Paths beyond Domination

The Walk of Life:

Centre, Circles, Power & Blending
in Bagua and Tai Chi
This Workshop

The Series / background

The role of martial arts

The role of internal martial arts

Primer on internal power

Use of visualization

Flow & relationship
A Few Questions...Personal

1\textsuperscript{st} Week: can you feel chi-energy?
The role of breathing
Attention: present moment
Where does power come from?

How do you learn this stuff? How practical is it?
For what?

– Relationship between Mental/internal and physical/external
  …between consciousness and repetition
  …between forms and principles
Questions: Social

The role of conflict in life
What negative aspects of MA need to be left behind?
• our stories of struggle in practice and mastery.

The role of tradition in martial arts:
dual role of knowledge & repression
What is needed to tap these potentials & develop the arts?
  - education
  - the economy
Go Round: Introductions

Who are you?
Done any Martial Arts?
Special interest? Burning question?
The Martial Arts

Roots in hunting / gathering cultures: 500,000 years (?)

Redefinition in Civilization, class society, patriarchy: 5,000 years (?)
Civilization, The Megamachine
& the Male Character-Structure:

Work (cog-labour)

War
Civilization / Patriarchy:

The Age of Conflict?

...or
The Age of Domination
Domination

All Of Them- Witches!
Domination
Domination

Homestead Strike, 1892
Domination
Domination
Domination
Domination

3 Gorges Dam
(Burtynsky)
Domination
Domination
Domination
Domination
Basic question:

Is Domination now a counterproductive strategy?
The limits of Domination-1
The limits of Domination-2
Gendered Identities Propping up the Fordist Waste Economy

*Cold War mobilization*

*Suburbanization*
1960s /70s: Troubles in North American Macho Land

John Wayne gets butt kicked in Vietnam
Wage/job rollbacks in industry

The rise of women, minorities, and countercultural images of androgeny.
The Renovation of Macho:
new more artsy & hip images of domination

Asian

Afro-American
21st Century Renovation:

Cannon Fodder for our Time:
the New Brutalism
Questions:

Are the Martial Arts simply tools of domination?

Is there an essence of Martial Arts that can help us evolve beyond Domination?
Contemporary Attitudes toward Martial Arts

How does beating people up rate as a spiritual endeavour?

Is fighting proficiency the single central criteria of Martial Arts integrity?
The Essential Developmental Concern of Martial Arts:

How to deal with Conflict
Developmental Traditions within the Martial Arts

The Internal:
...is both the alternative to, and the ‘inner core’ of, external Martial Arts
--conceptualization of Neijia
All disciplines as Microcosms
Relationship to Death
Conflict as part of Life

"When you focus, it is easy to excel ..."

Sun Lutang
THE MASTERS COLLECTION
002
Human Development: the Mystical Perspective

- Waking up to a deeper, more inclusive Self
- Higher levels of Reality can be directly perceived, not simply believed
- Evolution as Remembering & Return to Source
- Union and human nature: the Reed flute
- Dying to ego: full acceptance of Reality
- Keys to Transcendence: awareness and balance of yin & yang
Spirituality & Martial Arts: Conflict, Union & Purpose:

The Inner Jihad

“All that is other than the true ‘I’ must be slain.”

Rumi
The Draw toward Union

Unconscious/compulsive: Destroy the Other

Conscious: Become the Other
The Internal Arts Path to Union

• Martial arts as a Laboratory for applying life principles
• Being Whole: Attaining the Whole through the play of the Separate—the yin and yang
• Acting from one’s Centre
• Sensing other Centres
• Opening to Flow
• Accepting Reality
Self-Awareness

Subtlety of sensation: use of the Mind

Key to *Whole Body Power*

Attention and persistence/practice
Relationship

Attunement and blending

Achieving control by giving up control

Putting oneself in an advantageous position

A new balance between competition & cooperation
The Complete Martial Artist

(S)he who is fully tuned in to forces flowing around and through her, while rooted in her unique centre.
The Problem of Method

Traditional focus on technique and structure

Opportunities to work on principles via direct work with mind, intention and visualization

How is the posture or movement supposed to feel like?

Achieving the proper alignment by feel
A Taste of *Whole Body Power*

The Unbendable Arm

Every position taken in IMA should be “unbendable”
Zhan Zhuang:
Don’t just do something,
Stand there!

Radical form of qigong:
fastest way to develop
Whole Body Power.
Present in many systems;
most associated with
Yiquan (I Chuan)
Understanding Standing

Mind as Movie Screen
Standing: Clearing the Screen, Returning to Source

Field Consciousness: sensing the Big Picture

Body as Teacher: tuning in to natural alignments, dissolving blockages

Creating Engrams

Learning about Intention

Experiencing Whole Body Power

Powerful Healing
The Power of Mind

Engrams and effortlessness

Imagining as Doing

• Exercising the Mind
• Feeling while watching

Super-efficiency or higher energy?
Empty Force?
Centre Line & the Sphere
The Bow & the Bubble
Peng

Inflationary strategy:
“he blowed up real good!”

A complement to continuity
Standing I

- Identify with the *Centreline* first
- Don’t break sensing at the floor; feel the lower sphere and the *Root Point* deep under the surface.
- Let your limbs flow within the sphere; find the *Path* for energy-flow; let the body “assign” muscles and support
- Mentally *pump up* the balloon/sphere: focus on it, not on points of tension
Standing II

- Connect the hands (mentally) to help feel the upper sphere
- Equality of feeling in the sphere: don’t localize attention
- Become heavy by lightening up; Soft Eyes vision; peripheral sensing / field consciousness
- Feel as if suspended in water
Exercising the Mind

• **Visualization #1:** turn the whole body into super-dense bone or stone

• **Visualization #2:** pump up the sphere, starting from centreline to fill the entire room and the cosmos—and then gradually deflate it. Repeat. At first slowly.
Stillness in Movement

3 Dimensions of Movement

1. Rotating around the Centreline
2. Shifting the Centreline: the 'Gondola'
3. Sliding vertically on the Centreline

Feel lower sphere, Root Point, and weight of ballast water →→→→
Stillness in Movement-2

**Shifting**

- Keep focused on the Centreline as you shift it from left to right sides (facing front)
- Focus on Root Point below shifting horizontally.
- Pump energy around bottom of lower sphere to shift.
Stillness in Movement-3

Whole body strength:
Image of moving through water, mud, molasses, or peanut butter
Strength exerted in waves and pulses
Pulse energy through the legs around the Lower Sphere.
Feel the ballast water below.
Stillness in Movement-4

“The body is like a floating cloud. In push-hands the hands are not needed. The whole body is a hand and the hand is not a hand.”

Cheng Man Ching

Strikes: the water balloon

Sliding the arm on tracks

Rotating around joints
Framing / Posture-testing

Biofeedback for your partner

Rigidity essential for feedback

Let the Testee determine the weight

Also one of the best sensitivity learning tools for the Tester
Forces to Test

Emptiness / inflation / alignment / connection to earth

Folding / unfolding

Mind leads body
Have a Ball doing the Internal Arts!

Taiji / Tai Chi:
The Bouncing Ball

Bagua / Pa Kua:
The Spinning Ball

Xingyi / Hsing-I:
The Cannonball
Ba gua zhang: 8 Trigrams Palm

The art of Constant Change
A system of Principles
The Moving Root
Multiple Opponents

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Surprising changes of direction
Swimming Body / Dragon Body
Central Practice: Circle-walking

Use of the Palm ☯
Walking the Circle

Unending Continuity
Baqua’s Zhan Zhuang: Walking Meditation
8 Mother Palms
The Energy & Mind-space of the Circle.

“The fundamental condition of our existence is to revolve.” Rumi
Finding Your Groove

Every move flows into the next seamlessly
No beginning or end
Stop/starts all circle internally
Body moves as if in ready-made grooves
Never break awareness of your spheres
Walking On

Small Steps
Rolling Step
Snake / mud-walking
2 Centres:
   inside/outside
Push hands
Bumping cars in Traffic
   (avoid direct hits)
Ball and Wedge
The End