious practices in this part of the world, it more than likely detracts from a clear picture of the unique and variable forms which the spiritual practices take among various practitioners of *pencak-silat*. As noted earlier with other fighting arts, the degree to which the mystical practices are pursued and realized will vary from one practitioner to another. Indeed, some practitioners today avoid all involvement with magical mysticism and *kebatinan*, while other reportedly test their prowess by practicing the non-corporeal, mystical aspects of their style (Maliszewski, 1992).

While *silat* styles vary to some degree within and across Malaysia and Indonesia, an attempt was made to highlight the similarities and differences found within several different schools. For Malaysia, contact was made with *seni sri mersing*, a *silat* group only found in that country. Interviews were conducted with two representatives of this tradition. Abdul Wahib Bin Awang is a grandmaster of a system comprised of some 20,000 practitioners. His heir, Raja Ali B. Salleli, was also helpful in articulating aspects of their *silat* system. Interviews were conducted at Kluang, Johor, Malaysia, some eight hours distance by car from the capital, Kuala Lumpur.

To begin, in all of the martial traditions investigated in Malaysia and Indonesia, there is reference to an "internal" component of "energy" at least known to practitioners of the martial arts. However, articulating or describing the nature of this "entity" is often difficult. Unlike India, China, or Korea, where a definitive structure and set of pathways

in the body are identified for the existing flow of such "energy," discussion of this phenomenon in Malaysia or Indonesia is more "amorphous." There does exist an "inner power" component, but terms are often used which create a nebulous impression, similar to wording used to describe *kebatinan* noted earlier. In *seni sri mersing*, the term *hizib* was used to refer to the concept of "internal energy." It was described loosely as coming from the top of the head, flowing down to the heart, and then passing through to the right hand and then to the left hand. With *hizib* in the body, a practitioner could not be hurt, and he developed the ability to heal. Internal strength was further cultivated by the repetition of *zikir* (Arabic, *dhikr*), techniques of remembrance or recollection of God (Allah) performed silently or aloud. These techniques are similar to the Indian *mantra*. Part of *zikir* also involves repetition of sacred words by counting on one's fingers thirty-three times. There is no use of mystical diagrams or gestures as part of the spiritual practice.

A special type of breathing which involves inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth also enhances this practice. When this breathing technique is performed with *zikir*, one becomes invulnerable to attacks. This is a very fast, pressured type of breathing exercise which I have never witnessed elsewhere in any other type of martial or healing system.

Zikir essentially represents the meditative practice found within the *seni sri mersing* tradition. Mental concentration may also be placed upon an image of one's own teacher and the knowledge transmitted from teacher to disciple. Vital points – vulnerable points of attack and defense – are well known to many systems of martial arts. The term used to refer to them is *pukulan maut*. Striking these points can cause injury and also effect healing of the body. While specific locations are generally kept secret, particular points were described as being located at the eyes, heart, throat, behind the earlobes, on the rib cage, and behind the shoulder blades. The highest levels of training in *seni sri mersing* are spiritual in nature; at these levels one cannot be defeated or hurt physically. Increased repetition of *zikir* makes one stronger. The term used to refer to the highest level of spiritual development is *ha ta mun ha su ah*.

There are a number of healing practices found in this system. However, none of them would be demonstrated to me personally because I was an outsider, nor was I allowed to videotape them, as this was viewed as a serious violation of the Muslim religious code, punishable by banishment from Malaysia! One practice consists of taking a lime and squeezing its juice into a pail of water. This lime water (*mandi penimbul*) is then poured over a student by the *guru* (teacher) who then begins the *zikir*. This is only performed in the area of the training school, its effects making a student impervious to pain. No special medicines or oils are used. Massage may be used if applications of the lime juice does not heal an earlier injury. Another practice known as *memulih* consists of taking *hizib* and transmitting it to another's body via physical contact to the wounded area. Unlike other types of *silat*, there is no trance state sought. A technique known as *pukau* or *cuca* involves use of the *zikir* and blowing air on a person. This technique serves to render an opponent weak so that his movements become very slow and one can avoid being hit. A student may also learn to heal or be healed by a *guru* through use of *zikir* and breathing performed in this *silat* system.

Turning to practices encountered in Indonesia, the first example of healing practices witnessed in Bogor was performed by a group known as *dabus*. A practice linked to mystical Islam, the purpose of this group's demonstration was to furnish proof of invulnerability (*kekebalan*) by engaging in a variety of practices that would lead an ordinary individual to injury or death. Detailed information on the *dabus* can be found in Vredenburg (1973). An extraordinary performance by young members of the *dabus* as witnessed where practitioners were observed to swallow razor blades and nails and chew up light bulbs, tear open a coconut with their teeth alone, rub the body with fire, and sustain no injuries from sharp pointed instruments and knives. An interview with Nandang Rahmat Saputra was conducted after the filmed performance to acquire a greater understanding of both physical and psychological aspects of the practice.

Nandang is thirty-one years old and has been a member of the *dabus* for some

sixteen years. His title is that of a leader (*seh dabus*) although he has not yet evolved to the status of *guru* (teacher). To begin, *dabus* practices are not directly part of *silat per se* although Nandang practices *Cimande* style of *silat* (to be discussed later). As part of the *dabus'* performance, the mind is focused on the task at hand with the thought that one will not be hurt or experience pain. Nandang learned these techniques from his grandfather and he stressed that few people could learn to do these practices. Prior to actual performance, one recites *dzikir* (*zikir*) for ninety minutes. If this is not done, one's ability to perform is significantly impaired. For specific practices, particular abstinences and practices apply. For example, to eat glass, one must fast for three days and only sleep during the daytime (never at night) as well as recite specific *mantra* and *dzikir*. Invoking the name of Allah provides one with confidence in self.

As for the performance itself, Nandang was very relaxed. There appeared to be no pause or altered state of consciousness achieved. The background music played aided the physical performance (a practice found in a number of martial arts). In this case, a special song known as "Red Flower" was played. To achieve skill in performance, a practitioner will use a trial-and-error method to perfect his technique until he reaches the level of skill sought. In this training, one can get hurt. Over time, one is able to develop inner power (*tamaga dalam*) which can actually be transferred to a person who has no training or specific skill (known as *ingaman*). For example, I observed Nandang to drink a glass of water between techniques. This glass of water is infused by *mantra*. If another person drinks this water, he will develop inner power as well. To take away this inner power, one must take the *mantra* out of the water. If different words are contained within *dzikir*,

then different skills can be tested. Nandang admitted that his skills were not as developed as other older members of the *dabus*. Nandang indicated that advanced practices could be demonstrated for me. Practices mentioned that could be conducted at a later date (with sufficient time of advanced notice), included being run over by a car, pouring sulfuric acid on oneself with no pain response, licking fire, and taking a stake and sticking it through one side of the neck and pulling it out through the opposite side.

The style of *silat* practiced by this *dabus* group was known as *Cimande* style (*ci*, water; *mande*, river), founded in a city by that name in 1877. An interview with several practitioners (Daniel Monintja, Meinhard Wagey and Ahmed Fuad) was conducted to learn more about this system.

There exist two aspects of training in this system, one physical and the other metaphysical (*kebatinan*). The physical component consists of performing specific forms known as *jurus*. Thirty-three *jurus* are used in the weaponless aspects of training. Thirty-six *jurus* are practiced with weapons. Pursuit of metaphysical practices is up to the individual. There is reference to "inner energy" though no particular term is used to describe it, nor are there any special movements or behaviors performed to acquire it. It actually develops automatically through the practice of *dzikir*. *Dzikir* is described as a type of relaxed meditation performed with normal breathing while thinking only about Allah. No particular attention is given to any part of the body, i.e., point of concentration. *Tasbih* – a counterpart to the rosary of Catholicism – may also be used during *dzikir*. The effect of *dzikir* is to acquire self-confidence. Readings re-

Terraced valley on Bali, one of over 3,000 Indonesian islands. Unique geographic and religious aspects greatly affected the martial and medical practices of Indonesia.



Photo by M. DeMarco

peated during the *dzikir* are actually quotes from the Koran. For all individuals using it, the *dzikir* encompasses breath, prayer, and the individual's mental state. However, specific verses can have various meanings and are read for various purposes.

There are two types of practices within *kebatinan*. One type is done *with* the practice of *silat* (involving two dimensions: human or supernatural, i.e., spirits of deceased individuals), and the other is *without silat* and involves the dimension or level of God which can be used in *silat* if permission is given by Allah. Besides the practice of *dzikir*, practitioners are expected to follow the *talek*, which constitutes a moral code containing some fourteen premises (for example, obeying one's parents, being a good Muslim, engaging in regular prayer, etc.). Individuals who follow these principles are referred to as *sesepeuh*.

There is a very famous healing system associated with *Cimande*. However, no esoteric use of trance states, hypnosis, visual imagery, mystical diagrams, or references to vital points constitutes a part of the system. Rather, this system is known primarily for its application of special oils (called *Cimande* oil) to the body which, when combined with laying-on-of-hands techniques, effects cures of many types of diseases and injuries. Among diseases, injuries, or illnesses treated are hypertension, broken bones, polio, mental illness, and problems associated with black magic. One such advanced healer and *silat* master is Cabang Kotamadya, who stated that the skill to heal is derived from knowledge acquired from his ancestors (much of it esoterically described in an Arabic text which is only intelligible to one who possesses the "inner power"). Use of herbs, oils, *dzikir* and massage can aid healing. The approach taken to healing involves three steps. The first step is to observe or watch a patient. The second step is to ask the patient a set of questions to determine if one is dealing with a real disease or black magic. (*Kebatinan* can involve either white or black magic.) In the final step, the healer "senses" or "feels" what is wrong with the patient (without any special preparation, such as *dzikir* or fasting).

Aside from the two previous healing-oriented practices, a third system of *silat* provides a different perspective on the complex Indonesian mystical tradition. This style of *silat* is known as *merpatih putih* (white dove) and is famous for its breathing techniques that can extend beyond the development of "inner power" on to invulnerability. According to Master Budi Santoso, practitioners of *merpatih putih* essentially rely only upon breathing exercise development (*latihan pengolahan napas*) to nurture "inner power" leading to such skills as combat invulnerability, or sensing out or locating hidden objects without use of the five primary senses. This system is primarily a "sport form" of self-defense which appears in yearly competitions. Its proponents attempt to explain much of its extra-sensory skill development using scientific terminology and principles of physics and biochemistry. For example, a practitioner is said to be able to locate a hidden object because each object vibrates at a different frequency, and the practitioner learns to develop his skill by picking up the frequency of this object or "feeling it" in his mind. Hence, unlike other systems of *silat*, this style disclaims any need for or reference to *dzikir*, prayer, chanting, *kebatinan*, mysticism, formal healing practices, or the like. However, an individual can learn mental techniques to prevent any injuries from occurring. To develop this skill, an individual must practice *latihan* twice a week, for two hours at a time, over a two-year time period. An example of the most impressive skill development displayed as it relates to healing power was teaching a congenitally blind man to read a book by having him sense the shape of letters in a book with his fingertips.

Overall, I believe that the mystical-religious practices of Indonesia are the least explored area of healing in Asia known today. The diversity of the various sects and their respective practices would make for interesting film footage and investigation. The connecting link among the diverse cults and groups may, ironically, be their direct or indirect connection with *silat*. While each of the groups remains relatively autonomous, to systemize and provide a base for dialogue among the hundreds of different *silat* styles the government of Indonesia has created an organization known as IPSI (Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia) which lends itself to research investigation. It was this organization and its director, Rustadi Effendi, which provided me access to otherwise unavailable *silat* groups scattered throughout various regions of the country.

PHILIPPINES

It is generally thought that an early pygmy tribe called Negritos were the first settlers to arrive in the Philippines from Central Asia. Three separate Malay migrations followed, beginning around 200 B.C. and the last continuing until the middle of the fifteenth century A.D. Between these years, the second group of people called Brahmins came from India to Sumatra, creating the famous Hindu-Malayan empire of Sri Vishaya. The third migration involved the takeover of the Sri Vishaya Empire by the Majapahit Empire, originally formed in Java. Aside from the use of bladed weapons brought by the Malay migrations, martial skills from China entered the country (following earlier Indian influence), promoted by extensive trade relations which had begun in the ninth century. At this time, the fighting arts were known as *kali* (derived from *kalis*, sabre, sword) which referred to a stick, empty-hand or multi-weapon art that had been used effectively as a system of self-defense by the islanders for centuries (Inosanto, 1980).

Though its beginnings are rooted in weapons combat – specifically blade, dagger or stick – the Filipino arts are complete self-defense disciplines making use of a variety of weapons and empty-hand techniques. There exist over one hundred styles or systems which can be divided into three main groups: northern, central and southern Filipino systems. Northern systems, based on the long stick and long blade, are designed to be used from a long range and seldom have an empty hands component to the art. The central systems are based on the principles of sword and dagger (*espada y daga*), use the stick for training and fighting, are designed to be employed at medium range, and have a sophisticated empty-hand art. Finally, southern systems use the stick for training but the blade for combat, possess an empty-hands component, and are used at medium or close range. *Eskrima* is the term which refers to those systems based on *espada y daga*, while *arnis* often pertains to those systems based on the use of the single stick or double stick (Inosanto, 1980).

The art of *kali* was particularly strong in the central and southern regions of the Philippines. During the Chinese Tang dynasty (618-907 A.D.), training in warrior skills as well as academic pursuits such as religion, ethics and philosophy was conducted at an ancient school known as *bothoan*. Implicit within the system of education and philosophy of life was the premise that both martial and non-martial aspects of life constituted the whole of existence and could not be viewed separately without distorting their role and import in the culture.

Kali was taught on three different levels: physical, mental and spiritual. The physical level of training was generally divided into three parts which could vary from one system to another. Classifications included the following: (a) standing positions and tactics, squatting positions and tactics, lying positions and tactics; (b) long weapons, short weapons, no weapons; (c) holding weapons, projective weapons and empty-hands training. Mental training was directed to an understanding of the body, man's psychological makeup and the role of cosmic forces. On the final, spiritual level, the *kali* practitioner sought to become one with *Bathala* (God, creator and chief deity) (Maliszewski, 1992).

Today, some fighting systems make distinctions between the internal and external aspects of the arts while others do not. Again, clearly the form and degree to which the religious goals may be stressed will vary greatly from one practitioner to another. In the case of the Filipino arts with their highly individualized systems of combat, the impact of the instructor probably bears greater weight than the principles outlined within a particular martial system. However, while the metaphysical and spiritual bases of the arts exist, few practitioners are either aware of or stress this dimension in their teachings.

To explore the prevalence of spiritual and healing practices in the Philippines today, contact was made with a well-known practitioner of the Filipino martial arts, Dionisio Canete. Canete is a member of the Doce Pares system of fighting who has attempted to unite all of the many Filipino martial systems within a central organization known as NARAPHIL (National Arnis Kali Eskrima Association of the Philippines). According to Canete, there are presently only five living grandmasters of the Filipino martial arts and only these practitioners were likely to have any knowledge of the older healing and

QUESTIONS	G R A N D M A S T E R S		
	ILLUSTRISIMO	MENA	LEMA
1. Age began martial arts.	7	8	17
2. Present age.	84	70	72
3. Concept of internal energy.	None	None	None
4. Special type of breathing.	Diaphragmatic to gain power (in the stomach).	Slow inhalation and exhalation; bring air to heart region; exhale fast when striking to increase power.	Natural breathing only.
5. Specific healing techniques.	Say prayer to God and spit on wood and rub in saliva to heal faster.	Prayer to God for healing use of coconut oil and herbs (see also below).	None
6. Specific spiritual practices.	Use of bulong (prayer); pray to God to become strong.	Pray to God; give up self to God; concentrate on opponent's defeat.	None
7. Use massage.	None	Occasional	None
8. Concept of vital points in body.	Yes; called sogo ; strike them to effect injury.	Yes; no specific name.	Concept present; no specific number of points.

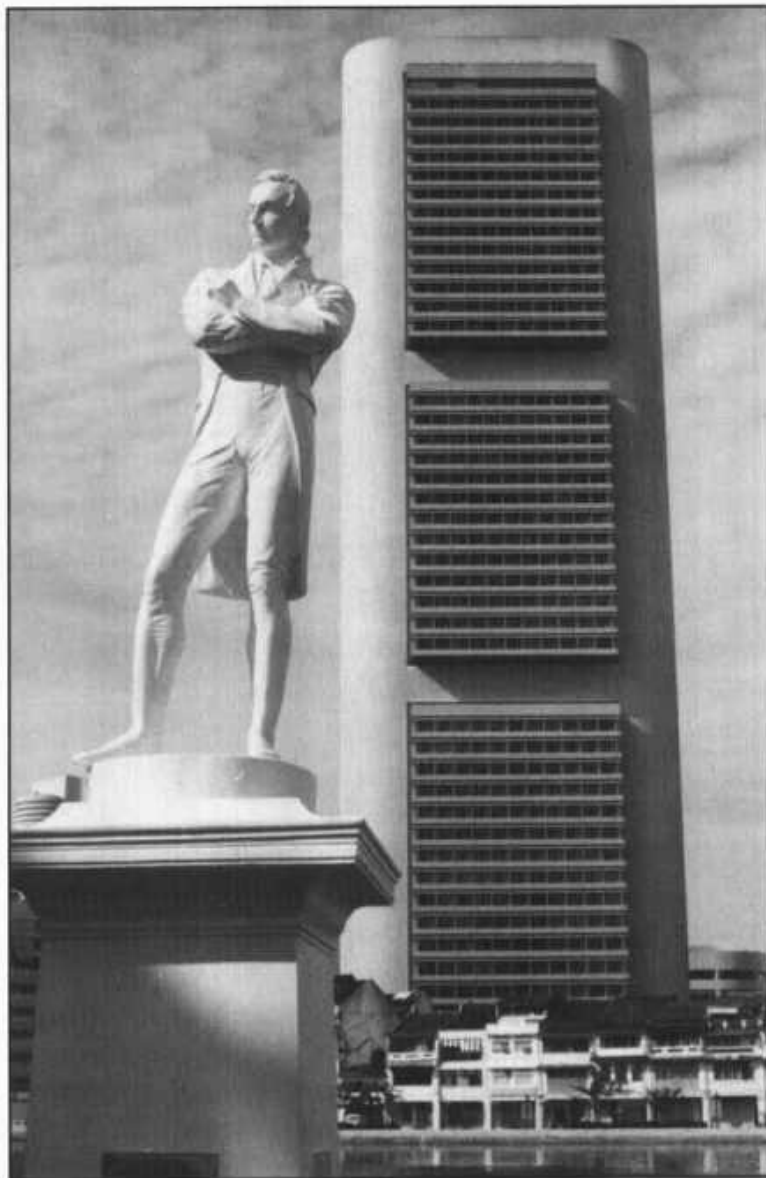
spiritual practices. Three grandmasters consented to interviews and film taping: Antonia Illustrisimo, Jose Mena and Benjamin Lema.

It should be pointed out that, conceptually speaking, Filipino martial arts lack systematic organization. Stressing practicality and utility in martial application, little attention was paid to systemization or structural analysis of a particular style. Hence, even terminology used to describe select physical movements or exercises within the arts (e.g., a particular type of kick) was often lacking. Metaphysical analyses are even less frequent. Hence, a summary of findings from these separate interviews with the grandmasters is found at the top of this page.

While each grandmaster represented a different set of martial traditions, one aspect of "health" which was apparent was the robustness and youthfulness they each embodied, given their chronological ages. All three men moved with noticeable agility and flow, quite uncharacteristic of other people between seventy and eighty years of age.

This appears to be a health-related benefit which is common to virtually all types of martial arts. In this case, all three men lived in economically quite poor surroundings on a less than adequate diet (by Western standards), and yet their reported ages were quite surprising to me.

It should be added that one of the grandmasters, Jose Mena, was also quite skilled as a healer. Essentially, he practices a laying-on-of-hands technique. To effect healing of an injury or discomfort, he will place his hand over the afflicted area without making physical contact. He then concentrates on the patient and takes up the person's pain into



The architecture of Singapore reflects its cultural diversity. In the photo above, a statue of the city's founder indicates how Eastern and Western elements have blended here. Within small Singapore, there exists a large variety of martial arts from various corners of Asia.

Photo by M. DeMarco

his hands which is then "thrown away." Taking out the "bad spirits" in a person, he directs his "inner power" (viewed as "good") into the person. Prayers are also recited to aid in the healing process. Massage and use of oils may follow. As for my own experience with Mena, when his hand was placed over my body, I felt a "prickling sensation" which I inferred to be his "energy" (despite his lack of use of such terminology). As was observed in Thailand, however, it appears that little remains of the spiritual and healing practices once strongly associated with the Filipino martial arts.

SINGAPORE

Singapore was a connecting stop for me on my trip. In contrast to most cities and countries visited, however, this so-called Asian city appeared more Western than Asian: new skyscrapers, shopping stores, modern government-built apartments and clean streets. Singapore achieved independence from Malaysia in 1965 and the state of its economy exceeds what is presently found in the United States. Singapore is made up of a mixture of races (Chinese, Malay, Indian and European) and religious life styles (Hindu, Daoist, Buddhist, Catholic, etc.). For any trip to Asia, I recommend Singapore as a stop-off point. It resembles many Western (U.S.) cities and English is widely spoken. As for martial arts, much of what is found in Malaysia and Indonesia can be found here as well. Chinese *wu-shu* and other styles of martial arts are also prevalent.

Despite my limited time here, I was introduced by my hosts to a Master Song who was described as a healer and meditation teacher. Master Song agreed to a personal interview with me for my research project but refused to permit videotaping for fear that any increased notoriety of his abilities would have dramatic negative consequences on his personal life and role within Singapore. Essentially, Master Song is a middle-age man who conducts "readings" of clients who meet with him. When a person comes to him for advice, he embraces that person spiritually and then visualizes that person in his mind, empties his own mind of thoughts, and then receives information in his mind which he previously did not know consciously about that person. People come to see him for all types of conditions, medical and psychological. If he cannot help with impressions he receives personally, he refers them to a hospital or physician.

Master Song describes his form of meditation as "mindfulness." Though of Chinese descent, he was born into the Roman Catholic faith yet became personally attracted to Buddhism. At the early age of eight, he recognized his skill in "reading" people. Spending time in Thailand learning meditative techniques, he improved his skills further. The basic meditation techniques he uses involve repeating the mantra "put" with every inhalation through the nose and "paw" with every exhalation through the mouth. One's attention is directed to the tip of the nose during this breathing exercise. Also, the tongue is curled backwards to the roof of the mouth. When treating a patient, a pulse is taken to assess blood circulation. Meditation on a Buddha image may follow together with prayers

directed to the hope that a patient gets well. Thoughts or impressions which come to Master Song's mind are then shared with the patient. Two or three visits constitute the average length of treatment. Laying-on-of-hands may also be part of the treatment. However, it is the mind which allows the healing to take place: no transmission of "energy" is involved. If a person is not willing to help himself, then he or she will not get well. I observed one person, who had not been helped by traditional Western medical approaches in Singapore, being treated on a follow-up basis for poor sleep patterns, depression, weight loss and fatigue. The young man reported a significant improvement in his condition with advice given to him by Master Song. No fees were charged for these visits either, patients making contact through word of mouth only: all in all, a rather unusual "healing encounter" amidst the bustle of a modern, metropolitan city.

TAIWAN

Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, resembles Singapore more closely than any other city discussed thus far. Expressways, modern buildings, discotheques and department stores . . . the city blossomed some twenty years ago, springing out of the Third World and it, too, represents another of Asia's success stories. However, one is sure to see the Chinese influence. Little English is spoken here in favor of Mandarin Chinese or Taiwanese. While Chinese healing practices were to be explored later in my travels in Mainland China, it was important to see representatives of Chinese practices in this republic and to see how they might differ from practices found on the Mainland. For this country, the Chinese practice of *qigong* was investigated with two practitioners, one a Western-trained Chinese physician and the other a master of internal Chinese martial arts.

Dr. Lin Hsiung is a thirty-nine year old physician whose specialties include nuclear medicine as well as acupuncture and *qigong*. Trained in Taiwan, he has worked at Sheng Ming General Hospital for three years and also has a small, separate private practice, treating all types of patients of various ages. His training in Chinese medicine (specifically *qigong* and acupuncture) took place in medical school and he uses it in an ancillary resource in his work. Major medical problems are approached through practices of Western medical techniques and *qigong* may be used as a complementary technique to speed recovery. (For an understanding of *qigong* from a native perspective, see Cui, 1989). Dr. Lin points out that *qigong* is not popular in general hospital use, only perhaps 2% of physicians trained in Western medicine choosing to use *qigong*. However, he does point

Located in downtown Taipei, New Park presents a spectacle of martial arts, qigong and assorted exercises each morning. Shown here is the practice of Taijiquan's "push-hands" useful for the development of relaxation, sensitivity, martial skills and the control of inner energies.



Photo by M. DeMarco



Above: Young men perform a martial drama in front of a temple in Taiwan's ancient city of Lukang.

Right: During a Daoist ritual of "renewal," performed near the southern city of Tainan, scrolls of gods were hung in a temple to invoke their blessings for the coming year. Warrior gods are sought to fight off sickness and evil temptations as well as for personal protection.

Photos by M. DeMarco



out that most physicians do believe in the efficacy of *qigong* in promoting health. Generally speaking, Dr. Lin's approach is to teach a patient to practice *qigong* on his own rather than to transmit *qi* (internal energy) to the patients as a healing procedure. To this end, he estimates that 50% of those who practice *qigong* do so prophylactically to promote physical health.

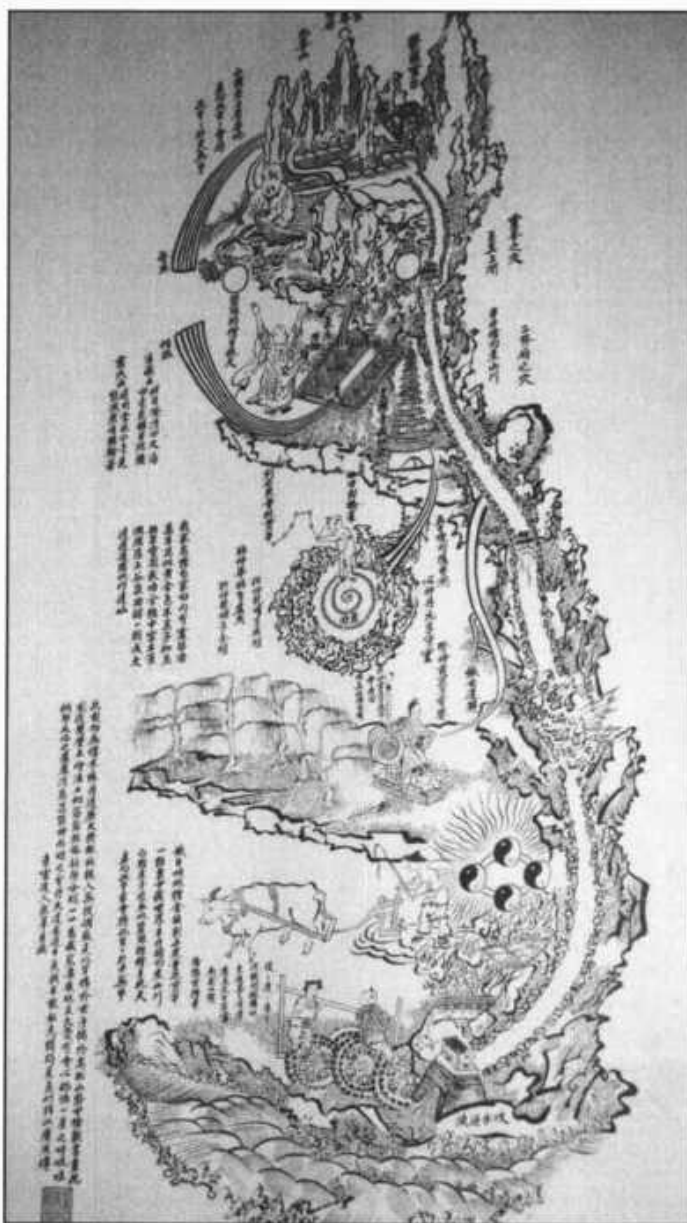
According to Dr. Lin, there are four applications of *qigong*: (1) to improve martial art skills, (2) to increase physical longevity, (3) to promote body health, and (4) to affect another person's mind (psychic influence). For the care of personal friends or acquaintances, Dr. Lin will diagnose and treat a person's condition by directing *qi* in the person's body. To do so, he will assess a person's appearance and direct *qi* to various parts of the body.

Like Western medical practices here in the United States, there are different levels of skill or competency among practitioners. Dr. Lin points out that *qigong* cannot have a deleterious effect on a person unless the teacher of this practice is not well trained. Unqualified practitioners exist even in Taiwan and Dr. Lin has established a Qigong Association of Taiwan to attempt to regulate the quality available to the public. He generally believes the quality or level of *qigong* in Taiwan is comparable to what is encountered on the mainland in China. While some techniques of *qigong* have a background in Chinese martial arts, some Chinese medical doctors may have no background in the martial arts. To this end, Dr. Lin distinguishes between what he calls soft and hard *qigong*. Soft *qigong* techniques have no martial foundations and can be acquired in two weeks time. Hard *qigong* is developed in the context of martial arts practice and it takes ten years to acquire skill in its application. Dr. Lin himself is schooled in both approaches and practices *Taijiquan*,

Paquaquan and *karate* himself. However, he stresses the importance of patients themselves learning these techniques and working to promote their own health and well-being.

In contrast to Dr. Lin, a second representative of *qigong* practice is Master Liao, a Chinese medicine doctor, artist and martial arts master. His nickname is "Monkeyman," named after his expertise in monkey style *wu shu* which involves mimicry of a monkey's movements as part of combat application. Master Liao is ninety-two years old. He has had five wives and has twenty-nine children (sixteen sons and thirteen daughters), the youngest child age five. At a young age, he learned several of the internal Chinese martial arts, and having been beaten up once as a youngster, he decided to learn the martial application of *qigong* from his father-in-law. The original purpose of *qigong* was to prevent pain or injury when being struck. In this practice, *qi* is directed to a region of the body which, together with select muscular movements, prevents any injury to that region of the body. Master Liao demonstrates this martial *qigong* on videotape with an American assistant and *Taijiquan* expert who was studying martial arts in Taipei. As part of this practice, he begins by inhaling air for one to two seconds and then forces the air containing *qi* down into a select region of the body. *Qi* is noted to circulate around in the navel region which is felt as a warm feeling or vibration. Both my assistant and I attempted to strike Master Liao in a designated region of his body. The impact of our blow felt as if we were

hitting solid rock. The region struck was hard but did not feel like muscular tension *per se*. While no pain was felt at the moment of impact, we were both astounded to discover that some thirty seconds later, after the impact, our hands and arms which struck Master Liao began to hurt! This is the classical martial application of *qigong* often described in literature but seldom seen. It can also be used to heal oneself. Master Liao is opposed to the idea that one should direct *qi* into another person's body, even for healing purposes. He also felt that performing any sitting meditation was bad for a person as it could lead to brain damage! He also noted that some individuals had begun to give seminars on *qigong* claiming to be able to heal groups of people at a time with these meetings. His impressions were that these commercial enterprises were a "rip-off" and not holding to the true purpose of *qigong*. It might also be added that Master Liao felt anyone could learn *qigong* and he himself taught sincere people these techniques at no fee. While Master Liao's skills at *qigong* illustrated on the tape are quite impressive, so too was his ability at age ninety-two to demonstrate some forms from his monkey boxing style. Physically, he did not appear close to his age. All in all, his style of *qigong* represents a vanishing trend in martial arts today.



The "Nei Jing Tu" maps in detail the inner workings of the human body. Activities in the psychic centers, or "fields," determine how qi flows. Understanding the inner workings of the qi is necessary for many medical, healing and spiritual aspects of Asian martial arts.

Photo by M. DeMarco

HONG KONG

Hong Kong defies description. A bustling financial center of the world, affluence abounds, extending from spectacular architecture and skyscrapers to fancy automobiles and restaurant and shopping complexes. Initially viewed as a stop-off juncture prior to my travel to Tibet, I decided to explore Hong Kong's martial-healing traditions as time allowed. However, my research earlier noted that spiritual aspects of the martial arts here were largely non-existent. Essentially I had been informed that what one would find would be ancestor worship: paying respects to one's master's ancestors, both real and fictitious. I had also been told that many practitioners in Hong Kong would not speak openly to Westerners, being suspicious of their motives, a carry-over of bad treatment they had experienced at the hands of the British. My initial responses bore this out. Despite sincere contacts, most doors were closed to me. Persistence paid off, however, and one Chinese medicine doctor agreed to let me interview him and film his treatment of various patients visiting his outpatient clinic.

Dr. and Master Liang Neng Ping has a general practice in which he uses techniques of Chinese medicine combined with Western technology (ultrasound, TENS units, etc.) to treat a variety of medical problems. Within his repertoire of treatment techniques are bone setting (*ti da*), massage, use of herbs, and occasionally, *qigong*. He no longer performs acupuncture because of patients' fears of needles being inserted in the body and concerns associated with contraction of AIDS. Several treatment approaches to various ailments were demonstrated, including those for an injured elbow, broken toe, torn tendon and heart-pain. Interestingly, the young man suffering form heart-pain is treated by principles of *qigong* and mild massage. Dr. Liang has a background in martial arts, having practiced for twenty-four years an external (hard) style know as *chow-gar* (combining the hand movements of *choi-li-fut* and stances and footwork of *hung-gar* from southern China).

The style of *qigong* which Master Liang practices is known as *Hsi-tsang mi-tsung qigong*, suggesting by the name a Tibetan influence. Noting the case of heart-pain, Liang states that the *qi* in his body is directed into his hand. It is then directed into the patient's body. His own breathing is performed naturally, and cultivation of *qi* in the navel region is not viewed as being very important. His own meditation beliefs are that *qi* enters the region of the "third eye" from the outside and is directed down to the navel region (*t'an-t'ien*). From here it returns to the forehead region again and out through the top of the head. Master Liang views *qigong* as a relatively "simple" technique, similar to *yoga*. Interestingly, despite his background in martial arts, he only uses *qigong* to heal others. His own *chow-gar* style makes no use of *qi* at all. And he is quick to point out that many martial arts masters do not perform *qigong*.

View from Victoria Peak, looking over Hong Kong's Central District and harbor toward Kowloon. Despite the modern surface, age-old facets of Chinese culture live on in Hong Kong, often hidden away amid the forest of high-rises.

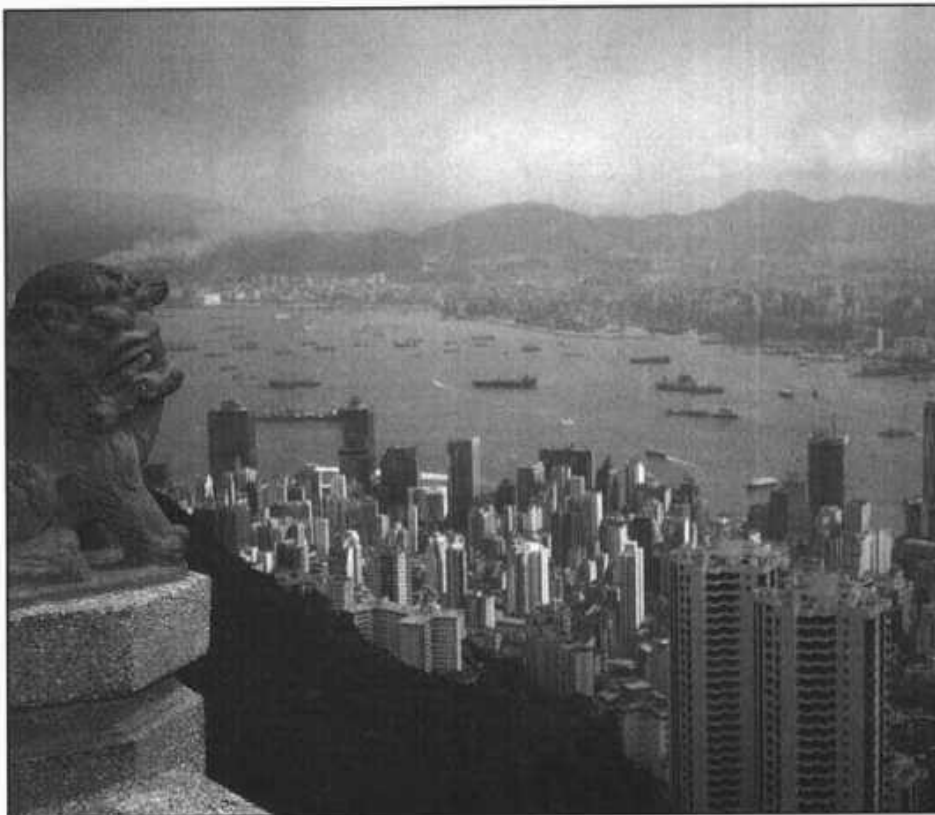


Photo by M. DeMarco

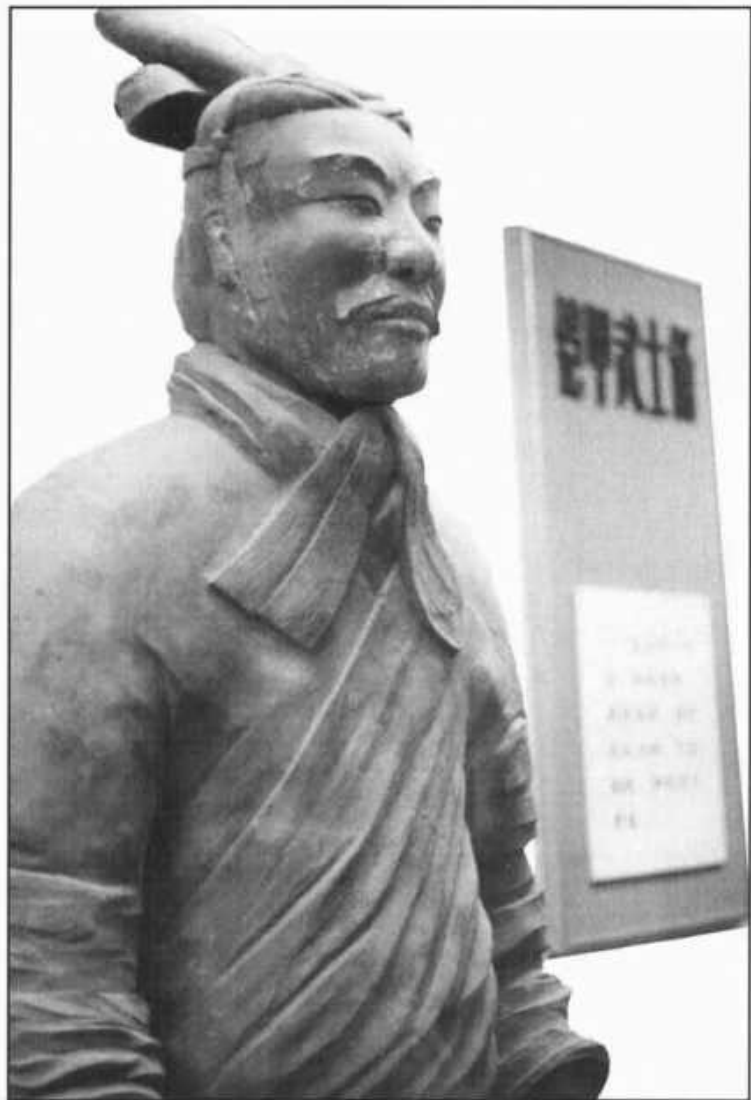
CHINA

The fighting arts of China remain poorly understood and inadequately researched. Early fighting forms are known to date back to the Zhou dynasty (1122-255 B.C.) and references to archery, wrestling and various weaponry appear in literature which predates the Christian era. A close association between ritual dances and the fighting arts has led to divergent theories concerning the origins of Chinese combat systems: some speculate that they may have emerged as a category of Daoist physical exercises while others believe that they constituted distinct fighting arts which later incorporated Daoist principles within their practices (Henning, 1981).

Though again lacking in strong evidence, practitioners of modern fighting arts often claim to trace components of their system back to the original Shaolin techniques allegedly introduced by Bodhidharma. At the present time, the major styles of *wu shu* are generally divided into two groups: external (*wai-chia quan-fa*) or hard (*kang*) and internal (*nei-chia quan fa*) or soft (*jou*). The external system stresses power strikes, greater use of kicks, hand conditioning and physical strength. While advocating regulation of breath, the emphasis lies more on generating quick movements, utilizing force in straight lines, and responding to force with force. The internal school emphasizes the importance of vital energy (*qi*), the will (*i*), and internal strength. It is the goal of many practitioners to collect, cultivate and store *qi* in the *tan-t'ien* (field of elixir), a region located below the navel, through Daoist deep breathing techniques of *qigong*. The internal schools are considered to be defensive and generally focus on approaches which include the following: emphasis on vulnerable body targets and use of clawing and poking hand blows; execution of circular movements and use of a sweeping action for deflection of oncoming attacks; and upsetting the harmony and balance of an attacker by "going with the blow": exploiting the oncoming force of an attack and absorbing the impact. Shaolin boxing is subsumed within the external classification, while styles classified as internal in nature include *Taijiquan*, *Pakuaquan* and *Liuhebafa* (Wong, 1978).

Much of the research in China centered upon two areas: *qigong* and martial arts. Three martial arts masters who reportedly had a high degree of proficiency in *qigong* were interviewed and demonstrated their abilities with *qigong*. Also, Professor Liu Jun-Xiang, a scholar, historian and practitioner of Chinese martial arts provided an extensive commentary on the subject of martial arts and healing. A comparative analytic stance was taken to the interview and experiences with the three *qigong* masters to assess commonalities and differences in their practice.

The first practitioner, Hsu Shi-t'ian, demonstrated for me Yang style *qigong*. A man in his mid-forties, he had learned *qigong* from his grandfather when he was eight years of age. Rather primitive by comparison to other approaches observed, Hsu claimed to radiate energy from his body and be able to heal individuals by the power of his mind alone



One of thousands of life-sized terra-cotta warriors found guarding the tomb of China's "First Emperor" Qin Shi Huangdi (near Xi'an city). Some of these figures are standing in a defensive guard stance, common to many Chinese martial arts. Also found here were more than 10,000 pieces of weaponry. Treated with an anti-corrosion preservative, many weapons have remained sharp and shiny for over 2,000 years.

Photo by M. DeMarco



without need for any tactile contact. He has received sanction by the state board regulating *qigong* practice to perform this skill, which served to support his contention that his *qigong* was of a high calibre. In addition, I was given five rocks which, altogether, could fit in the palm of my hand. Master Hsu claimed to put *qi* in these rocks and then placed them on an individual's body, which was a procedure that permitted greater healing effects to take place. I also participated in a demonstration of *qigong* in which Master Hsu attempted to transfer *qi* to me from a distance of some ten feet. While I served as a subject in this procedure for some thirty minutes, a mild, cool sensation was experienced around my hands and feet. But none of the dramatic changes expected (e.g.,

falling down or moving forward) took place. Overall, I felt the level of skill demonstrated was quite poor and limited, an impression echoed by Li Meibin, my seasoned interpreter and editor of a famous Chinese martial arts magazine in Beijing.

A second practitioner, Zhang Yongli, age thirty-nine, also was a practitioner of Yang style for over twenty years. Working in the orthopedics department of a local hospital in Beijing, he used *qigong* and acupuncture in his work. He indicated that *qigong* was actually not so popular in hospitals in Beijing but that most practitioners actually performed their art in specifically designated *qigong* institutes. He pointed out that, in China, few practitioners of the internal Chinese martial arts, such as *Taijiquan*, have the *qi* internally, most of the teachers simply practicing only the physical form, not even understanding the principles underlying the physical



Students in Nanjing's Jie Fang (Liberation) Road Primary School take an "acupressure break" as part of their daily routine. The practice is encouraged nationwide for various health benefits, including the maintenance of good eyesight and general preventive medicine.

Photos by M. DeMarco

movements. With regard to *qigong*, various forms of *qigong* are used with various types of illnesses. *Qigong* may be used for (a) protecting oneself, (b) improving one's own health, (c) improving another's health, and (d) achieving longevity. *Qigong* itself can only have negative consequences when exercises are taught improperly by an inexperienced teacher. The accumulation of too much *qi* itself could never lead to negative consequences. Zhang demonstrated *qigong* on me. A distinct flow of energy along my spine to the top of my head was felt when he placed his hands on me. Even after his hands were removed, a strong flow of *qi* continued to be felt. This basic approach was used with patients he treated at his work setting, involving both tactile and non-tactile applications. He also indicated that in treating patients, there was no danger of contracting their disease, the *qi* itself being a neutral medium incapable of carrying any particular disease.

The third master, Jiang Qimia, exhibited perhaps the most powerful effects of *qi* with me. By simply standing in front of me several feet away, he was able to direct my *qi* upwards or downwards without making any physical contact with my body. He had practiced martial arts and *qigong* for over thirty years. As part of healing, he indicated that one could demonstrate a group effect of *qigong* (many people having their *qi* affected by a single practitioner at once) without any direct physical contact (this was reported earlier in Taiwan). However, for healing to be effective, a one-on-one approach was needed. Various types of *qigong* were used, depending upon the nature and site of the illness or

injury. However, the basic principle involved his extending his *qi* to another person to activate the other person's *qi*. Psychological changes could occur insofar as the effects of *qi* and martial arts practices could relax one's character and temperament. Ironically, Master Jiang's temperament was far more aggressive than all the masters interviewed. Psychologically, emphasis appeared stronger with mastery of *qi* power than characterological transformations stressed in most martial arts writings. Clearly, the exercises, claims, overall efficacy, specific effects, procedures of performance, and psychological makeup of the *qigong* practitioners are quite diverse in nature and must be assessed from a research point of view on an individualized basis.

Professor Liu provided a very scholarly, insightful, and critical review of *qigong*, the Chinese martial arts and healing practices. (Needless to say, with the position taken by the communist government in China, religious practices are seldom mentioned by any of the people I interviewed.) To begin, he pointed out that fraudulent practitioners of *qigong* could even be found in China in spite of attempts by the government to regulate the practice through state licenser. Suggestibility played a strong role here in effecting spurious claims. For example, practitioners claiming to alter the *qi* of many people at once could create a number of conditions to suggest this effect: construct a pleasant atmosphere, speak in a monotone voice, sit in a chair without allowing the back to touch the backside of the chair, allow for periods of quietude and have "coached" people in the audience to respond to suggestive cues. Investigators of this phenomenon had to be made aware of these factors.

Professor Liu pointed out that several types of *qigong* existed historically, as noted in the table on the next page. Professor Liu stressed that one could not really separate *qigong* from the Chinese martial arts. It is believed that these practices evolved from early meditative practices in which spontaneous body movements exhibited eventually became systematized into distinct movements. However, to fully understand this field of study, he noted that one must have a basic foundation in Chinese philosophy and medicine.

Within systems of *qigong* and Chinese martial arts, vital points can be stimulated to injure or heal an individual. Sitting meditation practice is found in all of the internal Chinese martial arts and constitutes an important complement. Specific hand gestures (called *zi-wu-jue*) are used though no mantras are recited to these practices. Some fifty million people practice *qigong* in China (its total population is 1,000,100,000!). Unlike the situations observed in other countries discussed thus far, the People's Republic places a strong emphasis upon the martial arts of China with a central governmental body constituted to see that these arts are propagated and preserved. (The National Academy of Martial Arts was set up in 1985 and consists of 101 academy members). Research conducted in this area in China is actually only relatively recent. Mr. Xu Cai is president of the Chinese Wu Shu Research Institute and is attempting to coordinate this work with full government support.



Above: In a Shanghai suburb "commune hospital," a doctor treats a patient for lower-back pain by inserting an accu-puncture needle in the side of her left hand.

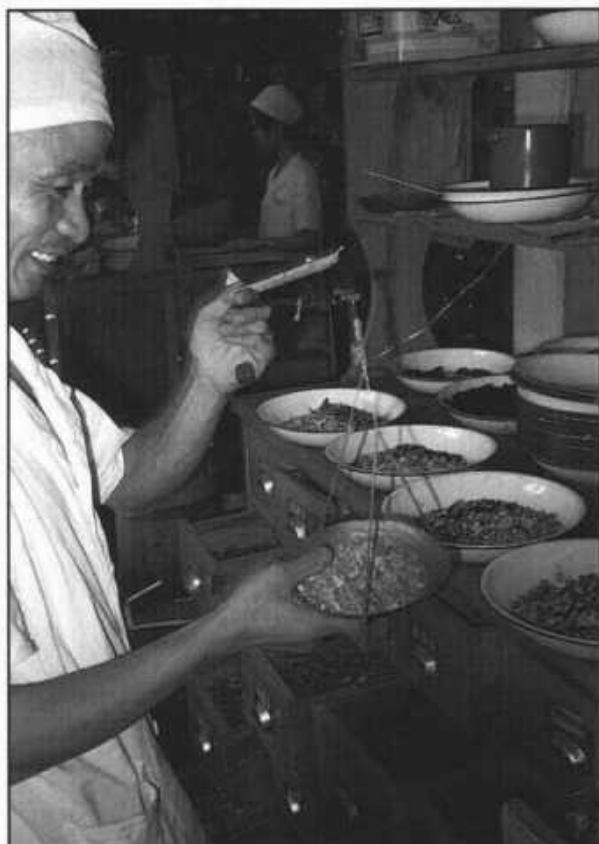


Left: At the Red Cross Hospital in Hangzhou city, a man receives acupuncture treatment with needles that are electronically stimulated. In the background, American doctors inspect the clinic and bombard Chinese doctors with questions regarding their traditional medicine.

Photos by M. DeMarco

TYPES OF QIGONG
D E S C R I P T I O N

Confucian	Developed 1,000 years ago; attention paid to meditation; emphasis placed on raising the "inner being" and on the relationship between body and soul, universe and self.
Yi School	Medical in focus; movement emphasized; spirit should be connected with body.
"Academic"	Emphasized application to massage and acupuncture.
Martial Arts	Integrated into internal Chinese martial arts styles.
Buddhist	Emphasized breathing and recitation of Buddhist scriptures.
Number School	Used numbers in place of Buddhist terms.
Mudra	Involved use of hand gestures.
Daoist	Emphasized longevity and "immortality."
Tibetan	Came into existence at end of Ming dynasty and beginning of Qing dynasty; emphasis on Tibetan Buddhist religious principles, though strong emphasis on qigong was not common among the Tibetans.



Unknown outside of China, there are a number of additional healing practices to be found, besides *qigong*, acupuncture, use of herbs or massage. They are even more esoteric than the above-named practices. Briefly described, they consist of the following:

- (a) *fu lu* – tracing a "signal" on a piece of paper.
- (b) *jie* – tying a thread around a finger or part of the body.
- (c) *hua* – drawing diagrams on the skin.
- (d) *shu-zi* – number method; repeating numbers in various arrangements.
- (e) *yin-xiang* – *qi* combined with vocal expressions.
- (f) *jiu* – heating up bamboo sticks and use them to stimulate specific acupuncture points.

However, according to Professor Liu, no writings have appeared on these healing practices even within Chinese texts, nor was I able to get them demonstrated on videotape. As in Indonesia, martial arts and healing arts are quite widespread and offer a rich base of information for investigators seeking to study and document these esoteric practices.

Left: In Hangzhou, an herbalist prepares ingredients according to the prescription he holds in his left hand.

Photo by M. DeMarco

Tibet

Early nomad tribes populated Tibet as early as the second century B.C. However, little was recorded until the seventh century A.D. when the people first acquired a writing system along with the newly imported religion of Buddhism. Elements of the early animistic Bon religion were incorporated into what later became Tibetan Buddhism. In the seventh century, Tibet's warrior king, Namri Songtsen, began to unite the many clans of Tibet and his son, Songsten Gampo, established the country as a formidable military power to be feared and reckoned with. The empire continued to expand into the eighth century extending into Kashmir, China proper, Turkestan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim, and upper Burma. Skirmishes along the western Chinese border were common until a peace treaty was signed in the early part of the ninth century. Internal politics led to the demise of the great military power and from the ninth to the twentieth centuries time seems to have stood still. During this period, Tibet began to develop its own form of Buddhism. By the twelfth century, several "orders" had emerged: *Bka'-gdams-pa*, *Sa-skya-pa*, *Bka'-brgyud*, *Karma-pa*, *Dge-lugs-pa*, and *Rñin-ma-pa*. Over the years which followed, Tibet's geographical position served as a buffer between China and India and ongoing factional fighting followed which included the Mongols, Chinese, Indians, Russians and British. The nineteenth century was marked by increased Chinese pressure in Lhasa (the capital city) to meet the threats of encroachment from British-ruled India and czarist Russia. The founding of the People's Republic of China took place in 1949 and in 1951 the victorious People's Liberation Army of the Chinese Communists reached Lhasa after conquering the Nationalist forces led by Chiang Kai-shek. Some eight years later, following increased friction with the Chinese occupation forces and a growing armed rebellion, the Dalai Lama fled to India where he resides in Dharamsala to this day. At this time, the Chinese occupation continues despite increased political pressure and attention by the world to the plight of the Tibetan people.

Tibet was perhaps the only country which combined religion and politics into an effective form of government for many centuries. Visiting Lhasa, I found that the religious beliefs permeate all aspects of life, despite the attempts of the Chinese to promote a more socialistic view. The system of medicine indigenous to Tibet is also closely linked to Tibetan Buddhism.

Historically, Tibetan medicine involves a complex integration of religion, mysticism, psychology, and practical medicine. Primarily holistic in nature, it stresses the relationship of mind to body as well as the relationship of the organism to the universe at large. Illness stems from an imbalance or lack of harmony within the organism as well as between it and the universe. Further, the lack of harmony also stems from the religious influence which points to the fundamental delusion of duality and the ego's self-existence.

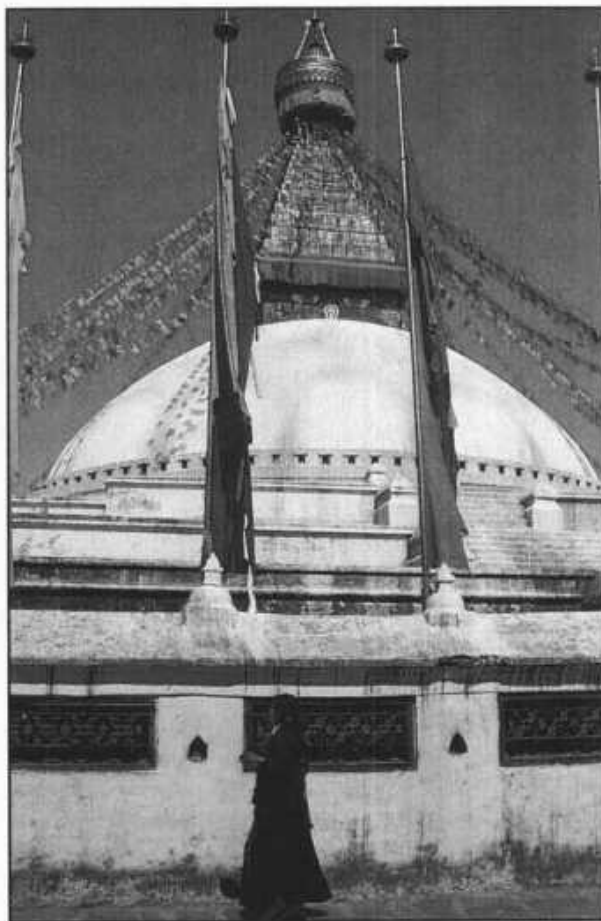
In her review of the subject, Clifford (1984) remarked that one may divide Tibetan medicine into three different categories: dharmic or religious medicine, tantric or yogic medicine, and somatic or regular medicine. Religious medicine stresses the use of meditation, prayer, moral development and other religious practices to heal through realization of the nature of mind and control of negative emotions. Yogic medicine employs the use of specific meditative and visualization practices for healing. Somatic medicine is based on Indian Ayurvedic medicine combined with Tibetan and other foreign additions. Approaches to healing include the use of mineral baths, massage, dieting regimens, acupuncture and herbal pharmacology. All three categories are integrated within the system. Virtually the entire teachings of Tibetan medicine are contained in the work known as *Gyu-zhi*, or *The Four Tantras* which was brought to Tibet from India in the eighth century and expanded over the centuries which followed.

Exploring the connection between martial arts and healing, within the Vajrayana tradition itself, I found that martial arts have not served a role in strict religious practices but serve as a means of "support" (e.g. to avert wars) in limited circles as observed among some monks known as *Ldab ldob*. In some Tibetan texts, martial symbolism has been used to convey their teachings. Hence, for purposes of this research, the focus of my study was to explore further the practice of Tibetan medicine. While some questions were raised as

to the Chinese government permitting use of a video camera, I was pleased to be given permission to conduct both audio tape interviews and videotaping within Lhasa. Several Tibetan physicians were interviewed at the Tibet Hospital in Lhasa. It should be pointed out, however, that being holistic in orientation, no specialization within Tibetan medicine occurs.

There are no elaborate rituals or esoteric practices observed in the diagnosis and treatment of a patient's condition. What was observed in Tibet falls largely into the category of somatic medicine. The basic approach consists of asking the patient to describe his or her problem and accompanying set of symptoms; asking what factors may have created the problem; checking the pulse on both sides of the body; checking the color

and appearance of the face, eyes, tongue, and urine; and conducting blood tests (before and after introducing Tibetan medicines into the body). Various herbs are then prescribed and follow-up visits are scheduled accordingly. While this procedure may appear simplistic and quite limited by Western standards, this picture should not be taken to reflect the level of sophistication of Tibetan medicine proper. An interview with the associate director Dr. Garma Choepel of the Medical Research Institute of the Tibetan Medical Hospital, proved to be most illuminating in this respect. Dr. Garma has served as the private physician to the Panchem Lama and with forty years of research and medical work is considered to be one of the world's foremost experts in Tibetan medicine. A superb diagnostician, he is knowledgeable in principles of Western medicine. He indicated that aside from the use of herbs and herbal combinations and the



Over the centuries, Tibetan culture has moved into neighboring lands such as Nepal and India. This photo taken in Nepal is of an "all-seeing stupa," adorned with prayer-flags and prayer-wheels which a lady spins for blessings. Tibetan medicine and its culture in general is permeated with its religious beliefs and practices. How much of one's health depends solely on how one thinks and believes?

Photo by M. DeMarco

superiority of the Western practice of surgery, a distinct feature of Tibetan medicine was its emphasis upon assessing "energy" in the body, known as *lung*. *Lung* exists in everyone's body and to check the *lung* one has to conduct an examination in the fashion reported earlier. According to the Tibetan perspective, even in Western diagnostic procedures which do not consider the flow of *lung* in the body, change will take place in an individual's condition as a result of invasive procedures because *lung* is changed by those very procedures. Unique to Tibetan medicine is what might be termed "*lung* medicine." Its specific purpose is to alter the flow and direction of *lung* in a person's body to correct a medical problem. While the four medical *tantras* which contain this information have not been translated into English, the graphic representation of these teachings in the form of medical *thangkas* has recently appeared (Byams-pa 'Phrin-las, 1987). For the benefit of cross-cultural analyses, it is interesting to note that Dr. Choepel Garma was aware of the Chinese practice of *qigong* as a healing method. However, following religious practices, in Tibetan medicine, a doctor never attempted to direct his *lung* into a patient's body. *Qigong* in the Tibetan view was relegated to the domain of the monk (as a kind of formal meditation) and equated with *siddhis* (miraculous powers).

Three types of *qigong* identified in Tibet were (1) having the body jump up and down (levitation, *gyok-lung*), (2) traveling quickly over long distances (*lung tuklor*) and (3) generating inner heat (*tumo medo*). However, again, in Tibet these practices were only performed by monks, not doctors. Tibetan medicine has undergone little systematic investigation or testing in the West. Its rich history and comprehensive methods of treatment are indeed worthy of research exploration for those interested in "energy medicine."

KOREA

Military contact with Mongolia and China constituted the earliest sources of martial influence in Korea. Though early forms of unarmed combat, referred to as *t'aekkyon*, are reported prior to the third century B.C., it was not until the Chinese emperor Wu Ti successfully invaded the Korean peninsula in 108 B.C. that a highly developed martial arts system was introduced there. The formation of three major power bases or kingdoms (referred to as the Three Kingdoms) – Silla (57 B.C.), Paekje (18 B.C.) and Koguryo (37 B.C.) – eventually succeeded in destroying the Chinese colonies in Korea, though Chinese cultural influences continue (Henthorn, 1971; Shim, 1974).

At the time when Buddhism was being introduced to Korea via China, it had taken on its own unique flavor. In particular, in the kingdom of Silla during the sixth century A.D., social-religious organizations developed, the heads of which were referred to as *hwarang* (*hwa*, flowers; *rang*, young master). Though initially beginning as a social organization for aristocratic youth, this system later evolved into a philosophical code known as *hwarangdo* (Way of the flower of manhood), steeped heavily in Confucian concepts of chivalry and patriotism. Training consisted of education in philosophy, morality, and the arts and sciences as well as extensive practice of the fighting arts, particularly swordsmanship and archery (Rutt, 1961).

Buddhism was introduced and openly accepted in Silla at this time. Maitreya worship constituted the predominant form of Buddhism. As the interpenetration of Buddhist thought and the *hwarang* ideal grew, a *hwarang* eventually came to be viewed as the incarnation of Maitreya. In time, members of the *hwarang* began calling themselves the men of the *Yonghwa* tree, stating that Maitreya worship formed a bond between the two traditions. Indeed, the relationship between the *hwarang* organization and Maitreya was such an intimate one that the formation of a Maitreya cult is suspected.

By the late eighth century, however, the government of Silla began to collapse, the *hwarang* warriors losing their military effectiveness and eventually turning into disorganized bands of dilettantes. The Koryo dynasty (918-1391 A.D.) supported Buddhism and a number of fighting arts including *subak*, *kwonbbop*, *yusul*, *ssirum* and *gungsul*. However, the high ideals of the *hwarang* and intimate association with Buddhism no longer appeared during this period. Several systems, such as *subak* and *kwonbbop*, fell into the category of popular sport or were used more exclusively in military training. In the Yi dynasty which followed (1392-1910 A.D.), even the interest in these later two fighting arts declined and Confucianism replaced Buddhism as a strong cultural force in Korea.

While an open route between Korea and China had existed for the Korean and fighting arts masters prior to the Yi dynasty, Confucian philosophy tended to discourage the practice of the martial systems. With these developments, the arts were kept alive only by the dedication of masters who retreated to remote mountain areas and handed the forms down secretly to select pupils. Despite these developments, at the present time the re-emergence of an art known as *hwarangdo* has appeared which draws upon the ideologies, practices and teachings of earlier Buddhist and Confucian philosophy. Contemporary sources associated with this martial art credit Won'gwang, a famous Buddhist priest in Silla, as founding this discipline and developing it in harmony with his concept of the laws of nature. Deriving central teachings from earlier Daoist writings, particular emphasis was given to the principles of *um-yang* (Chinese, *yin-yang*) and *ki* (Chinese, *qi*). Evolving from *Taequk* (Grand Ultimate), the interaction of the cosmic forces, *um* and

yang, led to the formation of the five basic elements of matter (*ohaeng*) in the universe: *kum* (gold), *mok* (wood), *su* (water), *hwa* (fire) and *t'o* (earth). The vital energy associated with the dialectical interaction of *um-yang* was *ki*. *Ki* was viewed as the undifferentiated unity of existence and non-existence and the vital force behind life transformation. In conjunction with these principles, together with the Maitreya philosophy, a fighting art evolved which blended principles of hardness and softness, and linear and circular motions. On a physical level, contemporary *hwarangdo* combines hard and soft techniques and integrates circular and linear movements. Self-defense methods include spinning and jumping kicks, falling and rolling techniques, throws, locks, hand strikes and blocks, chokes, joint breaking and joint manipulation. Advanced training involves the use of weapons and study of vital points (Lee, 1978).

Contemporary techniques of this system are founded on four basic divisions of power: inner (*naegong*), outer (*oegong*), weapon (*muqigong*) and mental (*simgong*). *Naegong* consists of training methods for developing *ki*; *oegong* relates to external techniques, shifting of the *ki* power to its extension; and *muqigong* consists of techniques in weapon training. *Simgong* is directly concerned with the mental control of *ki* and is organized into thirteen different subdivisions, among which are included putting a person to sleep (*ch'oemyunsul*), concealing oneself in front of others (*unsinbbop*), chanting to heal or cause disease (*jusul*), studying the laws of the universe (*ohaengbbop*) and studying the mind (*yusimbbop*) (Lee, 1978).

Development of *ki* is a central theme of *hwarangdo*. In the human body, this vital force is viewed as concentrating in a region slightly below the navel called *dan jon* (red field), which is trisected by three acupuncture points: *kihai* (*ki* ocean), *sokmun* (stone door) and *kwanwon* (first gate). The first point serves as the reservoir of *ki*, the second point is the "keeper of strength" and the third point opens to receive *ki* from the universe. The entire life process is both activated and maintained by *ki*, which is circulated through twenty-six meridians to various parts of the body. Cultivation of *ki*, achieved through exercises of breathing (*danjonhohupbbop*) and mental concentration (*jongsindobbop*), is the central medium through which shifts in consciousness are viewed as unfolding (Lee, 1978).

Given the rich tradition background of *hwarangdo* and popularity of Olympic and world competition in such Korean sport forms as *taekwondo* and *judo*, an assessment of healing and martial arts in general was in order. To pursue this investigation, two sets of interviews were scheduled in Seoul. One interview was designed to assess the current relationship of martial arts and medical systems in Korea today and the other interview was directed to an assessment of *hwarangdo* healing and spiritual practices. The first interview was conducted with Professor Jong Dal Kim and his assistant, Mr. Shim, both an hour's distance from Seoul. The second interview was to be conducted with a master of *hwarangdo* in Seoul. As this interview did not materialize, upon my return from Asia an interview was conducted with Grandmaster Joo Bang Lee, who now resides in Downey, California.

Turning to the first interview, Professor Kim is a faculty member of Korea Sports Science College which has enrolled some 3,000 students engaged in the study of a variety of martial arts sport forms, including *sumo*, *ssiru*, *kendo*, *judo*, wrestling, *aikido*, *taekwondo*, and *karate*. He also holds the title of chief referee of the Korea Judo Federation as well as teaching *judo* and being a high ranking *judoka* himself. According to Professor Kim and Mr. Shim, older traditions of Korean medicine were very similar to Chinese medicine, much of the theory and practice of this older system actually having been brought from China and modified in Korea. Herbs used in treatment in the two cultures, for example, were not very different in nature. The use of this approach to healing was quite prevalent a century ago, but with the modernization of the country (Seoul resembles Times Square in New York City), Western medicine has replaced the older ways. Currently, it is believed that Western medical techniques are much faster in their effects and, to this end, most Korean doctors are trained in Western medicine. As might be suspected, practices such as *ki gong* (Chinese, *qigong*) are known but not widely practiced. So if an athlete is injured, Western medical techniques will be used first. These techniques may be followed

by acupuncture to further facilitate healing of the injury. While massage constitutes a complementary part of training, it is used primarily as a method to induce relaxation prior to sporting events or competition. As acupuncture can be employed as part of the treatment regimen, it is clear that select aspects of earlier healing practices have remained. To this end, despite the modernization of medical approaches, *ki* development remains an important part of training. Diaphragmatic breathing is used to cultivate *ki*, although its purpose is to serve as a component of exercise training rather than healing *per se*. (This particular technique supports one view that cultivation of *ki* will improve overall performance in martial arts.) When asked what remained unique to the Korean sports training approach, e.g., in *judo*, it was stated that the system of training here was much harder, with athletes practicing longer hours than what was observed in other countries. The athlete worked out six days a week (except Sunday), and weight training constituted a part of *judo* training. No special dietary regimens were followed. Korea appears to have placed strong emphasis on the socio-political aspects of sports. Both *judo* and, more recently, *taekwondo* have become Olympic and world competition sports. Given the origination of *taekwondo* in Korea and the success of *judo* here, the South Korean government has actively sought the accolades associated with success in sports competition. (The politics and cost of building the Olympic Village in Seoul in 1984 reflect this orientation.) Formally, other countries have pursued the same goal, e.g., in both Indonesia and the Philippines, the respective governments are pushing for development of *taekwondo* over their own native, indigenous martial arts of *silat* and *kali* to the dismay of many martial arts practitioners there. It appears, then, that with increased modernization of a country, indigenous healing and spiritual practices once common and deeply revered, are being replaced by Western technologies and medicines. Similarly, sophisticated martial practices have given way to the more superficial sporting contests.

Turning to the practice of *hwarangdo*, many practitioners trained in the art are exposed at advanced levels to the more esoteric and ancient practices. Grandmaster Lee would not permit any new videotaping of his demonstration of spiritual or healing practices since, he indicated, they were already available on tape. To this end, he provided me with a videotape of several nationally televised programs where he demonstrated a variety of healing-based martial techniques. In a personal audio-taped interview, he provided greater detail on the mental processes involved in performing these feats.

To begin, in performing a technique of sticking a bicycle spoke through various parts of his body (*pokpukihapsul*), *dan jon* breathing precedes the actual performance. Through this exercise, *ki* is directed to various parts of the body, e.g., head, neck, hands and feet. Concentration is a very important part of the technique. At the moment of sticking the spoke through the skin, Master Lee says to himself he will experience no pain. He further imagines that there is no object through which the spoke is passing. However, focusing attention upon the area makes the area numb. No pain is felt nor is there any sensation of movement of the spoke. If he were to imagine the presence of pain, then pain would be experienced.

As to a second ordeal of being run over by a moving vehicle, preparatory practices leading up to the performance of this skill consist of placing increased weights on the stomach until the desired comfort level is reached. A technique known as *yukchimsul*, which is different from the bicycle spoke exercise, is employed. Attention and brief concentration are focussed upon tightening the stomach muscles (referred to by Master Lee as "*dan jon*" tightness) as the truck wheel passes over the stomach and a *kiai* ("spirit shout") is uttered at the moment the truck wheel makes contact with the body. A similar principle is applied (*dan jon* breathing coupled with momentarily-focused concentration) when attempting to break a two-by-four board with a hand or foot strike. Master Lee also remarked that *ki gong*, the Korean version of *qigong*, is also a component of *hwarangdo* training and involves directing *ki* into a person's body as a healing technique. To this end, while most other Korean martial arts have lost touch with older religious and healing traditions, *hwarangdo* incorporates many of these ancient practices. Ironically, preservation of these practices may have resulted from their being transplanted to the United States where interest in this phenomenon today is much greater.

JAPAN

While martial tradition is accorded an important position in Japanese culture and history, it was not until the twelfth century A.D. that the classical professional warrior (*bushi*) had risen to a position of political power, figuring prominently in the development of the national character of Japan. This favorable environment allowed the *bushi* to further develop and refine the combative techniques of *bujutsu* (martial arts) in the centuries which followed.



Rebuilt in 1960, the castle of Odawara is the city's main attraction. It houses a fine museum concerned with local history.

Photo by M. DeMarco

military/martial affairs; *jutsu*, art – to *budo*, the martial Way), which constituted a reorientation away from combat training to cultivation of man's awareness of his spiritual nature. The primary goal of early *budo* was enlightenment, similar to what has been described in Zen teachings, external perfection of (martial) technique leading to self-mastery via "spiritual forging" (*seishin tanren*). The distinction in classification made between *bujutsu* (martial arts) and *budo* (martial Ways) is often applied even today (Draeger, 1973a, 1973b).

The overthrow of the Tokugawa government in 1868 generally marks the emergence of what Draeger (1974) has called modern *bujutsu* and modern *budo*. As a whole, these disciplines are generally categorized as methods of self-defense or as tactics for sparring or grappling with an opponent. Many modern *bujutsu* systems consist of officially approved methods of hand-to-hand combat which are sanctioned by the government and limited to either practice by law enforcement groups for the purpose of dealing

Zen Buddhism was introduced to Japan from China during the Kamakura period (1185-1333 A.D.). Two central figures responsible for this introduction were the Japanese Buddhist priests Eisai (1141-1215) and Dogen (1200-1253) who had studied *Ch'an* in China. Through the efforts of followers Tokiyori (1227-1263) and Tokimune (1251-1284), *Ch'an* as Zen was introduced into Japanese life and is often acknowledged to have a distinct impact upon the life of the *samurai*, one of many ranks of *bushi*. The integration of martial and spiritual teachings (including *Shinto*, Confucian and Zen Buddhist doctrine) led to the development of *bushido*, the warrior code. Espousing such virtues as justice, courage, loyalty, honor, veracity, benevolence and politeness, the classical warrior's primary concern was to experience a spiritual awakening by achieving the state of *seishi o choetsu*, a frame of mind where one's thoughts transcended life and death. Also of note, the older martial traditions often had a close association to Shintoism or esoteric Buddhist doctrines (*mikkyo*) derived from Shingon and Tendai sects. Those warriors adhering to the Buddhist practices often made use of such esoteric devices as *mandrara* (*mandala*), *jumon* (*mantra*), *ketsu-in* (*mudra*) and various ritual implements as a means of achieving protection in battle (Maliszewski, 1992).

With the growing importance and favor given to the warrior class, it is interesting to note that the Edo period (1603-1868 A.D.) is characterized as an age favored by peace. It is this shift in social awareness which led to the development of the *budo* forms. Taking a pragmatic stance, the Japanese culture took the Confucian interpretation of the *Dao* (Chinese for "Way") – *Do* in Japanese – and modified it in such a way as to be applicable to man in his social relationships and compatible with Japanese feudal society. This involved a transition from *bujutsu* (*bu*,

with offenders of the social order or the use by average citizens as methods of self-defense and spiritual training. Modern *budo* systems generally consist of unarmed techniques of grappling or sparring which are used as a means of physical exercise or sport, methods of self-defense or a form of spiritual training, the goal of which is to bring man into harmony with the values of a peace-seeking international society. Subsumed within the classification of modern *budo* are such disciplines as *aikido*, modern *judo*, *karatedo* and *kendo*.

In Japan, two separate contacts were made with representatives of martial systems falling within the classification of modern *budo* and a third contact with a researcher investigating esoteric spiritual healing practices in Japan and China.

The first representative was a former practitioner of *kendo*, *jujutsuo*, *jojutsu* and *bojutsu* (the latter two are stick-fighting arts), Mr. Kono Yoshi Nori, who was affiliated with one of the martial traditions (*ryu*) known as *Hashima-shin-ryu*. He now runs his own school which integrates the teachings of these earlier disciplines in the larger context of modern *budo* goals.

A component of Kono's art includes the older art of *reijutsu* (*rei*, spirit; *jutsu*, technique). *Reijutsu* is a healing practice which involves "absorbing" the condition or "essence" of an individual within oneself so that one can experience what is going on inside the other person's body. In this process, the person being "treated" is connected

with Kono. That person's weakness is directly experienced by Kono at the time awareness of his own self slips away. *Reijutsu* is not always practiced as a separate technique. It is actually experienced in the practice and performance of martial arts. Through movement exercises, a person is able to learn himself what he needs to do to correct problems within himself. The *ki* in Kono's body can mix with the other person's *ki* and this interaction can also be used to effect cure of diseases. It is clear that consciousness and healing go together. In Japanese martial arts, consciousness is accorded a higher position than in any other country. Through martial practice, one's maladies can be cured and one gains insight into changes which need to be made to correct problems in one's life and thereby make the world a better place in which to live. During martial performance, the mind becomes empty of thoughts and the ego vanishes. One becomes the sword in sword practice, for example, and changes in oneself arise automatically. There is no prayer, chanting or trance state involved in the practice. *Reijutsu* is practiced secretly by a number of people in Japan, due to past restrictions imposed by the government (i.e., practicing "medicine" without a license is illegal and some practitioners feel that what they do might be considered medical practice).

Kono also discussed a healing performed on his mother, who had broken her arm one month before. Performing a laying-on-of-hands technique slightly above her arm (no direct skin contact made), he employed a *reijutsu* approach of "caring and wanting" his mother to get well. Kono's mother experienced a movement inside of her which was more than simply the flow of *ki* from her son. Movement of her arm became possible three to four days later, unlike the six-month healing time proposed by the physician who had last treated her. Unfortunately, even among the Japanese people, little is known about the practice of *reijutsu*.



Lighting handfulls of incense in a burner at the entrance to the Asakusa Kannon Temple. Busy people in Tokyo will make time to stop and "catch the smoke." They draw it toward their bodies, often rubbing it on afflicted parts in order to relieve pain or cure some ailment.

Photo by M. DeMarco

The second interview was conducted with Aoki Hiroyuki, founder of a modern *budo* form known as *shintaido*. *Shintaido* is a contemporary martial art founded some thirty-two years ago. It is comprised of a core practice surrounded by six interlocking components: *karate*, *bojutsu*, *jojutsu*, *jujutsu* and "soft *shintaido*." The basic forms of practice combine breathing and movement practices performed as a solo or partner exercise. The goal, non-combative in nature, is to develop a trainee's physical and psychological sensitivity to training partners as well as improve performance of basic movements. The goal of *shintaido* is to become one with nature, to unite with other people, to become "what you are" and accept oneself. *Shintaido* recognizes that this outcome may be different for different people. In other words, the same martial techniques can be practiced by different people and will lead to different goals or outcomes (Aoki, 1982; Funakawa, 1987).

Aoki's development of *shintaido* represented a departure from traditional martial forms of the time. The expressive form of the art is noticeably different from all other martial arts with its emphasis on liberating oneself to be who one is. Aoki himself was a student of Western art, the vehicle which gave him the inspiration to create *shintaido*.

There is a distinct healing component to *shintaido*. One type of healing is "classical" in nature and involves healing oneself through the practice of *shintaido*. Through such practice, one's body begins to change and then one is able to heal others. Although this type of healing may sound similar to the Chinese practice of *qigong* (Japanese, *kiko*), it is actually quite different. To begin, *shintaido* healing techniques evolved separately from *kiko*. The ultimate purpose of *shintaido* is to liberate oneself to be oneself. A by-product of reaching this objective is healing. In *kiko*, a primary emphasis is health and long life. In *shintaido*, the emphasis is upon living life more fully rather than extending it. Whereas *qi* is a primary component of *kiko*, *ki* is found within *shintaido* but it is not the central component of the system. As part of healing, Aoki can either direct *ki* into a person or his *ki* can activate a person. The approach utilized depends upon the type of situation present. If a person's body is cold, then *ki* is directed into the body. One can also send heat to a person and then a person can activate his own *ki*. Both sitting meditation (the diamond position in yoga) and standing meditation (consisting of twelve forms) are included in *shintaido* practice. In these practices, one can learn to send *ki*, absorb *ki*, or "play" with *ki* (sending it back and forth by circulating it through the body). At higher stages of practice, one is able to "hit" a person with *ki* without making tactile contact with that person. Elevating the role of consciousness with this technique (known as *toate*, "distance hitting"), the practitioner can actually pick up the thoughts of an attacker and change them before he is hit. Aoki claims to be the only person to have demonstrated this publicly. This phenomenon has also been researched empirically (see Motoyama, 1985). Related to this, a higher level of healing practices may involve picking up another person's "vibrations" or weak areas, taking them into one's own body and "correcting" them and then giving this back to the individual.

The last interview of the trip took place in Yokohama, Japan, with Professor Yuasu Yasuo, a professor of philosophy at Tsukuba University. Professor Yuasa has been conducting empirical research in the general area of "energy medicine," meditation and healing for a number of years. At both Japan Medical School and Tokyo Medical School, a team of medical research specialists has been organized to investigate this area of study. General observations made from research data collected thus far is described below.

To begin, a number of martial arts practitioners have been tested in laboratories. When these practitioners send *ki* outside of their bodies, a major change in brain wave activity resembling patterns present during epileptic seizures is observed. Other practitioners only demonstrate these patterns when they first extend their *ki* outward. Once this process begins, the altered patterns level off.

A distinction is made here between "hard" and "soft" *ki* (similar to what was reported earlier in the Taiwan section of this paper). Hard *ki* involves sending the energy outside of oneself, is generally associated with practitioners of *budo* (martial arts) and correlates with strong levels of *ki* in the heart *cakra* region. Soft *ki* is commonly found among medical practitioners who often use the energy to cure themselves and their

energy, described as more universal and meditative in nature, is stronger at the *manipura cakra* (navel) region. Historically, hard and soft forms were separate, but now in modern times they are often mixed together. To this end, some hard *ki* and martial arts practitioners become doctors and use this form of *ki* to cure other people.

Professor Yuasa states that researchers in Japan draw a distinction between *kiko* (*qigong*) and Chinese medicine whereas here in the West *kiko* is often subsumed within the larger category of Chinese medicine. According to his view, Chinese medicine is performed by Chinese doctors using acupuncture and a system of twelve major meridians. *Kiko* is performed by Daoists and Buddhists who follow a system that contains eight additional meridians and requires special training only found in martial arts practice. However, both approaches are used in hospitals in China. Interestingly, Yuasa pointed out that the level of skill in *ki* development and healing is far greater in China than in Japan. Few practitioners in Japan know anything about traditional medicine, meridians, or *ki*. Exceptions to this, he stated, include the famous founder of *Daito-ryu aikido*, Morihe Uyeshiba; Aoki Hiruyoki, founder of *shintaido*; and Sagawa Yukiuyoshi, a highly acclaimed master of *Daito-ryu aikijujutsu*, who has been able to manipulate *ki* at advanced levels. Yuasa's work is most important to the field of energy medicine and his group, *Jin Tai Kagakukai* (Society for Mind-Body Science) is open to sharing research information accumulated with Western researchers investigating this same area. A sample of his writings appears in English (Yuasa, 1991). Further, he has a number of books written in Japanese and he recently (November, 1990) held an interdisciplinary conference on the subject of *ki*. Collaborative research of an empirical nature would appear to be quite fruitful here to both East and West.

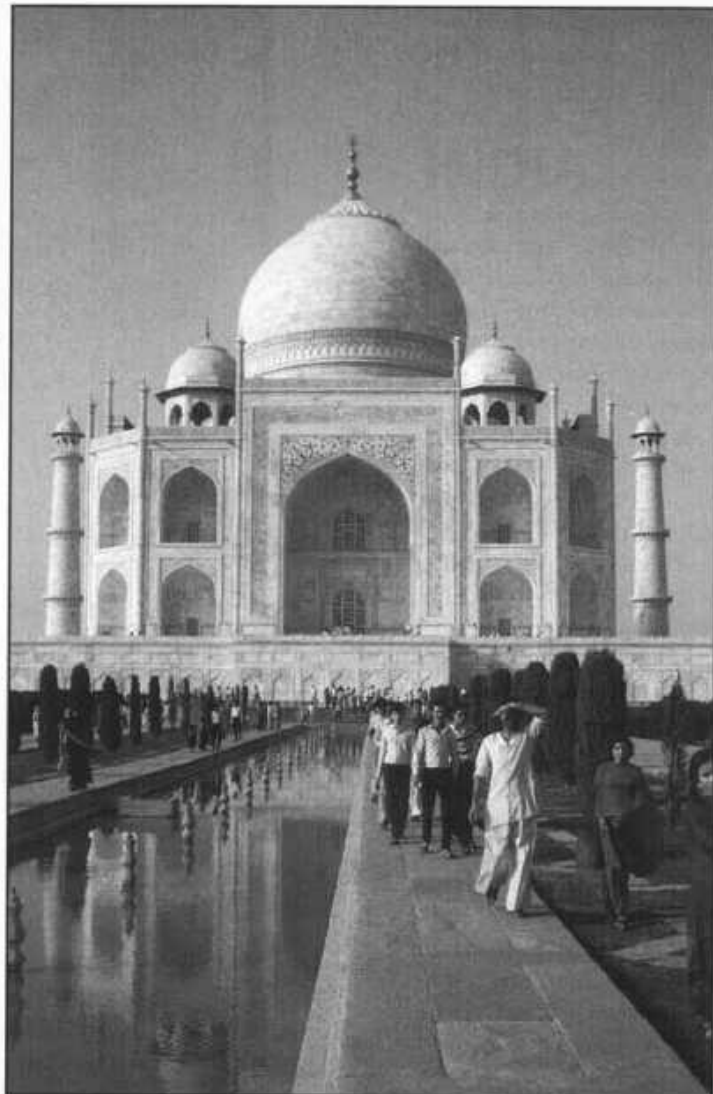
A tomb built for a Princess, the Taj Mahal is one of India's many architectural wonders. Maharajas had the political, economic and military power which allowed the creation of such monuments.

Photo by M. DeMarco

INDIA

India was not on my travel agenda for this trip. However, in 1987, I had been invited to participate in an international martial arts and dance conference where contact with Indian martial arts exponents was made. Given that theories proposed concerning the origin of martial arts leads either to China or India, it is fitting that a discussion of this country follows. Much of the information reviewed here on the Indian martial arts, particularly the art known as *kalarippayattu*, is derived from the writings of Phillip Zarrilli at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Those individuals wanting additional information to what is reported here should consult his works.

Many contemporary surveys of the Asian martial arts fail to provide any detailed information concerning martial practices of India. This is not surprising as Indian martial traditions are difficult to locate and verify. While they continue to develop, they have become increasingly rare. Within the past ten years however, literature has begun to appear on a martial art fighting art found in Kerala known as *kalarippayattu* (*kalar* [idiomatic] fencing school; *payattu*, fencing exercise; *kalarippayattu*, place where martial exercises are performed). Dating back to the twelfth century A.D., many current techniques in the art remain similar to those found in earlier times. In its heyday between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, *kalarippayattu* constituted a regular component of education for Kerala's martial caste (Nairs).



Later, its practice crossed both caste and religious affiliation to include higher caste Yatra Brahmans, lower caste Tiyyas, as well as many Muslims and Christians. During one's preliminary training, foundations of this physical culture system consist of individual body sequences (*meippayattu*) and ideally a full body massage (*uliccal*) administered on a yearly basis during monsoon season. From a fighting arts point of view, the physical aspects of the system consist of body poses, steps characterized by low stances and long strides, high kicks and jumps, and extended arm and hand movements. The later introduction of weapons adds the use of thrusts, cuts and evasive moves to the complex repertoire of bodily movements which characterize the art (Zarrilli, in preparation).

Training in *kalaripayattu* is not simply physical but internal as well. In-depth knowledge of the *marman* (vulnerable points of the human body) is required for purposes of knowing vulnerable points of attack of the opponent (with either empty-hand combat or use of a weapon), protecting one's own body for defensive purposes and treating injuries to the *marman* in training or battle. The emphasis placed upon visual concentration, use of breathing exercises, repetition of *mantra*, economy of movement and energy, special hand-body configurations (*mudra*), as well as performance of special rituals (paying respects to teachers, deities and even one's opponent) all aid in achieving proper mind-body coordination. Regular pursuit of these practices may lead to the development of power (*sakti*) and a state of "accomplishment" (*siddhi*). The flow of *pranavayu* (Sanskrit, "vital energy") and emanation of movement from the lower abdominal region known as the *nabhi* or *nabhi mula(m)*, corresponding to the second yogic *cakra*, *svadhisthana*, play a significant role in this process (Zarrilli, 1978).

Healing practices constitute an important component of *kalaripayattu*. Within the medical aspects of *kalaripayattu*, masters must become skilled at both attacking the *marman* and healing them after they have been penetrated. According to classical traditions, some 107 different vital spots exist, though variations may be found across different masters and lineages (Zarrilli, 1992).

Penetration can lead to death, very serious injury, or temporary incapacitation. To counter these effects, one response is to administer a strong slap with the empty hand to the same *marman* located on the opposite side of the body. Esoteric practices exist which suggest that a master who has reached a high level of spiritual development is actually able to see the *marman* and attack them simply by staring at a vital point or pointing a finger at them (Zarrilli, in preparation). Drawing upon the close association with *ayurveda*, the *kalaripayattu* master may treat a particular injury or condition through full-body massage and the use of various medicinal oils which affect both the physical and subtle bodies. Typical conditions treated include sprains, fractures, dislocations, rheumatism, arthritis, cuts and bruises (Zarrilli, in preparation).

I have touched only briefly on a very complex subject here. Further details can be found in Zarrilli (in preparation). Additional work needs to be done in this area exploring other Indian martial arts and their associated healing practices before such arts die out with the passage of time.

CONCLUSIONS

Asia is a rich setting in which to explore diverse forms of healing practices that integrate medical and spiritual disciplines. The martial arts of twelve countries were investigated to determine the nature of those practices and the extent to which they continued in various settings. First, it is clear that, regardless of the cultural terminology utilized, energy medicine and healing practices constitute an important dimension of traditional Asian martial arts. Regrettably, in some countries, this knowledge has begun to disappear, in some regions because of lack of interest (e.g., India, Thailand). In other instances, it appears that with increased modernization these ancient and esoteric practices have been replaced by "advanced" Western procedures (e.g., Japan, Korea). Generally speaking, some of the economically poorer countries offer the most to

researchers in providing a rich heritage of practice and knowledge that can be integrated in the West with current Western medical procedures. The countries of Tibet, Indonesia and China stand out in this respect. And yet, other advanced countries have begun to also explore this phenomenon empirically (e.g., Japan). Given the favorable political climate here in the United States for investigating medical traditions cross-culturally, it is perhaps not altogether surprising, though ironic, that preservation and growth of healing and "energy medicine" disciplines will be a direct result of Western influences on the ancient Asian systems.



EDITOR'S NOTE

THIS PRELIMINARY SURVEY ATTEMPTS TO PROVIDE AN INFORMAL INTRODUCTION TO HEALING AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES OBSERVED AMONG SELECT MARTIAL ARTS IN ASIA. THIS WRITING IS BASED UPON TWO CENTRAL SOURCES PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR. THE FIRST WORK IS A MAJOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH INVESTIGATION EXPLORING BOTH PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MEDITATIVE-RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF ASIAN MARTIAL ARTS. IT IS SCHEDULED TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE UPCOMING ISSUE OF THE *JOURNAL OF ASIAN MARTIAL ARTS*. THE SECOND SOURCE IS AN UNPUBLISHED REPORT AND SERIES OF VIDEOTAPES WHICH OUTLINE THE AUTHOR'S TRAVELS THROUGHOUT ASIA IN 1990. THE READER INTERESTED IN A HIGHLY ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT OF THIS SUBJECT IS ADVISED TO CONSULT THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL.

VIDEOTAPES ILLUSTRATING MATERIAL DISCUSSED HERE ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE AUTHOR. KINDLY ADDRESS INQUIRES TO:

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