

STRENGTH IN THE INNER MAN

A CHRISTIAN MARTIAL ARTIST'S VIEW OF
INTERNAL ENERGY, BASED ON TRICHOTOMY

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PREFACE

In 1972, I participated in my first ever Christian martial arts demonstration with the “Judo Gentlemen” evangelistic team of Bob Jones University. I was not a member of the team but enjoyed the one time experience. I was later asked to join the BJU “Karate for Christ” team, but that was not to be since I was planning to transfer. My experiences at BJU taught me that the Asian martial arts could be done to the glory of God.

The next year at Tennessee Temple College (later a university) I began training in kung fu under talented martial artist James Cravens, and participated in my first kung fu demonstration not long after. I am very grateful to Professor Cravens for his teaching and example as a Christian martial artist. I learned much under his tutelage, and have fond memories of the evangelistic demonstrations I did with him. It was under him that I first began learning about internal energy.

The martial arts program at TTC had been founded by Mike Crain, pioneer martial arts evangelist. It was good to get to know him, and exciting to see the things he could do in the martial arts while giving God the glory. In 1971 Mike wrote what is no doubt the first Christian approach to the Asian martial arts, a pamphlet entitled, *Instant Protection*. It was short and limited, but it did begin things.

Dr. Kent Haralson has come close to the theme of this book in his various books and pamphlets about the Christian martial arts. He wrote in one, “A martial artist was one who understood that he was a triune being. He had a spiritual dimension. He had a mental or intellectual dimension and a physical dimension. He recognized that none of these things could be neglected. To be a total man, all three must be cultivated and under constant discipline: the body under control of the mind, which in turn was under control of the spirit.” (*The Tainting of the Black Belt*, p. 10) This book will take Dr. Haralson’s concept and narrow it to the concept of internal energy, while widening his view of “the mind” to be the soul taught in the Biblical doctrine of trichotomy.

Again, Dr. Haralson’s pamphlet on internal energy in the martial arts, *Ki/Chi Power and the Christian*, was a pioneering effort and the first attempt on the subject from a Christian viewpoint, to the best of my knowledge. While I take a different view on *ki/chi* in some areas from Dr. Haralson in this book, he deserves credit for his work. In fact, he should be considered to have developed the hermeneutic necessary for the development of distinctively Christian martial arts, as pointed out by Dr. Kenneth Hoggund, associate professor of religion at Wake Forest University. (“Gideon the Black Belt’: Finding Harmony Through Hermeneutic,” at <http://www.wfu.edu/Organizations/ncrsa/papers/hog.html>)

It is my wish that this book will take what these good men have begun and improve on it. I also hope that others will be inspired to research this subject and do much better than I have. In addition to these men, I give thanks to my parents, my wife Patty, who puts up with a lot, and my son Paul, who served as my proofreader and editor.

Chapter One

THE GREATEST POWER IN THE WORLD

In the summer of 1974, I stood in a kung fu uniform with a sledgehammer in my hands on a platform in front of about 6000 Christians at the National Conference on Soul-Winning and Revival in Indianapolis. For that summer I was Mike Crain's assistant both at his new youth and sports camp and in his Judo and Karate for Christ Ministry. Mike was doing martial arts breathing exercises in preparation for lying on his bed of nails. I was to swing the sledgehammer for the break, and that was the dangerous part for Mike. One man in California had died not from the bed of nails, but from having the sledge swinger miss!

As I nervously danced around on the platform waiting for Mike to get set, others were getting nervous, too—at me! Mike finally had to ask me to hold still while he continued his preparations. Finally he was ready. Mike lay down; I swung the hammer and successfully broke the concrete.

Mike always gave credit to God for his ability in performing such feats. I can hear him preach as if it were yesterday, shouting, “There are all kinds of power in this world: white power, black power, pucker power—but the greatest power in the world is God's power!” What Mike was consciously doing was comparing the power of the God of the Bible to the internal energy methods taught by practitioners Asian martial artists who subscribe to Asian philosophy or religion.

We should take time here to define exactly what internal energy is. As described in the Asian martial arts (karate, tae kwon do, kung fu, aikido, judo, etc.), external energy is that power that is produced strictly by training the muscles and ligaments. Internal energy, on the other hand, is that power produced by training the nerves and the inner part of a human being, usually described simply as the mind. Usually this internal energy is described as *ki* or *chi*, depending on the country of origin of the martial art. For the purposes of this pamphlet, I'll be using the term *ki/chi* to describe the Asian idea of internal energy. *Ki* and *chi* are the Japanese and Chinese readings for the same Chinese character. In Chinese, the Wade-Giles romanization has *ch'i*, and the Pinyin romanization of the PRC government is *qi*. In Cantonese it is pronounced *hay*. (For a discussion of the original meaning see Appendix B.)

I would eventually duplicate Mike's bed of nails stunt and many other martial arts demo stunts—without *ki/chi*! My method was to logically examine the stunt, apply the principles of my high school knowledge of physics and biology, pray for God's power, and give it a shot. In almost every case, I found I could accomplish exactly what the demonstrators had, yet without Asian mysticism.

There are warriors in the Bible who accomplished much greater feats in actual battle than the feats of the best warriors put together of all the Asian martial arts ever known. There was David who killed a lion and a bear and Goliath (1 Sam. 17:31-51) and David's “mighty men” who did incredible things in battle (2 Sam. 23:8-39). How could we forget Adino the Eznite, who fought 800 men with a spear (v. 8); Shammah who stood his ground and killed many Philistines (vv. 11-12); Benaiah, who fought and killed two Moabite heroes and then a lion in a pit in the middle of winter (v. 20—he makes modern “no-holds-barred” fighters look weak!), as well as disarming a huge Egyptian and killing him with his own spear. (V. 21)

We must remember that the incredible feats of these men were accomplished with the power of God, not merely external energy (physical power) or even human internal energy. Remember what Jonathan said to his armor-bearer before they went up on a plateau to kill twenty men in a half acre of land, just the two of them: “It may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.” (1 Sam. 14:6) David gave God direct credit for his fighting ability when he said, “Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight. (Ps. 144:1) Samson's martial ability was straight from God. The Bible says of Shammah's victory that “the LORD wrought a great victory.” (2 Sam.

23:12)

We cannot forget Samson, one of the greatest warriors of all time. Before he ever defeated a single enemy, the Bible says that “the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times.” (Judges 13:25) His first victory was against a lion, which he destroyed as if it were no more than a baby goat when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. (Judges 14:6) In Ashkelon he killed thirty Philistines when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. (Judges 14:19). In Lehi he broke the ropes binding him and then killed a thousand Philistines with a donkey’s jawbone when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. (Judges 15:14-15) Samson backslid, we know, and lost the power of God. However, at his death he killed an incredible number of the enemy after praying and asking God for power. “And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.” (Judges 16:28)

However, the greatest warrior of all time is Jesus Christ Himself. Even while on earth He preformed some fantastic feats of martial skill. What Asian martial artist ever lived who could simply walk through a crazed crowd who was trying to kill him without being touched? “And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.” (Luke 4:29-30)

On another occasion our Savior defeated a large number of opponents, kicking them out of His Father’s house. And He did this twice, one time with nothing more than a belt for a weapon (John 2:13-17), and another time bare-handed (Matt. 21:12-13)! However, His greatest fight is yet to come. Someday He will defeat Satan’s greatest battler, the Antichrist, by nothing more than “the brightness of His coming.” (2 Thess. 2:8)

Because of these and many other reasons, I have long been dissatisfied with the typical view of internal energy among martial artists, even Christian martial artists. We have long needed a view of internal energy that is Biblical and based on solid theology. It is my desire that this book will fill that need.

Most American experts have an Asian view of internal energy, or *ki/chi*. It goes like this. The teacher had his disciples sit with him in a cross-legged position. His voice was quiet and self-assured, giving a feeling of calm to the disciples. At last he was telling them some of the secrets of his great internal energy. “Relax and open your minds. Rid your minds of all outside influence. Meditate. Your goal is to unify your mind and body, and when that happens, as it will, you too will feel the power of your *ki/chi* energy.” The disciples do as he says, and lo and behold, they too feel an inner calm, and a warm energy begins to radiate from them. They believe themselves to be filled with internal energy!

This or a similar scene is repeated in secular martial arts schools, self-discovery seminars and New Age cult meetings all over the world. What few people realize, even the teachers, is the theological and philosophical basis of what they are teaching. The doctrine is called “monism,” and it is the belief that the seen and unseen parts of a human being can be unified into one, unbreakable whole. In other words, monism teaches that Man only has one moving part!

This all sounds so deep and powerful. What could be wrong with monism? The problem is that it is a lie! The Bible makes it clear that there are both visible (the body) and invisible (spirit, soul, mind, heart, etc.) parts to Man. The problem with monism is that when we die, according to the Bible, we must immediately go to either Heaven or Hell! When a person goes to Heaven or Hell, only his or her immaterial, inner self goes, and the body is left behind. Thus, we have a minimum of two parts.

The Bible does teach that there are connections between the inner and outer person, the mind and body for example, when it says, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.” (Prov 17:22) However, this is not to say that they are one. The Bible definitely teaches that they are separate.

According to physician and theologian Jeffrey H. Boyd, there are two kinds of monism. “Physical monism . . . holds that spirit and body are an indivisible physical monad. But spiritual monism holds that they are an indivisible spiritual monad, for the body is an illusion.” (“One’s Self-Concept And Biblical Theology,” from *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, June, 1997, p. 212)

Boyd further explains it this way: “In the physical version of monism, when the body dies the entire lump dies. At the resurrection, God makes a new lump and somehow creates a sense of continuity of identity between the new lump and the previous lump. In the spiritual version of monism death is less of a problem, for

the body and its demise are illusory.” (Boyd, p. 213) Both kinds of monism are equally dangerous. Physical monism makes one concentrate on the physical, ignoring the spiritual and thus inviting eternal punishment, and spiritual monism neglects our relationships with others, destroying love and creating spiritual pride, much like the Gnosticism of the days of the early church, which taught that anything physical was evil.

Jesus Himself taught that there are at least two parts to Man, the seen and the unseen, the inner and the outer. He said, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matt. 10:28) This is a clear statement from our Lord Himself that Man has at least two parts, soul and body, and that these two parts are separate parts, because at death they end up in different places—earth and Heaven or Hell. Again, to the thief on the cross who believed in Him, Jesus said, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43) Obviously the man’s body would not be in paradise. Jesus was talking about his unseen part, the real person.

As Jeffrey Boyd points out, the Apostle Paul also clearly taught dualism, the doctrine that we have both physical and unseen parts.

There is considerable Biblical support for the idea that at death humans are not completely identical with the cadaver, which would be inconsistent with physical monism. Paul had a thorn in his flesh (2 Cor 12:7). Like most people with chronic illnesses, Paul did not think of himself as identical with his body but spoke of it rather as a temporary tent (5:1), a jar of clay (4:7), a place he would rather depart from (5:8). He yearned to have his earthly body transformed into a spiritual one, for the earthly vessel was “perishable,” “dishonor(ed),” “weak,” subject to Adam’s nature (1 Cor 15:35-54). He said he beat his body to make it his slave, the way a disciplined long-distance runner must do (9:27). The estrangement (Note—“estrangement may not be the best word here. JRH) between Paul and his body was so deep that he could even entertain the possibility that he took a journey to the third heaven without it. He says he has no idea whether he took the trip in the body or out of the body (2 Cor 12:2-4). Anyone who can even imagine a trip to the third heaven without his body is not a monist. (Boyd, p. 215)

So what is reality? How many parts do you really have? If it is not one, then it must be two, right? There are some Christians who teach just that, and this doctrine is called “dichotomy.” This view does have some support from the Bible, and many good theologians and Bible teachers believe and teach it. However, there is another view that I believe fits the Bible data better, and that is the view called “trichotomy.”

Trichotomy teaches that we each have three parts: spirit, soul and body. This very thing is stated plainly by the Apostle Paul: “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess. 5:23) Again, the writer of Hebrews goes so far as to talk about the division between the soul and the spirit: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12)

We will not make room here to discuss all of the differences and arguments between monism, dichotomy and trichotomy. However, as we have seen, monism is definitely un-Biblical and wrong. My position is that trichotomy is the right view, simply because without it the above verses (1 Thess. 5:23 and Heb. 4:12) are too difficult to explain. According to Robert L. Thomas, “That Paul saw man as a threefold substance in this verse (1 Thess. 5:23) has been generally recognized since the early fathers. The symmetrical arrangement of three nouns with their articles and their connection by means of two ‘ands’ (*kai*) renders this the most natural explanation.” (*1 Thessalonians in Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 11, ed. by Frank Gaebelin, p. 295)

A secondary reason that I use trichotomy as the basis for the theory of internal energy given in this paper is that it works! Trichotomy is a very practical viewpoint, and it allows us to Biblically explain all sorts of things about the way God has made us. It explains more than dichotomy explains, and far more than monism explains.

What does all of this have to do with the martial arts? Many martial artists teach monism as a means to develop their internal energy. This is true because many Western martial artists simply take as gospel truth what they are taught about internal energy by their Asian masters. Few take the time to investigate and learn about the philosophies and religions their Asian masters believe in: Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Confucianism,

Taoism, etc.

Some martial artists, it is true, are fully aware that they are teaching monism, especially those with a philosophical or theological background. Chris Casey was an extremely talented and knowledgeable master of various styles of kung fu. (Note: I'll be using "kung fu" as a generic term for the Chinese martial arts, since it is the commonest term used in America and most other places outside of China, including Japan. It is beyond the scope of this booklet to deal with all the terms the Chinese use for their own martial arts.) Casey was also well-versed in Asian thinking, having a degree in philosophy. In the collection of his writings issued after his death, he wrote, "This final phase of Mind-Hit Boxing welds the Body and Mind together, e. g., when life makes its demands, the Chi is available to immediately rise to assist Higher Energy Centers. The Chinese Boxer's essences are both fully integrated and prepared to respond to any situation." (*The Boxing*, p. 155) Though Casey's philosophy ended up being a strange mixture of his own blending, his main philosophical source seemed to be Taoism, as seen by the following words: "If the student becomes One with the Tao, as the pebble is one with the Tao, he can find the pebble in the dark room because both of them participate in the same 'oneness.' The 'oneness' brings them together." (Casey, p. 53) Ultimately these beliefs led him to a tragic suicide.

Again, other martial artists who are not so educated still know the source of their teachings, even if they are not able to systematically present monism. In his book on internal energy, kenpo grandmaster Sam Kuoha shows that he knows he is teaching monism by the title of his preface, "Unification of Body-Mind." (*Chinese Kara Ho Kenpo, Vol. 2: Secrets of Ki and Internal Power*, p. vii) He also openly admits the source of his knowledge is when he writes, "On a recent trip to my homeland in Hawaii, I visited a Zen Temple located in the deep valleys where I used to live and train. As a couple of my instructors and I listened to the administrator's interpretation of the true meaning of Zen, we were engulfed by a warm and positive energy. We understood the feeling of being 'in-tune' with one's own mind, spirit, and body." (Kuoha, p. 4) Kuoha's book is filled with references to Asian religions such as yoga, the chakra points of Hinduism, Zen Buddhism, etc.

On the other hand, many martial artists seem unaware that they are teaching monism, or of the implications of what they are saying. Prominent White Dragon Kung Fu master Glenn Wilson trained directly under Daniel Pai, the grandmaster of the style, for many years, and imbibed Pai's philosophy. Wilson writes about the monks of the Shaolin temple, "Daily routines were practiced to unify the energies of body and mind." (*Way of the White Dragon*, p. 1) The book, while being a good presentation of the style as it is now practiced, is full of many other statements of Asian thinking imbibed no doubt from Daniel Pai, who claimed a knowledge of philosophy. However, nowhere in this book or any training manual of the style which I have seen is there a unified philosophy, though platitudes are plenteous.

Unfortunately, included in the martial artists who are unaware that they are teaching monism, or the implications of their teachings on internal energy, are many Christians. In his book on encouraging us to teach the Asian martial arts in a way consistent with our culture and religion, Christian martial artist Bob Orlando does a great job debunking Asian views of *ki/chi* and unmasking fake demonstrations of such. However, when he then tries to define *ki/chi* in a logical way he gets into trouble. He ends up calling it "a synergistic, near perfect union of mind, body and spirit for the accomplishment of a specific task—which in our case is effective self-defense." (*Martial Arts America*, p. 138) In spite of his efforts to escape Asian philosophy and religion, Bob ended up with a monistic definition of *ki/chi*.

It is my goal through this book to alert Christian martial artists to what they are teaching that is from Asian philosophies and religions, and provide them with a Bible-based theory of internal energy that is not only filled with the truth of the Word of God, but can be used to train at a higher level in the martial arts. Let's see where the Bible will take us!

Our attitude should be that of King Hezekiah, when Jerusalem was surrounded by the Assyrians, an enemy from the East. He told the people, "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles.' And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah." (2 Chron. 32:7-8)

Chapter Two

THE SPIRIT

This is the area in which Christian martial arts and secular (or other religious) martial arts will differ the most. In their search for spiritual power, Asian religionists bow to idols, meditate with their gaze selfishly turned inwardly, and participate in endless and meaningless rituals. However, we as Christians have a very different life spiritually than that of the Asian religionists. We are to “walk in the spirit” (Gal. 5:16, 25), “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17) and be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18) As we do so, our “inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16), and we will be “Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.” (Col. 1:11) This is true spiritual internal energy, far greater than that taught by any Asian philosophy, religion or martial art. Let us examine what Biblical spirituality means to the Christian martial artist.

MEDITATION

Meditation is essential to a Christian for many reasons, and by extension to the Christian martial artist. However, we must realize that truly Christian meditation is totally different from that of religions created by men, especially the Asian religions. Thus, the meditation of a Christian martial artist should be as different as night and day from that of a secular or Buddhist or Taoist or New Age martial artist.

Asian meditation in the martial arts has basically three goals: the unification of body and spirit (or mind or soul), the attainment of “enlightenment” (which is some personal truth that always supercedes the Word of God), and finally, the achievement of a “calm mind” which will aid you in an actual fight. Each of these goals is wrong, especially for the Christian martial artist.

First of all, the search for “enlightenment” through meditation is wrong. Peter Ralston is one martial artist who has totally surrendered to Asian religion in the form of the New Age movement. He was originally a very successful practitioner of the internal martial arts of China, in particular Hsing I. In 1978 he won a “World Championship” full-contact tournament in Taiwan, and his future in the martial arts was secured. However, during his martial arts odyssey he was sucked into Asian religions through the New Age movement.

Ralston began to seek “truth” through various New Age gurus and experiences. For example, he writes about one such experience, “I didn’t have a direct experience of the truth right then, but went right into phenomenal experiences. The room started changing, it got bright, I saw colors, and the sense of myself was quite different, I felt expanded somehow.” (*Cheng Hsin: The Principles of Effortless Power*, p. x) Ralston also speaks throughout his whole book of how to attain the unification of body and spirit, and how this can supposedly increase your power and ability in the martial arts.

It should be obvious to every discerning Christian that Ralston’s meditation is very wrong. His search for “enlightenment” and “mind-body unity” has lead him straight into a false religion. The meditation of the Asian religions is for wrong reasons. First of all, any “enlightenment” that originates outside of the revelation of the Word of God and is not led by the Holy Spirit brings delusion.

The Bible says concerning the Antichrist, “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess. 2:9-12) Those who follow Satan’s religions end up being deluded and deceived.

Secondly, any meditation that seeks to unify the body and mind (or soul, or spirit) is doomed to failure and delusion. Since the Bible clearly teaches that the inner person and the outer person are separate (Matt. 10:28, 1 Thess. 5:23), it is impossible to unify them, no matter how much you meditate. What will happen

instead is that you will end up in a mental and emotional condition in which you think you have attained your goal, but are deceived. Thus, when Robert W. Smith speaks of “Karlfried Von Durckheim, one of the leading European authorities on mind-body synthesis” (*Chinese Boxing, Masters and Methods*, p. 29), it is as if he is speaking of “the leading expert on Martian turkeys.” Such a thing does not exist except in the minds of deluded people!

Unfortunately, many martial artists, including Christian martial artists, are fooled into thinking they can achieve mind-body unity, and never realize that the idea comes from Asian monism. Even more unfortunately, others know exactly what they are getting into. Smith wrote in another book, “The *Internal* (emphasis in the original) is based on the combined training of spirit and body, exemplified in the doctrines of Buddhism and Taoism.” (*Pa Kua Chinese Boxing for Fitness and Self Defense*, p. 117) Smith eventually left his Catholicism. His pursuit of Asian philosophy changed him. Ironically, this very book was based primarily on the kung fu of his teacher Paul Kuo, a Taiwanese Christian who later, according to Smith, went on to be a missionary to the tribal people of northern Thailand! (*Martial Musings*, p. 180)

This story could be repeated over and over. It may even be safe to say that the search for greater internal power from any source but the true God and His Son Jesus Christ will lead the martial artist to embrace dangerous philosophy or religion. Kouzu Kaku (*The Mysterious Power of Ki*), Brian Gray (*The Complete Iron Palm*) and B. K. Frantzis (*The Power of Internal Martial Arts*) are other martial artists who, in their search for *ki/chi* power, have ended up embracing and endorsing Asian religion and philosophy.

The so-called internal martial arts (in particular T'ai Ch'i Ch'uan, Pa Kua, Hsing I and Aikido) are thus fraught with difficulty for the Christian martial artist. There are some who have successfully practiced and taught them with Christian principles. (For example, see Chapter X in *Kai Sai Yim Wing Chun*, by James C. Cravens.) However, any Christian martial artist who practices these arts should be very careful that Asian philosophy and practice does not enter or influence his practice and teaching.

Practitioners of other Asian martial arts, though, can by no means be careless as they imbibe the martial doctrines of Asian teachers. For example, Shaolin kung fu styles are said to have begun in the original Shaolin Buddhist temple with the teachings of Tamo (called Bodhidharma in India and Daruma in Japan), the founder of *Chan* (*Zen* in Japanese) Buddhism. Supposedly (the history is very shaky), when Tamo saw that the monks were out of shape, he introduced exercises designed to get them back into shape. One of these exercises was called the “Muscle Change Classic,” and according to many sources speaks of “washing the bones and marrow” with the mind. This is patently impossible, according to Biblical teaching. Though the mind and emotions can have an effect on the body, they are separate from it and components of the soul.

Thirdly, the search for “calmness” or “inner peace” through Asian meditation may be temporarily successful but is doomed to final failure. Many martial artists, even Christian martial artists, experience a certain calming of the mind through the breath training, relaxation training or meditation practice of their martial art. They may even think that they are experiencing *ki/chi* power. All they are experiencing, however, is the natural result of learning to relax the muscles. Relaxing the muscles through breathing exercise, etc., is a good thing for all martial artists, since it improves reaction time and muscle speed. It is even good to achieve physical calm, reducing physical stress and the diseases that stem from it. However, the Christian martial artist must draw the line here. His inner peace comes from God!

Many Asian martial artists teach this goal of inner peace through both physical practice and meditation. According to Chinese master Sung Shih-Jung, you can achieve “full calmness” through Taoist martial art meditation. (Quoted in *Hsing I, Chinese Mind-Body Boxing*, by Robert W. Smith, p. 99.) This, to the Asian religionist, goes far beyond a mere physical calm and into the inner man.

What is wrong with this concept? Is not it a good thing for the Christian martial artist to achieve a calm mind? First of all, such mental calmness is a delusion. It may disappear when the martial artist actually heads into action to defend himself. If such calmness only comes through meditation or physical relaxation, adrenaline, emotional distress or physical pain may destroy it. Secondly, the Christian should only find his peace through Jesus Christ and walking with God.

Chris Casey wrote, “The Boxer must ‘relax,’ permitting a calmness in action and meditation in movement. Additionally, he must ‘sink,’ utilizing the Tan Tien, lower breathing discipline to control breath.”

(*The Boxing*, p. 155) Casey was one who trusted in the methods of the Chinese internal martial arts to gain this inner peace. Ultimately he lost his inner peace through the pain of unrelenting and undiagnosed headaches, and committed suicide.

Christian meditation is completely different. It is spiritual with mental gain instead of totally mental. It is upward toward God and not inward toward self. It fills the mind with good things instead of emptying it. And, most importantly, it is not a ceremony or a means of training, it is wrapped up in the life of the Christian, since he is to meditate “day and night.” (Josh. 1:8, Ps. 1:2) As a Christian of a previous era said, we are to “practice the presence of God.” God promises that if we do that, He will draw near to us. “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” (James 4:8)

The Christian martial artist does not need the temporary calmness that comes with Asian meditation, though he may obtain physical calmness simply by learning to relax through forms, breathing practice, etc. He or she can have the perfect peace of God only by meditating on the Lord. As the prophet wrote, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” (Is. 26:3) In God, not the heart of any man, is true perfect peace. This peace can keep the martial artist in the midst of any encounter, no matter how violent.

Thus, the primary meditation of a Christian martial artist should be on the Lord Jesus Christ, the “Prince of Peace.” Once while in America on furlough, my gracious father-in-law took my son and me to a store to buy suits for each of us. I struck up a conversation with the lady at the register, a large, happy Baptist lady. She shared with us how her twelve year old son had one of those WWJD (“What Would Jesus Do?”) bracelets on his wrist. One day the boy got into a terrible argument, and even lifted his hand to take a punch at his friend. At that moment he saw his bracelet and realized that he was not doing as Jesus would do. If we Christian martial artists would meditate on Jesus and His life, as this boy did, we would find true power and truth for daily living.

Secondly, the Christian martial artist should meditate on the Word of God. It is here that we find truth for living. How can meditating on the Word of God help a Christian martial artist? In many ways. For example, he can study and learn from the martial artists of the Bible, not the least Jesus Christ Himself, the greatest Warrior of all history. The Bible says, “Jehovah is a man of war: Jehovah is his name.” (Ex. 15:3) From Jesus the Christian warrior can learn humility, the power of God, courage, the importance of truth, and so much more.

Also, there are genuine tips in the Word of God for training and strategy. For example, the Apostle Paul points out that discipline is essential to produce a true warrior. Paul said, “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” (1 Cor. 9:26) An undisciplined fighter who has neglected his training will end up missing his opponent in the ring and losing!

Next, every martial artist needs an ethical and moral basis for his fighting. Any martial artist who simply fights anytime and anywhere he wants to is basically amoral. Any martial artist who fights simply for the joy of hurting people or to prove his own power is immoral. We need to learn what God says about fighting to learn how to practice the martial arts righteously.

Another reason to meditate is that it will bring you success in your martial art. The only time the word “success” is used in many English Bibles is as a result of meditating in the Word of God. “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.” (Josh. 1:8)

The Christian should also meditate on the works of God. “I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.” (Ps. 143:5) As I look back on my life as a Christian martial artist, I see many times when God worked through me and in me to win souls, disciple Christians and teach self-defense, but the incident that stands out most is when I learned the kung fu “spider” technique. My teacher got down on the gym floor facing upward, but supporting himself with his hands and feet. He then said, “Attack me!” I obeyed, and took a step towards him with my left foot, at which he hooked my ankle with one foot and pushed on my knee with the other foot. I immediately felt excruciating pain in my knee, and was downed, just

the effect the technique is designed to achieve.

After a few minutes I was up again, gingerly learning more from my teacher. Later in the afternoon I went to my job as a forklift driver, but the more time went by the more my knee swelled up. I eventually ended up having knee surgery for torn cartilage. As I lay in my hospital bed I discovered the beautiful passage about God's chastisement in Hebrews 12, in particular verse 12: "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." I knew that the Lord was chastising me, because although I was studying for the ministry, my heart was not right with God and I was not having my personal devotion time with Bible reading and prayer.

Needless to say, I got right with the Lord that day! Often since then I have meditated on how God worked in my life, and been the better for it. I trust that I am a better Christian warrior for the experience. The man who taught me the kung fu "spider" technique that day may regret the incident, but I do not. Every second of pain I endured was worth the spiritual lesson I learned!

PEACE

That brings us to the next spiritual characteristic that can give internal energy to the Christian martial artist, and that is the peace of God. I consider this to be a spiritual characteristic rather than one of the soul (mind, heart, will) because of how the Word of God describes it in Philippians 4:6 and 7: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." It is spiritual activity that brings peace to the heart. Notice that our "minds and hearts" are kept through the peace we have through Christ Jesus.

In particular, it is trust in God through which we gain inner peace, not meditation or breathing practice or *kata* (forms) practice or anything similar. To me, the verse in the Bible with the most impact on this subject is Isaiah 26:3, which says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Imagine what "perfect peace" can mean to the Christian martial artist! When he works out he can concentrate better. When he spars he can be at ease, and not get all emotional when he loses or thinks the referee is unfair. When he competes he can do it for God's glory instead of his own ego. When he is injured he can look for how God wishes to work in his life. Perhaps most importantly, when he is actually in a self-defense situation, he can fight with no fear, knowing that the worst that can happen is death, at which time he will be with Jesus in Heaven.

The Christian martial artist with God's peace will be like the bulldog that Evangelist Bob Shuler told about. As Bob sat on his porch, the bulldog walked by on the sidewalk with that half sideways gait peculiar to the bulldog. About 40 feet back was a small dog, barking at the bulldog all the way. Evangelist Shuler prayed in his heart, "Lord, don't let that bulldog look back," and the Lord answered. The bulldog simply ignored the little dog's criticism and carping! We can practice our martial art with the exact same attitude as that bulldog if we have God's peace!

FAITH AND PRAYER

The Christian martial artist can have great faith in God as he heads into battle, or even as he trains. This is one area in which the Asian philosophies and religions have no real parallel. For example, Buddhists do not really treat Buddha as a god who can help them. Buddhist martial artists never recommend faith in Buddha to gain inner strength. Again, the philosophy of Taoism teaches that we can tap into the energy of the great Tao ("Way") of the universe, which is *ki/chi*. However, Taoists do not believe the Tao to be a deity, but more of an impersonal energy. There are deities in the religious version of Taoism, such as "God of War" Kwan, but such cannot be compared to our great God of Creation.

First of all, the Christian martial artist needs faith that God will give him strength. This is totally different from the monism of the Asian martial artist, which teaches that strength is within us, if we can only

learn to tap into our *ki/chi*. The Christian has promises from the omnipotent God of the whole Universe that He will give us strength in time of need.

Secondly, the Christian martial artist needs faith that, when things are absolutely hopeless, God can step in and protect him. No martial art which teaches Asian philosophy or religion can promise this. God, though, gives us great promises through the Word of God that He will protect us. David wrote in Psalm 7:10, "My defense is of God, which saveth the upright in heart." There are no less than seven other verses in the Psalms which promise that God will defend us! (31:2, 59:9, 59:16, 59:17, 62:2, 62:6, 89:18) Do we trust Him to do so?

The great prophet seemed so sure and confident of himself, even though his town was completely surrounded by a crack combat unit of his worst enemy. His servant, paralyzed with fear, cried out, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" Elisha answered back, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." (2 Kings 6:15-16)

That didn't sound right to the servant. All he saw were the horses and chariots of mighty Syria! The Bible then tells us, "And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." (V. 17) God had sent an army of angels to protect His servants, but only one had the eyes to see them. The army of God turned out to be much more powerful than that of the king of Syria, and when Elisha prayed, the Lord struck blind their entire strike force!

God protects in modern times, too. "At the Vermont Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D. C., the offering was taken and the dedicatory prayer was given, then a robber came forward and took it. The church officers followed him out and grabbed him from the rear. A tussle took place. The robber bore down on the men with a revolver. He pulled the trigger, but the gun did not fire. The police arrived and made arrest, and ascertained that the gun was loaded. The Lord was watching over the church officers and the offering." (*Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, by Paul Lee Tan, p. 513)

The most important element in the faith of the Christian martial artist is prayer. It is through prayer that God works in answer to our faith. The Christian martial artist should pray about everything! The Bible says, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. 4:6) We can pray for physical strength, for help in our training, for wisdom about fighting theory, and of course for strength to defeat the enemy, especially in a self-defense situation. When worst comes to worst, we can even pray for power in death!

The great martial artist was almost finished with life. His enemy had blinded him and enslaved him, but it was his own fault. He had let a woman learn the secret of his martial art, and that woman promptly sold it to his enemies. Now he knew it was the end, but he still longed to defeat his enemy with God's power, because, you see, they were God's enemy too! He bowed his head for one last prayer: "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." (Judges 16:28) God answered Samson's prayer, and he killed more Philistines at his death than through his entire life. If God answered Samson so powerfully, will He not answer the Christian martial artist of the twenty-first century in his or her need?

LOVE AND COURAGE

Believe it or not, the love which God gives us is also a source of spiritual power for the Christian martial artist. The first thing that love does for him is take away fear. As John wrote, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John 4:18)

How does this work? It works because fear is a selfish, inward-looking emotion, and the love of God is an outward-looking attitude. As an example, let's think of a self-defense situation. A burglar has entered your house and you are going after him. You see his darkened outline in your living room and you immediately attack. If you are filled with love for your family, you will attack with a ferocious determination to stop the burglar, especially if he has a weapon that may harm your family.

Even more significant, the inner power promised directly by God is given primarily for the purpose of

loving our Lord Jesus Christ more and more. Paul told the Ephesians that he was praying to the Lord, “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” (Eph. 3:16) This sounds wonderful, does it not? However, we must not forget what the reason for this inner power is, as told in the following verses: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” (Vv. 17-19)

In an extremely important passage for the Christian martial artist, Jesus points out how the greatest human love there can be will show itself in the defense of friends. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13) Great courage even resulting in death can result from love. In fact, the incredible courage shown by Christ on the cross was even greater than the greatest human love, since He died for sinners and not just friends. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

Barbara was a rather large single lady who I worked with every day at Cumberland Corporation’s Chattanooga factory, trying to pay my way through Bible college. For eight hours a day, Barbara would put wires into a metal frame we called a “jig,” and then slide it across the rollers to me at my spot welder. I would run it through the welder, and thus another Cumberland milk case would be born.

I had been witnessing to Barbara for quite some time, and finally the day came when Barbara seemed to be ready to trust Christ. As we worked at our machine, she began asking some very serious questions, such as, “What should we do if we hate someone?” and “Is revenge wrong?” I told her once more about the love of Christ and how He could forgive bitterness and save from sin.

After a short while, “lead man” Russell came over to me and said, “John, come help me fix this machine.” I knew something was up simply because if you really wanted to fix a welding machine you didn’t need my minimal skills! In the meantime, Russell filled me in. Barbara’s boyfriend had begun seeing someone else, and she was hurt and angry. That day she had brought a .38 caliber revolver to work, planning to send him out of this world. But God’s love had broken through and maybe saved a life and hopefully a soul. Thank God that His love that day took away my fear of witnessing!

Love can, in an amazing way, produce internal energy! So can meditation, the peace of God and the faith of a Christian. This concept is totally different from that of Asian monism and the teachings of *ki/chi*. It is in the spiritual elements that Christianity differs most from the Asian religions and philosophies. The Christian martial artist should draw his primary power not from his own inner abilities, but from God Himself through the Holy Spirit.

Chapter Three

THE SOUL

The soul is that part of you which relates to the people around you. It is the real you, and it can exist without the body, contrary to the teachings of monism. According to the Bible, when the thief on the cross believed in Jesus, our Savior told him, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43) The split second a person dies, his or her soul and spirit goes directly to Heaven or Hell without the body. Now, how can our soul gain internal energy?

Chinese theologian Watchman Nee invented a word which I find to be fascinating: “soulical.” By this he meant that which pertains to the soul, much like “physical” means that which pertains to the body, and “spiritual” means that which pertains to the spirit. Nee wrote, “The peril of the believer is to confuse the spirit for the soul and the soul for the spirit, and so be deceived into accepting the counterfeit of evil spirits to the

unsettling of God's work." (*The Latent Power of the Soul*, p. 7)

Nee further believed that our souls have tremendous potential and can be developed until we can perform psychic miracles such as healing, fortune telling, etc. I disagree with Nee here. I believe that yes, the human soul is powerful, but such miracles as are not through the power of God Himself are done through Satanic power. It is possible to have tremendous martial power through being possessed by demons.

One who had such power was the demoniac of Gadara. (Mark 5) He had such power that "he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him." (V. 4) Again, there was a demon-possessed man who defeated the seven sons of Sceva at one time. "And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." (Acts 19:16) It is clear from these passages that demonic power can give a human tremendous power in the martial arts.

I know of a case in a Tokyo church where a slim Japanese boy of 16, who had been fooling around with black magic through his hobby of role-playing games, was demon possessed. This boy, in the house of my missionary friend, was able to avoid capture by two grown men, one of whom weighed over 300 pounds, for quite awhile.

I hesitate to write this, but famed founder of Aikido Morihei Ueshiba may have gained some of his incredible power through demonic means. Aikido is a beautiful and fascinating martial art, practiced with integrity by many Christian martial artists, but all admit that Ueshiba could do amazing feats which have never been duplicated by his followers. It is significant that Ueshiba was an adherent of a Buddhist cult called "Shingon." According to John Stevens, "He (Ueshiba) also gained experience in Shingon visualization techniques in which one mentally conjures up a deity and then attempts to merge with the image." (*Three Budo Masters*, p. 93) Again, after a special fire-walking ceremony, when he received a Shingo "Seal of Attainment" certificate, something happened to Ueshiba. "This triggered the first of a long series of mystical experiences for Ueshiba—I felt as if a guardian deity had settled in the core of my being." (Stevens, p. 96)

Later Ueshiba joined another cult called "Omotokyo," and had a great experience of enlightenment. "Following this earth-shattering transformation, Ueshiba began to manifest incredible powers: he could displace enormous boulders, leap unbelievable distances, and dispose of any kind of attack—anywhere, anytime." (Stevens, p. 112) It is unfortunate that Ueshiba, an extremely gifted martial artist, was so spiritually deceived.

A similar case is that of So Doshin, the founder of Nippon Shorinji Kenpo. In one account I read, he claimed to have been possessed by the spirit of Tamo (in Japanese, Daruma, the founder of Zen Buddhism) while staying overnight in the Honan Shaolin Temple in China. Supposedly, Daruma told him to teach kenpo in Japan as a religion rather than a martial art, thus circumventing the Allied Occupation's rules against teaching the martial arts right after World War II.

Christian martial artists must be extremely careful here. The Christian martial artist should consider the relationship between his body, soul and spirit. He should ask himself in the middle of his training, "Is this energy soulical or spiritual or physical?" The internal energy of the Christian martial artist must come through the working of the Holy Spirit. Asian religions and philosophies are very dangerous spiritually. As ninjutsu expert Robert Bussey says, "today I see top ninjutsu teachers and martial artists practicing all kinds of spiritually destructive skills. The martial arts is their religion, their God. Until they accept Jesus Christ into their lives, they are lost." ("Martial Arts in the Name of God?" by James William Holzer, p. 72)

As Paul wrote, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." (Eph. 3:14-16) As pioneer martial arts evangelist Mike Crain used to say in his messages, "There are all kinds of power in the world: white power, black power, pucker power. But the greatest power in the world is God's power!"

Here are some definite and proper ways to develop the power of the soul through the working of the Holy Spirit to the benefit of our martial arts. In particular, the mind is extremely important to the Christian martial artist.

THE WILL

The human will is that part of your soul which sets the direction of your life. It is with your will that you make decisions, and thus it is perhaps the most important part of your soul. In particular, it is with your will that you invite Christ into your heart to save you. The Bible makes this clear when it says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Rev. 3:20) Again, Jesus made it clear that He will forcibly save no one when he said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matt. 23:37) Note that Christ wanted to save the people of Jerusalem, but they “would not.”

Once we have invited Christ into our heart to save us, then He takes over with His will. We cannot save ourselves—our part is simply to accept His salvation. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)

How is the human will important to the Christian martial artist? In every way! Woe be to the Christian martial artist who ignores the potential and power of his will. The decisions he or she makes about the martial arts can either make or break what he wants to do for Christ.

First of all, every believer should offer his or her will to Christ on the altar of the heart. This is absolutely essential for true growth in the Christian life. By this I mean that God’s will should become your will. You should be willing to go anywhere and do anything for Jesus Christ. This is so basic that Jesus taught it as part of His model prayer: “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10) Have you ever prayed this? I suggest that if you haven’t, you get down on your knees right now and give your will to God. Ask him to lead your life and show you His will, and promise Him that you will go anywhere in the world and do absolutely anything for Him.

Christ puts it this way. “And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.” (Mark 8:34-35)

In a narrower sense than this full commitment, the Christian martial artist should offer his martial art up to Christ to use as He sees fit. Simply get on your knees and tell the Lord that your martial art belongs to Him, and that you will do with it whatever He wants you to do. The Lord may lead you to do Gospel martial arts demonstrations or teach a Christian martial art at an openly Christian martial arts school—or He may not! Only the Lord knows best how you can use your martial art to His glory.

May I give a personal testimony here? At age 16 I committed my entire will and life to Jesus Christ. At age 18, God called me to preach. At age 20 I began using my martial art for the Lord in demonstrations and, not too long after that, in teaching. During my 20’s I gave my martial arts ability to God more than once, but He always gave it back since He knew I would use it for Him. When I was 20 He called me to be a missionary to Japan, and then in 1981 I finally made it to Japan with my family, where I have served Him ever since. I must say, I have never one single moment regretted that day when I gave my will, my life and all I am to Jesus Christ to do His will. The joys and blessings of doing the will of God since then have been beyond compare, and the only thing I regret is the times I have failed to follow His will.

There is another way in which the will is important to the martial artist and that is in his commitment. This word is used sometimes in a tactical sense in the martial arts to indicate the extent of your commitment to attack. Thus, “partial commitment” means that you are doing a partial technique to see how your opponent will react, but “full commitment” means that you have every intention of connecting.

This is an important concept for the martial artist, but there is an even more important form of commitment that we should know, and that is the nature of our commitment to our martial art. If a Christian has decided to pursue a martial art for God’s glory, he should follow through on that decision no matter what

happens. The Bible says, “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.” (Prov. 4:26-27)

Few sports call for the total commitment that the martial arts do. I am reminded of my friend Mike McClure. Mike began his career in the martial arts at Tennessee Temple University way back in the early 1970’s, but did not meet early success. Later in Florida he trained under one instructor for seven years without receiving his black belt. He must have been discouraged many times during those years, but he never quit. Finally the day came when Mike Crain, the pioneer martial arts evangelist, gave Mike his first degree black sash in kung fu. In later years Mike became a board member of the Gospel Martial Arts Union (GMAU), and was also given an honorary doctorate for his writings on the Christian martial arts. In the summer of 2001 I was honored as the Director of the Temple Chinese Boxing Association (TCBA) to be the one to give him the certificate for his 5th degree sash in kung fu, earned in a test under GMAU auspices. Mike has complete commitment to his Savior and the Christian martial arts, and God has rewarded him for it!

Solomon, the wisest man of the Old Testament era, put it this way: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” (Eccl. 9:10) However, as mentioned already, this should be for the glory of God, not one’s own self. “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” (Col. 3:23-24) Again, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Cor. 10:31)

This commitment that one must have to be a successful Christian martial artist is really a sign of maturity. It is similar to the commitment that we must have to follow Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote of that commitment, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” (1 Cor. 16:13) Therefore it is no accident that the Bible often refers to the Christian life as a battle in which a Christian warrior must be totally committed to the fight. Paul wrote, “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” (2 Tim. 2:3-4) To be a true Christian warrior, whether in the spiritual world or in the martial arts, requires full commitment!

When I was in high school, I joined the “catch-as-catch-can” wrestling team, partly with the desire to learn how to defend myself. I was quite blessed in that the coach was Bruce Ehrhardt, a small but wiry former Wisconsin state champion. Along with the brutal practices wrestling requires, Coach Ehrhardt taught us many character lessons. One day in my junior varsity year I walked down the hall toward the mat next to a very strong looking young man who asked me what weight class I was in. I said, “138 pounds, but I’m wrestling up at 145. What class are you?” I was quite relieved when he replied that he also was 138, until he said that he also was wrestling 145 that day!

Sure enough, he muscled me around for the first two periods until he got me in a painful double arm lock called the “double chicken wing.” Fortunately, though I was upside down as I “bridged” on my head with my neck muscles, I was able to see the clock. I knew that if I was pinned, my team would lose five points instead of just the three if I lost, so I stayed there for a whole minute, unable to escape but determined not to be pinned, while my teammates screamed, “Himes, don’t get pinned!” I survived, and went on to chase him around the mat for the last period, gaining some takedown points though I lost in the end. In the locker room the coach came up to me and gave me one of the greatest compliments of my life: “Himes, you showed a lot of guts out there!”

I credit Coach Ehrhardt with teaching me commitment through wrestling. In my senior year, I let the brutal practices and my failure to make the varsity get me down. I went to the coach’s office and said, “Coach, I’m quitting.” His reply is a classic, and should be remembered by all Christian martial artists: “Himes, if you quit now, you’ll quit the rest of your life!” I stayed with the team, and received my varsity letter in wrestling even though I never wrestled a single varsity match! Let these words echo in the mind of every Christian martial artist: “Don’t quit!” As the Bible says, “For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.” (Pr. 24:16)

THE MIND

The mind is that part of our soul which thinks and reasons. Unfortunately, many Christian martial artists do not use their minds very much, and thus miss a great source of internal energy. The more your mind is in control of your body, the more powerful you will be. On the other hand, the more you allow outside influences and substances (drugs, alcohol, etc.) to control you, the less powerful you will be. Let's look at some mental traits that are needed for internal energy.

SELF DISCIPLINE

What is it that keeps you training when your whole body aches? How can you continue the fight when you think you have lost? It is the character trait of discipline. Asian monism teaches that to attain self-control you need to unify your body and mind. It is never explained practically or scientifically how this can be achieved, though mystical terms and concepts from the false doctrines of Taoism and Buddhism are often intoned as gospel truth. Christian martial artists should instead understand the concept of mind over body, or self-discipline. As Paul wrote, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9:27)

The martial arts are sometimes thought of to be an excellent means to learn self-discipline. Even many Christian instructors push the martial arts as a good means to learn Christian discipline. While it is true that the martial arts are one tool for teaching and learning discipline, let us never say that any martial art or sport can be a source of true Christian discipline and thus lead us to a moral life. History is replete with examples of wickedness in the martial arts.

Japanese scholar Inazo Nitobe was a zealous Christian, but he was also a zealous Japanese apologist who wrote a book to explain and defend the ethical and moral basis of his country's culture. (*Bushido: The Soul of Japan*) While essentially a true account, his book does not tell the whole story. Nitobe whitewashes the samurai life. In a book by 17th century samurai Tsunetomo Yamamoto, we learn that drunkenness, adultery, murder (sometimes legalized) and homosexuality were rampant in the samurai culture. (*Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai*, translated by William Scott Wilson) The samurai warriors were not able to live up to their high standards.

Where does Christian discipline come from? It is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22) Temperance is an old English word meaning "self control." There used to be "Temperance Societies" in America whose goal was to defeat the demon alcohol! They would enter saloons and seek to lead the poor souls within to a life of sobriety. The Christian martial artist must walk in the Spirit so that he may have the self-discipline the Holy Spirit can give. As the Bible says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16)

In June 2000, Tiger Woods broke a record in golf that had stood for 138 years. He won the U. S. Open with an incredible 15-stroke lead. How was he able to do this? He noted, "I've had a sense of calmness this week that I haven't had in a while, since Augusta in '97. I felt very tranquil, very calm no matter what was happening. I was able to keep my composure." (Daily Yomiuri, Reuters, 6/20/2000) We Christians can have this through Jesus Christ, with no need for meditation.

PAIN REACTION CONTROL

What is one practical result of the Christian martial artist's self-control? An important element of internal energy that can be gained through self-control is the ability to control one's own pain. Actually, it would be more accurate to call this the ability not to control the pain itself, but one's emotional reaction to it. One must control his mind to the extent that when the pain signal reaches the brain, the will acknowledges that it is there but refuses to react to it.

Virtually all reaction to pain is instilled by cultural influences. In other words, reaction to pain is a learned response. (See *Pain*, by Dr. Arthur S. Freese, p. 81.) For example, the stunt practiced by some martial

arts demonstrators of lying on a bed of nails poses little danger of injury (though scratches may occur) as can be proven by simple arithmetic. A 150-pound man lying on a bed of just 150 nails receives only one pound of pressure per nail, nowhere near enough to break the skin. All that is needed is an ability to ignore the pain signals going to the brain from 150 spots!

According to Arthur Freese, a physician named Berthold Wolff did studies comparing pain tolerance of members of different cultures. "Dr. Wolff had the good luck to test a nurse who had spent many years among the Eskimos, who deny all pain, and her tolerance was so great he could hardly believe it. But after she had lived in New York for a considerable period he managed to test her again and her tolerance had returned to the usual American levels. And a Sikh physician also demonstrated a fantastic tolerance but frankly admitted that with his background he just could not bring himself to even mention pain." (Freese, p. 77)

What is needed is a decision, when the pain signal reaches the decision centers of the brain, not to react emotionally. Robert W. Smith, in telling of his three-year odyssey to Taiwan to learn Chinese martial arts, wrote, "Fatigue became my constant companion and I learned to live with bone aches, pulled muscles, bone chips and utter exhaustion. Pain became for me only an opinion, one I chose not to have." (*Chinese Boxing Masters and Methods*, p. ix)

There are training devices which will raise the practitioner's ability to take pain. It has been proven that athletes in contact sports (judo, wrestling, football, boxing, etc.) have a higher pain tolerance than those in non-contact sports (tennis, golf, track, etc.) and those not involved in sports at all (Freese, p. 18). Therefore it is evident that a primary function of such martial arts exercises as "push hands" in t'ai chi ch'uan, the "forearm banging" exercise in some styles of kung fu, Wing Chun's "sticky hands" and "mook" training, *makiwara* training in karate, etc., is to raise the pain threshold rather than merely toughen a particular part of the body or develop sensitivity. Along the same line, punching a bag such as in Western boxing may have its greatest value in psychologically preparing the fighter for the impact of his own blow.

It may also be that certain techniques can be used to augment this control of one's reaction to pain. Most martial arts teach that the primary function of the shout used in attacking (*kiai* in Japanese, meaning "spirit meeting") is to disorient the opponent. In fact, at the moment a person hears a loud noise, it has been proven that his muscle movement is paralyzed for a fraction of a second.

However, a further benefit of this shout is to cut off one's own reaction to pain incurred by a received blow. Indeed, when judo teaches a *kiai* at the moment of hitting the ground when being thrown, this is one element of that teaching. Medical science has discovered that "a loud noise can raise your pain threshold (the point at which you feel pain) some 50 percent." (Freese, p. 18)

Of course, it must be stressed here that one should not ignore pain which informs one of injury. All injury should be treated, and the sooner the better. What is being stressed here is the ability to ignore that pain which is simply a warning of stress to a certain part of the body experienced in such activities as stretching, punching a heavy bag, sparring and its resultant bruises, long practice which produces fatigue pains, etc.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

A positive attitude is also a mental trait. The Christian martial artist's success in the martial arts may well depend on his attitude. God does not endorse a negative attitude towards our training. One may safely say that God opposes any thinking pattern which suggests that He cannot help us accomplish what we should.

Let me state here that I do not agree with Norman Vincent Peale's so-called "positive thinking." As I heard a famous Baptist preacher say, "I think Paul is appealing and Peale is appalling!" Simply having a positive attitude does not necessarily breed success. Such a positive attitude may simply be another form of humanism, the thinking that Man doesn't need God but can become his own little god, and this is idolatry.

What I am talking about was best expressed by the Apostle Paul, who said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4:13) He is talking about a positive attitude, true, but one that is based on faith in God. Prayer with faith can accomplish fantastic things for the Christian martial artist. Matthew 17:20 says, "And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and

nothing shall be impossible unto you.”

The Christian martial artist, then, should have a positive attitude based on his faith in God. His faith that God is with him and helping him will cause him to eliminate negative thoughts from his mind, such as: “I quit,” “I can’t” and “He didn’t treat me right!” We have already studied some character traits that will help him in this: the peace of God, self-control, etc. The most important thing to help the Christian martial artist in this area is simply to walk with God. The Christian martial artist should long with his whole heart to draw near to God, and when he does so God will draw near to him and help eliminate those negative thoughts. “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” (James 4:8) He should fill his mind with the Word of God, which will force out the negative thoughts mentioned above, and he will be able then to do, with God’s power, whatever is right to do.

Should we ever have negative thoughts? Yes, towards sin! It is said that “Silent Cal” Coolidge, one time president of the United States, came home from church one day, only to be asked what the sermon was about. The laconic Cal answered, “Sin.” When asked what the preacher thought of sin, he answered, “He was against it!” Let us always be against sin and the devastation it brings into the lives of believers and unbelievers.

FIGHTING WITH THE MIND

The general was extremely discouraged. He had taken his men to attack a small city and it should have been an easy battle. Instead the enemy had turned out to be far tougher than he had thought, and he had lost the battle and about thirty-six men. He was at a loss about what to do next, so he fell on his face in prayer, only to be told by God that sin in his camp was the reason for the loss. After dealing with the sin and sinners, General Joshua received an inspired battle plan from God Himself. In the second battle of Ai, General Joshua played with the minds of his enemy, fooling them into thinking that they were winning again so that they made a foolish attack, losing their city and being destroyed in what may be the first record of the classic “hammer and anvil” battle plan. (Josh. ch. 7 and 8) Note that God’s plan allowed the enemy to deceive themselves. God Himself never lies (Rom. 3:4, etc.), but He is willing for us to use our minds to misdirect our enemies, causing them to deceive themselves.

Tremendously talented martial artist Chris Casey developed a concept he called “mind hit” fighting. His top student and inheritor of the style describes it thus: “Mind-hit refers to the use of the mind as a weapon, to the marshaling of all one’s mental resources in combat.” (*Chinese Boxing Core Curriculum*, by James C. Cravens, p. 45) One example of a “mind-hit” technique is attacking the eyes or your opponent. This is outlawed in all martial arts competitions, and for good reason. However, in a life-threatening situation against an armed enemy, it is an excellent technique for the very reason that, even if you do not damage your opponent’s eyes, you will shock him mentally and give yourself that extra edge to win the battle.

I once saw a professional martial arts competition in which one competitor seriously fouled his opponent by thumbing him in the eyes. The look of shock on the fouled competitor’s face was very revealing. He felt great pain as well as revulsion at his opponent’s tactics. He also felt a kick to the head and several punches to the face before he was able to react. Though in the match the competitor who used the eye-gouge was penalized and eventually lost the match, the temporary advantage of his “mind-hit” technique was obvious to all.

Kent Haralson uses the term “mind-leading” in a similar way to Casey’s “mind-hit.” He defines “mind-leading” as “the use of actions, eyes, voice and posturing, to ‘lead’ the opponent’s mind to a position of vulnerability and defeat. (*Gideon the “Black Belt,”* p. 9) Haralson’s “mind leading” is a more defensive concept, and is even designed to prevent combat when possible. He believes that a Christian martial artist should “have the mental ‘mind-leading’ abilities to disarm a threatening situation.” (*Christians and the Martial Arts*, pp. 4-5)

One example of mind-leading is found in the book of Proverbs, where it says, “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.” (15:1) By this we can see that it is possible to defuse a dangerous situation by carefully choosing our words and lowering our voice. Significantly, “grievous words” make the situation more dangerous.

Many battles are won simply by thought, whether by “mind-leading” or a “mind-hit” technique. That is, the fighter uses his brain instead of his emotions to guide his technique. “Mixed martial arts” wrestler Kazushii

Sakuraba is nicknamed in Japan the “IQ Wrestler” because of his very intelligent approach to the martial arts. We as Christians should develop our martial art as intelligently as possible. In this way we can bring glory to God as lost martial artists learn to respect our abilities.

THE HEART

The heart in the Bible is the seat of emotions. It is with the heart that we love and hate, rejoice and sorrow, become calm or angry. Believe it or not, proper control of the emotions is a very important key to internal energy for the non-Christian as well as the Christian martial artist.

One fighter and kung fu teacher very successful in full-contact “koushu lei tai” fighting and in coaching such fighters, wrote, “New fighters always ask me, ‘What should my emotional state be when I am fighting?’ The answer is . . . there should be none! No emotion. Flat. Most are confused by my response. People often think they need to cultivate anger to fight well. Not true. Anger clouds the mind. The mind must be clear to perform at optimum levels. Anger is very powerful, but undisciplined, and hence, unusable for a fighter. So, too, are the emotions of hate, rage, and vengeance. All are powerful states of mind, and all are unusable because of occlusion of the mind.” (“Mike Patterson’s Winning Secrets,” by Mike Patterson, in *Inside Kung Fu*, August, 1997, p. 70)

Bruce Lee also learned this secret. In the development of his fighting style, Lee researched how to put the most power into his punch. According to one of his disciples, “A relaxed body was important because speed was a key ingredient for every move; any tightness or tension used energy prematurely and created a stiffer and slower motion. Being relaxed not only helped make Bruce more fluid in his movements, but also more explosive in his punching. To develop a state of relaxation in a tense situation, Bruce realized he had to control his emotional and physical reactions during a fight.” (“The Origin of Bruce Lee’s 1- and 3-Inch Power Punch,” by James W. DeMille, in *Inside Kung Fu*, July, 1986 p. 50)

The article goes on to tell how Lee “began a regular meditation program to dissolve everyday mental stress.” (P. 52) This is where Christians have a great advantage over non-Christian martial artists. We do not need a “meditation program,” but can meditate all day long over God’s goodness, and thus have extraordinary peace and calmness when facing a self-defense situation.

Unfortunately for Bruce Lee, he meditated on the wrong things and never found true peace and calm through the Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of his short life, his body was found in the apartment of Hong Kong starlet Betty Ting, with whom he had evidently been having an affair, and marijuana was found in his body (evidently from cannabis-laced cookies). (*Bruce Lee: Fighting Spirit*, by Bruce Thomas, pp. 203-209)

What should a Christian martial artist meditate on to have this inner calmness? Philippians 4:8 has a great list for meditation: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Christian meditation on these things will calm the emotions and get rid of fear, hate, vengeance, etc.

Even more important for the Christian martial artist’s control of his emotions is the knowledge of salvation. Knowing that when you die you will go to Heaven can take away all fear of death. As the Psalmist wrote, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.” (Ps. 23:4)

My kung fu teacher, Professor James Cravens, learned this truth. His teacher, Chris Casey, was a godless man who at one time enjoyed destroying the faith of his students. However, Casey realized there was something special about the faith of James Cravens, who tells the story in his introduction to a compilation of Casey’s writings which he edited. “At one point years later, he was evaluating how he thought I would fare against another martial artist in an all out fight. He said that the other person probably would defeat me on paper, but he thought I still held the advantage and would win because I had a strong faith which made this life only a temporary point and that I did not fear death as the other person did. He believed that this difference would allow me to relax more and therefore make up the difference.” (*The Boxing*, by Chris Casey, p. 18)

It is possible for a Christian to have complete control of his emotions. I learned this in about 1977, when a kind church bus dealer invited my whole extended family, the “Rice Clan,” on a trip to Disney World in Florida on one of his buses. At Disneyland, everyone was surprised when my aged grandfather, famed evangelist John R. Rice, got in the line for a wild ride on the “Space Mountain” roller coaster. He and my grandmother walked right past the attendant, who followed them saying, “Sir, sir, please don’t ride this if you have a heart problem!” However, Grandpa’s physical problem was not his heart but his hearing, so he kept right on walking.

I was completely unable to enjoy the ride, so worried was I about my grandparents. When we all got off, though, they looked quite all right. I walked up beside them and asked gingerly, “How was the ride, Grandpa?” He answered with perfect peace, “Oh, not too bad!” Of course I had forgotten that one airline had given him a plaque for being a “Million Miler” on their airplane! However, John R. Rice was a man totally in control of his emotions when others were all strung out on adrenaline.

There is a time, though, when controlled and righteous anger can be a tremendous tool for the martial artist. Jesus taught us this when He fought a whole crowd of law breakers and drove them out of the temple, His “Father’s house.” We, too, should be fired up with righteous anger should we ever face a criminal in a self-defense situation.

Chapter Four

THE BODY

The past few decades have seen an incredible increase in our knowledge of the human body. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, we know now far more about the human body than scientists even in the first half of the twentieth century knew. Research has virtually mapped the functions of vast areas of the brain, recorded the intricacies of the cell down to the DNA and RNA in it, dramatically increased our understanding of the nervous system, and progressed rapidly in many other ways. As a result, it is high time for Christian martial artists to revamp our view of internal energy. Many things thought to be a result of *ki/chi* are now known to be natural functions of our God-given bodies. Asian teaching on *ki/chi* can now be shown to be outmoded. In fact, what the Bible teaches about the body is far more accurate, and provides a much better way to apply the findings of modern science to our martial arts training.

In Asian thought, the immaterial part of man and the physical body are joined permanently. The goal in Asian philosophy and some martial arts is to merge the two in a “mind-body unity.” This results in some very strange ideas, such as that bodily fluids turn into *ki/chi*, which is usually thought of as spiritual or unseen. One master of the Chinese internal arts even wore a hat and sunglasses so that his *ki/chi* would not leak from the top of his head and his eyes! (*Chinese Mind-Hit Boxing*, by Chris Casey, p. 20)

Various Asian martial arts use certain concepts and forms of training to produce a state of mind that will produce what they believe is mind-body unity. Japanese martial arts call this state *mushin*, or “no mind/heart.” It also occurs in various Chinese martial arts as “*wuji*,” which is the process of emptying one’s mind at the beginning of the *T’ai Ch’i Ch’uan* form. *Wuji* translates as “no extremity.” “This is the state of undifferentiated emptiness before a beginning. As soon as there is a beginning or a movement, there is differentiation and opposites, and this is called *Taiji*.” (*Tai Ji Theory and Martial Power*, by Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming, p. 263)

In the Bible, however, the body is something far different. It cannot be merged with the mind or any other part of the inner man. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit. According to 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

Since the body of a believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit, he has no right to call it his own. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are

not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19-20) Thus the first implication of the body being the Spirit's temple is that we must glorify God with it. Christian martial artists should never train with the goal of impressing others and bringing glory to himself or herself, but only to bring glory to God.

Another implication of this doctrine is that we should be careful how we treat our bodies. Any practice that may harm the body must be carefully considered before being indulged in. Would the Holy Spirit want us to bring drugs, alcohol or tobacco into His temple? Would he want us to engage in kinds of competition or training which may damage His temple? Would He want us to have patterns tattooed into the walls of His temple that do not glorify Him? These are questions to be answered by each individual martial artist, and thus cannot be successfully imposed permanently from without, though rules in a Christian martial art school can help. Ultimately, though, each Christian martial artist must stand before God alone on this matter of how he or she has treated God's temple.

Having made this plain, let us move on to the problems of how to develop internal energy in our bodies which can make us powerful martial artists for God's glory. My goal in this chapter is to strip the mysteries from much of what is called *ki/chi* or "internal energy" in the martial arts. Many things we do and think of as "internal" are nothing more than ways to use the fantastic, God-given abilities inherent in our bodies, which are "fearfully and wonderfully made." (Ps. 139:14)

Bear in mind that just because something deals with the physical does not mean that it is not internal in the martial arts. The external deals with the physical training of muscles, and the internal deals with the unseen. Until the twentieth century we did not know much about things the Asians considered spiritual, such as the chemical makeup of the body. We can now explain with science what the ancients used mysticism to explain.

TRAINING

The first physical goal of the Christian martial artist should be proper training. He should learn to train wisely and well, but above all he should learn to train. A well-prepared martial artist is much more likely to come out on top in an actual self-defense situation. Southern comedian Jerry Clower told a story about being in front of a hotel with country singer Porter Wagoner. A little red convertible with four dudes in it pulled up. One hollered at Porter Wagoner, "Hey, where'd you get that Rolex watch?" Porter stuck his hand in his rear pocket and said, "The same place I got this .357 magnum gun!"

In the Christian life, training the body is not nearly as important as training the spirit. We are told in 1Ti 4:7-8, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Notice that the Bible does not condemn or forbid physical exercise, but only points out that spiritual exercise is better! Bodily exercise and physical training does profit us physically, though not spiritually. So, in our training we should emphasize the internal first, then the external.

The truth is, the Bible refers positively several times to physical training in the martial arts. For example, we find that Abraham's servants were trained in the martial arts of the day so that when he needed them to rescue his nephew Lot, they did the job! "And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan." (Gen. 14:14) This small band of warriors beat a much larger army, because they were well trained!

The Apostle Paul also knew about training in the martial arts. In comparing physical sports to the spiritual, he wrote, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9:24-27)

In this passage we learn that Paul had seen both good and bad training in the martial arts of his day. He may have even been a spectator at the original Olympics in Athens, since we know he spent much time in Greece planting churches. In fact, the city of Corinth, the home of the church he wrote the Corinthian epistles

to, was in Greece. Therefore, he had more than a nodding acquaintance with the martial arts of the day, and may even have practiced some form of self-defense art.

What arts did the Greeks practice? As did all the other ancient nations, they had a style of wrestling. On ancient engravings, statues and vase paintings are portrayed many wrestling holds which are used to this very day in Olympic freestyle wrestling or American “catch-as-catch-can” wrestling, a style I learned in high school. (See *A Pictorial History of Wrestling*, by Graeme Kent, pp. 14-30) One of my favorite holds, the “guillotine” (a combination leg grapevine and armbar), is portrayed over and over.

The Greeks also had various forms of boxing, but the final result of their martial evolution was the famed “pankration,” a mix of boxing and wrestling. By Paul’s time, there were forms of both professional and amateur pankration. “We may see from the statues of the period that the beauty of the 7th century athlete had changed by the 3rd century to the solid bulk of the strong man.” (Kent, p. 27)

What had changed? Obviously Paul was seeing solid training in the martial arts of his day, and that is what he recommended for spiritual warfare—hard training in the Word of God in order to defeat the devil. Likewise, as Christian martial artists, we should be serious about our training. Good physical training can, to a degree, develop the internal man also to the extent that mental discipline is developed and the principles and techniques become ingrained so that they can be performed without thought.

The Christian martial artist who is well trained will be like the grandma who thwarted a burglar. “My grandmother, a demure lady of 70-plus, has always professed disdain for the wrestling which is so popular on television. Yet every night she sits through the matches, saying she can’t sleep if she retires too early. Then one night a young hoodlum climbed into the house via Grandma’s window, but tripped over a footstool and fell. Before he could move Grandma had grabbed his leg, twisted it around the bedpost and held it firmly while she called for help. Afterward she explained airily, ‘Oh, I just took him with a step-over toe hold.’” (W. F. Abata, in *Reader’s Digest Treasury of Wit and Humor*, p. 141.) She had watched her beloved professional ‘wrasslin’ so much that the holds were ingrained in her mind!

Why was the Roman army so good at war? First century historian Josephus said it well. ““Their drills are bloodless battles and their battles are bloody drills.”

THE BREATH OF LIFE

According to the Bible, “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Gen. 2:7) Therefore there is something extremely important about the breath.

It is no accident that both the Hebrew word *ruach* and the Greek word *pneuma* can each mean both “spirit” and “breath.” Each word is translated both ways, *ruach* in the Old Testament and *pneuma* in the New Testament, as Dr. Kent Haralson points out in his groundbreaking book on the subject. (*Ki/Chi Power and the Christian*, p. 12) Our breath is literally our life, putting oxygen into the bloodstream. So, the Bible often speaks of *ruach*, calling it the breath of life. (Interestingly enough, the famous passage in Gen. 2:7 in which God breathed into Adam uses a different word, *nashamah*, which can also mean soul!) The Bible also teaches that “the life of the flesh is in the blood.” (Gen. 9:4, etc.)

Not only can we not live without breath, but Eliphaz in the Bible further equates the anthropomorphic “breath of God” with His power to destroy: “By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.” (Job 4:9) This has definite implications for the martial artist. To take away an opponent’s breath is to control and even kill him. The chokehold can be used either to cut off the breath or to cut off the blood to the brain by constricting the carotid arteries to the brain. Either way, the “breath,” the oxygen, is cut off.

Psalm 18 says a similar thing about the creative power of God’s breath: “Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.” (V. 15) God is also the source of all breath in all creatures, “seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” (Acts 17:25) What implications, then, does breath training have for the Christian martial artist and his internal energy?

First of all, let's explore the meaning of the Chinese word *ch'i* and the Japanese word *ki*. The basic meaning of the word in both languages is "breath." (See Appendix B for a detailed explanation.) The idea of *ki/chi* as an unseen energy comes primarily from Taoism. Many Chinese martial artists treat *ki/chi* as no more than air. Robert Smith mentions one such man: "Chou (Chou Ch'i-Ch'un) believed differently about *ch'i*. He believed it was simply air, not energy. Skill and technique, not *ch'i*, were the important things." (*Chinese Boxing: Masters and Methods*, p. 84) Only when the Taoist meaning is used do Christian martial artists run into trouble. Thus, one Chinese scholar defines it as "the psychophysiological power associated with blood and health." (*Hsing I: Chinese Mind-Body Boxing*, by Robert W. Smith, p. 17) Note that he includes both "psycho-" (pertaining to the mind or soul) and "physiological" (pertaining to the body) in one word.

It should go without saying that Christians should also reject practices based on monism. However, we do not have to have mind-body unity or agree with the false doctrine of monism to learn how to breathe correctly! The truth is, all martial artists need to learn to breathe from the diaphragm, since this is the most natural and powerful way to breathe. It is no accident that most Asian martial arts, in teaching proper breathing, say to breathe from what the Chinese call the *tan tien* (*tanden* in Japanese). The literal meaning of the word is "crimson field," believe it or not, but it should be translated, "abdomen," with the mysticism stripped away.

Breath control can without fail only be achieved by abdominal breathing; that is, by breathing in and out from the abdomen by means of the diaphragm instead of from the upper chest by means of the chest muscles. It is interesting to note in the literature of the Asian martial arts how often we are exhorted to "lower the *chi*" into the lower abdomen. (See *Hsing I: Chinese Mind-Body Boxing*, by Robert W. Smith, p. 107; *Hung Gar Kung Fu*, Bucksam Kong and Eugene Ho, pp. 26-28; etc.)

I was taught to breathe from the diaphragm long before I learned any martial art. In 7th grade I had a wonderful choir teacher who taught all of us to breathe from the abdomen. Some who have heard me sing may not believe it, but I took voice for several semesters in college. My junior high lessons on abdominal breathing were reinforced at that time, for every good voice teacher teaches abdominal breathing.

How can you tell if you are breathing properly? Get in a natural stance and put your hand on your stomach. If your abdomen expands when you breath in, you are breathing correctly. If, on the other hand, your chest expands, you are breathing incorrectly. It is not too difficult to correct the problem of wrong breathing once you are aware of it.

The Chinese term *ch'i kung* literally means "breath training." To the believer in Asian philosophy the *ch'i* referred to here is that mystical energy substance that circulates in the body. For this discussion, however, it will simply mean breath. There are basically two types of breathing exercises in the martial arts. In Chinese terms, they are hard breath training (often called "tension breathing") and soft breath training.

Breath training evidently began in the Fukien Province of China. Many styles of kung fu there practice various forms of both hard and soft breath training. It is also common in other provinces, for example in the famous "Iron Wire" form of Hung Kuen (often called Hung Gar) and certain moves in the forms of the Wing Chun style. However, it must be noted that both of these styles originated at the Sil Lum Temple in Fukien.

Both kinds of breath training are practiced while doing a form (*kata*) slowly. In hard breath training, abdominal breathing is done by relaxing when breathing in and tensing every muscle possible while breathing out. On the other hand, in soft breath training, all muscles are relaxed as much as possible.

Soft breath training is widely practiced in Fukien Province, though it is usually included within the forms, often in 10 to 20 moves at the beginning. Thus, since most karate *kata* (forms) originate in Fukien, which is the closest province to Okinawa, many karate forms also have a few moves of soft breath training in them. (Unfortunately many practice these moves with tension breathing.)

In particular, hard breath training is done with a form called *Sam Chien* in the Hokkien dialect of Fukien, meaning "Three Wars." One example of this form can be seen in the Five Ancestors Fist style, which has altogether ten hard breath training forms. (See *Five Ancestor Fist Kung-Fu*, by Alexander L. Co.)

This same form was learned by Chojun Miyagi and incorporated in Goju Ryu, the karate style he founded, except that he turned the open hand techniques of China into closed fist techniques. In Japan it is called *Sanchin* (though with the same Chinese characters), and has also been adopted by other styles than Goju. Miyagi also invented another, softer, breathing form called *Tensho*, based on kung fu movements he had learned

while in Fukien.

How can abdominal breathing help the martial artist? First of all, it gives him endurance. He can last a lot longer in a fight if he is breathing properly. Secondly, it gives him protection. When the diaphragm is used properly in breathing, and the stomach muscles are controlled properly, there is a pneumatic effect that allows you to take a punch to the stomach easily. Furthermore, hard breath training helps the practitioner learn to take a punch in another way, by strengthening the abdominal muscles. This is why it is an important element in what the Chinese call “Iron Shirt” or “Iron Vest” or “Iron Body” training.

Also important is the fact that the muscle tension required to take with impunity a blow to the body cannot be maintained to a high degree when inhaling. Any football player knows that he had better not be inhaling when making a tackle, and judo players are taught to exhale with a “kiai” shout at the moment of landing on the mat when being thrown. Controlled exhalation prevents the breath from being “knocked out.” Thus, for the martial artist who wants to learn how to absorb the power of a received punch or kick, breath control is essential. (See *The Medical Implication of Karate Blows*, by Brian Adams, p. 78)

One Japanese man learned this the hard way. There was a young lady in our youth group in Japan named Eri. She was from a poor background, and I felt she needed some self-defense skills, so I taught her to punch, and used to let her give me her best shot in the stomach. One day I told her, “Eri, if you ever need to defend yourself, that punch will do it!” Sure enough, one day her boss at a “karaoke” music place grabbed her and Eri had to defend herself. The punch that I was able to take easily in the stomach because of the hard and soft breath training I’ve done broke her boss’s nose and did internal damage in his abdomen, sending him to the hospital!

Proper breathing can also help in the circulation of the blood, giving the entire body a sense of health and well being. It is no accident that the Bible says, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood.” (Lev. 17:11) The blood takes the oxygen (the breath, which the Bible says in Gen. 2:7 is the life) from the lungs and distributes it all throughout the body. If you are not breathing properly, you are weakening that splendid body that God has given you, the temple of the Holy Spirit!

Try this. If your style does not have a breathing form (such as some styles of kung fu and karate have), practice your basic form or kata, whatever it may be, slowly and in a relaxed manner. As you do the moves, breathe in through the nose before every move, and out through the mouth during every move. (Example: in the down block of the first “I-kata” of many styles of karate, breathe in through the nose as you raise the fist to the opposite shoulder, and then slowly out through the mouth as you do the down block.) As you do the form, concentrate on breathing with the diaphragm from your abdomen, and learn to be aware when you breathe with the chest. Then, the next time, try the same form with every muscle tensed. Even if your style does not have a breathing form, you can still increase your internal energy with good breath training.

MUSCLE CONTROL AND DEVELOPMENT

Much of internal energy in the martial arts simply comes from a high degree of muscle control and development resulting from (1) knowledge of muscular function, and (2) years of training in a particular manner. (Note that this is an internal use of the muscles. External martial arts aim for brute strength in their training.) The Christian martial artist, through the self-control taught by the Holy Spirit, should have an advantage in this area.

An ability to control the tension and relaxation of one’s muscles is essential to the martial artist who wishes to obtain internal strength. For example, an arm that is tensed in a cocked position must, in the process of punching, go through a series of relaxing and tensing of the various muscles. It is, in effect, fighting against itself.

For this reason, among others, the Chinese “internal” martial arts of T’ai Chi Ch’uan, Pa Kua and Hsing I all teach that one must relax while going through the moves. For example, “A cardinal principle of Hsing-i is that all movements must be done lightly and briskly without the heavy muscular contraction of karate.” (Smith, *Hsing I: Chinese Mind-Body Boxing*, p. 28)

There is usually, of course, muscular tension at the moment of the blow, though I have known some to dispute even the necessity of this. At any rate, the internal martial artist will move lightly, without a great deal of

muscle tension in either his stances, blocking or attacking.

Muscular control is also used to receive the opponent's blow without harm, along with pain reaction control. Wrestlers, boxers and even those internal martial artists who take a full power blow to the stomach in demonstrations usually do so with (1) muscular tension at the point of impact, (2) breath control to avoid having the breath knocked out, and (3) pain reaction control.

One style of jujutsu has a technique by which a full power blow to the throat can be received safely. In this technique, by swallowing, the tougher cartilage in the throat is brought to a protective position, the chin is lowered somewhat (reducing the target area and giving the muscles more static strength by shortening them), and the muscles of the throat are tightly tensed. Sumo wrestlers also train to take a full power blow to the throat, a perfectly legal technique called *nodowa*.

Sustained development of a certain muscle group is another method of achieving so-called inner strength in some styles. In actuality, this should be seen as external strength applied in an internal manner, such as in the various methods (*dim mak* or *tien hsueh* in Chinese, *atemiwaza* or *kyushojutsu* in Japanese) of striking at the vulnerable spots of the body.

Robert W. Smith translates *tien hsueh* as "spotting," and gives the advice of one Chinese master on how to obtain it. "Wang closes with advice on how to gain this ability: starting from a push-up off five fingers, one progresses to the point where he used only the index finger of each hand as support while the toes rest on two bricks; then he is capable of spotting." (Smith, *Chinese Boxing, Masters and Methods*, p. 15) This method obviously features an entirely external method of training the muscles. The internal element comes in the application: when, where, and how to hit.

Many other examples could be given of such training methods: thrusting into sand, iron filings and iron ball bearings to develop the spear hand; throwing up a vase or a brick and catching it on the way down to develop "claw" grips; walking on the tops of logs stuck in the ground or on the rims of pots to develop balance, etc. These are all basically external training methods with the potential of internal application. For more on this see *The Complete Iron Palm*, by Brian Gray (Parts of this book are very good, but Gray praises the strange and un-Biblical practices of Tibetan Buddhism.) For a good survey of other such methods, see Chapter Five of *Shaolin*, by P'ng Chye Khim and Donn Draeger.

As pointed out, though, the most important element of muscle control is learning when your muscles are relaxed and when they are tight. This is very difficult for many people, even Christians. However, it is entirely possible for every Christian martial artist to learn. First of all, you must have the peace of God in your heart. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." (Is. 26:3)

ACTION AND REACTION

Many martial arts aim for speeded-up reactions. An exponent of the external Chinese martial art of Hung Gar writes, "When you are no longer conscious of your movements and act instinctively, you are nearing ultimate perfection." (Kong and Ho, p. 224) A practitioner of the internal art of Hsing I made a similar statement: "In an emergency you do not try to hear or see: you merely avoid automatically." (*Hsing I*, Smith, p. 112) What these authors did not say is that this amazing state is simply a physical result of your training in the martial arts.

Normally, a reaction can be divided into three steps: (1) reception; that is, reception of the action from without that produces a reaction; (2) comprehension; that is, recognition of the original action towards oneself followed by a decision concerning one's own action; (3) reaction, meaning action taken to stop or counter the action from without. Naturally, all three of these steps may only take a total of a split second.

Thus, the first time one touches a hot stove he (1) feels pain, (2) realizes that to stop the pain he must withdraw his hand, so his brain sends a command to the hand to withdraw, (3) upon which he withdraws his hand. However, after a few such experiences the action becomes automatic. The body seems to understand the problem without the brain and so he leaves out the second step of comprehension.

What has happened is nothing mysterious, nothing that involves *ki/chi* circulation. What has really happened is that the pain signal went no further than the spinal cord, where a motor neuron does the job of the

brain. This “reflex arc” speeds up the reaction considerably. (Freese, p. 31) Evidently this is what happens when a martial artist finds that his technique has become ingrained. His response has become learned through years of practice so well that, after reception (through the eyes or other senses) of the need for a self-defense technique the signal does not have to go all the way to the brain but only across this reflex arc. Therefore his reaction time becomes much faster.

An extra advantage in reaction time comes when one’s head is threatened. Evidently the nervous system is “hard-wired” to move the body at its absolute fastest when the head is threatened. (Freese, p. 85) No doubt there are also other factors that affect reaction time. There is much we do not yet understand about the action-reaction process and the human nervous system. However, it is entirely possible for you and any other Christian martial artist to increase your reaction time—by simply training your best!

BODY CHEMICALS

We’ve all heard stories of someone (a grandma, a little housewife) who suddenly had almost supernatural strength enough to lift a car off a loved one. This sudden power is nothing supernatural, but is simply the adrenaline in our body doing its job. What the ancient Chinese and Japanese mistook to be *ki/chi* is nothing more than various special chemicals God put in our bodies which help us to perform amazing feats in times of great stress or danger.

We’ve all heard of something called “adrenaline,” a chemical in our bodies associated with such feats of strength. Actually, there are several primary chemicals which are produced by the adrenal gland which have relevance for the martial artist. According to *Taber’s Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary*,

The adrenal medulla synthesizes and stores three catecholamines: dopamine, norepinephrine, and epinephrine. Dopamine’s chief effects are dilation of systemic arteries, increased cardiac output, and increased flow of blood to the kidneys. The primary action of norepinephrine is to constrict the arterioles and venules, resulting in increased resistance to blood flow, elevated blood pressure, and slowing of the heart. Epinephrine constricts vessels in the skin and splanchnic area, dilates vessels in skeletal muscle, increases heart activity, dilates the bronchi by relaxing bronchial musculature, increases the glucose level in the blood by stimulating the production of glucose from glycogen in the liver, increases the amount of fatty acid in the blood, and diminishes activity of the gastrointestinal system. (*Taber’s Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary*, ed. by Clayton Thomas, p. 42)

Let’s put this in simpler language. According to Dr. Archibald Hart, “These hormones stimulate the heart, raise the blood pressure, and prepare us for the unique emergency reaction in the body . . .—the ‘fight or flight’ response.” (Hart, p. 37) Because of these chemicals released into the body, in a time of emergency we are able to operate physically at the absolute top of our strength and ability, and accomplish things physically which afterward seem miraculous! When that little housewife lifted the car off her child’s body, she was working at the extreme top of her physical strength, thanks to God’s gift of adrenaline. The martial artist, by proper training, can learn to utilize this physical phenomenon as well.

Another important body chemical is called “endorphin.” According to the same medical dictionary, endorphin is “A poly-peptide produced in the brain that acts as an opiate and produces analgesia by binding to opiate receptor sites involved in pain perception. The threshold for pain is therefore increased by this action.” (*Taber’s Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary*, p. 641) What this means for the martial artist is that there are times when either he or his opponent will literally feel no pain!

At the GMAU Japan martial arts clinic in Gunma Prefecture in July of 2001, Dr. Mike McClure told of confronting an intruder in his church. The intruder attacked him, and Dr. McClure’s first line of defense was a full-power groin kick, which was totally ignored by the intruder! Fortunately, Dr. McClure was able to subdue the intruder on the ground by his kung fu techniques, but in retrospect it is obvious that this man’s endorphin was at its full power!

Endorphin can be artificially produced by tension breathing techniques. At the GMAU clinic in Australia in 2000, I demonstrated the iron throat technique using tension breathing (see Appendix A) with a razor-sharp

hunting arrow in the hollow of my throat. I made a mistake in the choice of the arrow, though, using a narrow blade instead of a wide one that would be supported by the muscles of my throat. As my assistant pushed the arrow into my throat it did break, but it also cut me seriously enough to bleed copiously and require three stitches! As I felt myself going into shock, I knelt in the *zare'i* (sitting on the feet) position, and then was able to control my body's reaction and stop the shock by soft breathing. The important point here is that I felt no pain the entire time, neither when the arrow was pushing on my throat or even later after I was sewed up! God's wonderful provision of endorphin for the body protected me!

One more important chemical in the body is called "peptides." According to a *Time Magazine* article by Melissa Ludtke,

In laboratories around the world, medical researchers are exploring the mind-body connection, separating myth from reality, intuition from fact, belief from science. Much of this work centers on the actions of neuropeptides, molecular messengers that travel through the body linking the nervous, immune and endocrine systems. In the 1970's neuropharmacologist Candace Pert at the U. S. National Institute of Mental Health found that these peptides bind to receptors on a cell, beginning a cascade of biomedical effects, including protein synthesis and cell division. 'It's like ringing a doorbell. All kinds of reactions happen inside,' says Pert. 'The whole metabolism of a cell can be altered.' Because their activity fluctuates with emotional states of mind, Pert refers to these peptides as 'the biochemical units of emotion.' Exhilaration triggers neuropeptides; depression sets off others." (March 12, 1990, "Can the Mind Help Cure Disease?")

As can be seen, the body has many chemicals which produce various effects in the body which have relevance to the martial arts. The Christian martial artist will understand this, and in keeping with the doctrine of trichotomy will train and prepare for conflict with at least a basic knowledge of what his body and his opponent's body will do under stress.

Chapter Five

WHERE TO NOW?

Christian martial artist Bob Orlando has written a tremendous book called *Martial Arts America*, on how Americans should practice the Asian martial arts. He states his theme in the Introduction: "The central truth running through these pages is that *philosophies and method of instruction must match the culture of those being instructed.*" (P. xxii. The emphasis is in the original.) He makes a very important point for our purposes in Chapter 11, "The Spiritual Dimension," where he says, "Eastern religious, spiritual and meditative elements are adjuncts. They have been added to martial arts training. They are not an essential part of the art." (Pp. 144-145)

Famed ninjutsu expert and Christian martial artist Robert Bussey makes a similar point. He says, "Martial artists who strive for inner peace through meditation, energy channeling or internal focus are alienating themselves from God.' Bussey feels no responsibility to honor the ancient, mystical traditions of ninjutsu. 'I've tried that route, and found it to be a nowhere road leading to confusion and unhappiness.'" (Holzer, p. 72.) Bussey adds, "Power from within only comes when one asks Jesus into their lives and they become new creatures of God. To use forces beyond God, Christ and the Holy Spirit is dangerous and counterfeit." (Holzer, pp. 74 & 113)

Kent Haralson also points out the danger here, saying that the martial arts practitioner can pass "beyond the line of acceptability for a Christian and into the world of mysticism and the occult." (*Ki/Chi Power and the Christian*, p. 16) Again, Haralson writes, "Man must recognize that all strength, wisdom and understanding begins with a knowledge of the god of the Bible and that only through a close walk with Him, can the vast potential of this body of clay be realized in a way of eternal value." (Ibid, p. 22)

I believe the Christian martial artist should divest his thinking, training and teaching of all Asian religious and philosophical ideas, in particular those concerning internal energy. Although originally a term used only by martial artists in the West, *ki/chi* is now used so much by New Age and Asian religionists and by martial artists who have converted completely to Asian religion, as a simple search of the Internet will prove, that it is time to let it go. In fact, having examined internal energy in a Biblical context, we should know that it is far more complex than the *ki/chi* of Asian monism. The Asian theory is far too simplistic.

There is little or no proof from a Western, scientific, logical viewpoint that internal energy is some strange substance that circulates in the meridians of acupuncture through our body and cannot be measured or explained by Western science and logic. As we have seen, it is a very complicated interplay of spirit, soul and body. Even the physical aspect of internal energy is extremely complicated, involving breath control, pain control, the chemicals of the body, body state (relaxation and tension), and much more.

As Christian martial artists, I propose that we drop the *ki/chi* term entirely. I personally favor the term used in this book—internal energy—but there are many other possibilities. We might simply use the terms of the original language of the Bible, *ruach* (Hebrew) or *pneuma* (Greek). Other possibilities also exist, such as “inner strength,” or “inner power.”

Bob Orlando ends up sticking with the Asian terms, though he suggests the word “synergy” as being a possibility. “Perhaps the best Western word for capturing the essence of chi is synergy. Synergy is a combined action or operation. A synergistic cooperative effort is one whose total effect is greater than the sum of the effects taken independently.” (Orlando, p. 132)

If internal energy only dealt with the physical, we would probably have no problems with the Asian terms. However, internal energy deals not only with the body but with the “inner man,” usually described in Asian martial arts simply as the mind. Here the martial artist runs into spiritual danger, because Jesus commanded, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” (Matt. 22:37) With the mind we are to serve the law of God (Rom. 7:25) and we are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind (Rom. 12:2). In other words, our minds should belong to God and follow His way of thinking. Therefore the Apostle Paul warned us about the philosophies of the world, saying “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” (Col. 2:8)

Whatever word we use for internal energy, it should show forth a Christian way of thinking and not one based on Asian religion or philosophy. “Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.” (Jer. 10:2) It does not please God when we Christians adopt the ways of thinking of those who oppose the truth of God’s Word. And make no mistake, Taoists, Buddhists, and those of other Asian religions and philosophies do oppose the truth of Jesus Christ and the Word of God.

There are also practical reasons for this Christian approach to internal energy. First of all, although efforts have been made in the area of Kirlian photography and other ways of measuring the electrical energy of the human body, even strong advocates of the Asian way admit that they cannot prove even the existence of *ki/chi*. Paul Dong is honest enough to write that “science has not been able to prove the existence of the empty force.” (*Empty Force*, by Paul Dong and Thomas Raffill, p. 36)

Again, if we are not extremely careful in our presentation of internal energy, our presentation of the Christian martial arts will lack credibility. One aikijutsu master wrote, “I sometimes visit aikido demonstrations as a spectator and I am ashamed at the antics of some instructors. Do they really expect people to believe that three able bodied swordsmen can be rooted to the spot by the power of ‘ki,’ or that an opponent can be thrown twenty feet across the floor by a poorly executed technique? Do they believe it themselves?” (*Samurai Aikijutsu*, by Toshiro Obata, p. 143)

There is one more spiritual reason for a Christian approach to internal energy. We cannot reach people for Jesus Christ unless they see a difference between our thinking and their thinking. The average Asian considers Christianity to be completely different from his or her beliefs. Many years ago I was out on evangelism in the Yokodai area of Yokohama City in Japan when I saw an old man working in his yard. I stopped and offered him a tract, hoping to lead him to Christ. When he turned it down I asked him why and he

told me that he was Buddhist and that was Japan's religion. When I gently pointed out that Buddhism did not really reach Japan until the sixth century, and thus Japan's religion was Shintoism, he didn't budge. Then when I asked him about his view of sin and death, he told me this story.

During World War Two, he was in a tank on the northern border of Manchuria fighting the Russians. Japanese tanks had notoriously thin armor, and so just one artillery shell could take them out. For some reason his tank suddenly stopped, and when it did an enemy shell hit right in front of it. Then he said, "I have looked death in the eye, and so I am no longer afraid of it. As for sin, I sinned greatly in the war. My country also sinned. But I do not repent!" I left this man in great sorrow—but what if I had preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to him in a Buddhist context? Would he have repented? No, because he clearly knew the differences between Christianity, which he called a "foreign religion," and his religion of Buddhism.

To us, Asian religion and philosophy should be "foreign" religion and philosophy. That is, there should be a clear difference between what we believe and what adherents of Asian religion and philosophy believe. When this is true, make no mistake, there may be strong emotions. However, there will certainly be respect. In particular, when the Christian martial artist can give a clear, logical, coherent view of internal energy, the adherent of *ki/chi* will be amazed and want to know more. Why? Biblical thinking is much more rational than Asian thinking!

Missionary Frank Musk, our co-worker here on the island of Hokkaido, tells a fascinating story of a Buddhist woman whose husband died. She wanted the best afterlife possible for him, so she had an extremely expensive funeral. One thing she had to pay upwards of a hundred thousand yen for (about \$500 to \$600 in those days), is called a *kaimyo*, which is a new name for her loved one in the afterlife. According to the Buddhist priest, the better a *kaimyo* she bought, the quicker her husband would make it to the Buddhist paradise and the better a time he would have there. So she got him the best she could!

August came, time for the *Bon Matsuri* festival, in which the spirits of the dead came back from Hell. Lo and behold, now the priest told her that her husband was on the way back from Hell and she should celebrate the festival well in order to comfort her husband's spirit before he had to go back to that terrible place. At this, something of the absurdity of Buddhist teachings finally clicked in her head, so she turned to Jesus Christ and became a faithful Christian!

What will we do now? Will we eliminate Asian philosophy and religion from our martial arts, or will we be satisfied with a syncretistic martial art that mixes Asian and Christian thought, trying to have the best of both worlds? There is great worth and beauty in much of the Asian martial arts. Let us keep the silver of the physical power, the techniques and tactics of these ancient and useful arts, but cast out the dross. Let us be truly Christian in our martial art.

Appendix A

“INTERNAL ENERGY” STUNTS AND HOW THEY ARE DONE

NOTE: This is by no means a complete list, but any so-called “internal energy” stunts not on this list can be fully explained by physics and bio-mechanics, or failing that, demonic power. This list is simply from my own research. For further debunking, see two books by Dr. Leung Ting, *Skills of the Vagabonds* and *Behind the Incredibles*.

1. The “unbendable arm”—In this stunt, the practitioner places his arm on someone’s shoulder. The subject then tries with both hands at the elbow, but is unable to bend the arm. This writer can verify the above. I have myself done the stunt, though not with consistency. Is it a psychological trick, depending on the mental attitude of the one trying to bend the arm? Or does the brain somehow will the blood in the arm to stiffen the arm by a hydraulic process? Or is there really such a thing as “mind-body unity” which gives the mind complete control over physical processes?

Let Dr. Mike McClure, a fifth degree black sash Sifu in Sheng Dian Quan explain this one. According to Sifu McClure,

“I have seen two different versions of it. One where the demonstrator held his arm out in front of him in mid air, palm up, but with the fist clinched. He calls upon men from the audience to come and push in on his arm (fist going toward the shoulder). Although he resists with tension they are able to eventually over-come and bend his arm. He again extends his arm and asks them to try. This time, however he is relaxed and his hand is open (still palm up). They cannot bend the arm toward the shoulder. The second version I have seen (and done) is that the demonstrator extends his arm straight out in front of him and rests his clenched fist on the shoulder of another man. He invites the other man to pull downward at the elbow joint. The demonstrator resists with tension, but eventually the arm is pulled down. The demonstrator extends his arm again and places his wrist on the other man’s shoulder again. This time however, his hand is open and he appears to be relaxed. The man tries to pull down on the elbow joint again and cannot or at least finds it VERY difficult to do so. The common denominator here seems to be opening the hand which, while the muscles of the arm are relaxed the tendons are actually more active than when the fist is clenched. Thus the arm is rendered virtually ‘unbendable’.” (E-mail, 4/21/99)

2. The bed of nails—In this stunt, being careful to lower his body onto all the nails at once, the practitioner lays down, often with a bare back, on the points of around 200 nails driven through a piece of wood. At this point, the practitioner may have pieces of concrete on his stomach broken with a sledgehammer. This stunt is actually very simple, with little or no danger. The only ability required is that the practitioner be able to withstand the minor pricking of the nail points. The secret can be easily discerned from basic physics. If the practitioner weighs 200 pounds, and the bed of nails has 200 nails, there is only one pound of pressure per nail. This is nowhere near enough to break the skin unless the practitioner is careless in lying down on the bed of nails or getting up. The only real danger lies in having a clumsy person wield the sledgehammer. Rumor has it that a man in California was killed when the sledge man missed and hit him in the chest!

3. Bricks broken on the body (head, stomach, shoulder, etc.)—In this stunt, concrete blocks are placed on the practitioner’s body, and then usually broken with a sledgehammer. In an alternate method, the practitioner tenses his body and then has his assistant slam the concrete blocks against his shoulder, thigh, etc. Another alternate method is for a stick (broomstick, dowel, etc.) to be swung against the back, outstretched forearm, etc. and broken. The secret here is that almost all the energy of the break is absorbed by the item being broken, not by the practitioner’s body. The only danger is being bruised or cut by careless or weak handling of the material being broken.

4. The body radiating heat, supposedly because of *ki/chi* circulation—In this phenomenon, the hands of the internal energy practitioner are observed to be warmer than everyone else’s hands. Robert Smith tells of Wang Shu-Chin, a Chinese teacher who could do this. “Phil Relnick, one of his T’ai-chi students in Tokyo . . . , told me that he and several other Americans shivered through the exercises done outdoors in the Tokyo cold. (Tokyo does not really get very cold!—JRH) To warm themselves they would grasp Wang’s hand, which conveyed heat like a radiator.” (*Chinese Boxing, Masters and Methods*, p. 77) Yang, Jwing-Ming also speaks of “warmth in the palms” (*Tai Chi Theory and Martial Power*, p. 43) and other areas of the body (Yang, pp. 27, 45) as a sign of *ki/chi* circulation.

However, this phenomenon is not the result of *ki/chi* expertise, but is simply the physiological product of

having a body which is relaxed as a result of breathing, meditation, etc. On the other hand, a body under stress will become cooler. This is why when you shake hands with a person under stress, his or her hand will feel cool. Dr. Archibald D. Hart describes it: "What happens is this: in response to stress, nerve and hormonal signals (including adrenaline) are sent to the blood vessels in the hands, which then constrict and reduce the volume of blood present in the fingers. The skin, therefore, becomes colder as the flow of blood (which is warmer than the air) is restricted. Whereas the blood temperature is 98.6° F, the air in a normal room will about be 72° F. If the blood vessels are completely relaxed, the temperature of the skin can go up to almost the blood temperature, even in a colder room. A very relaxed person could, therefore, achieve a skin temperature of around 94° or higher. But when the blood vessels constrict, the temperature drops and can go as low as room temperature if the reaction is severe." (*The Hidden Link Between Adrenaline and Stress*, p. 122)

5. Iron throat—In this stunt the practitioner's assistant presses the point of an arrow (spear, flexible sword, iron bar such as is used when laying concrete, etc.) to the hollow of the practitioner's throat until it bends or even breaks. This is a complicated and dangerous stunt, and the one that takes great concentration. The practitioner stands in a forward stance and prepares himself mentally. He then begins tension breathing (like in the karate kata *Sanchin*) while the assistant places the sharp end of an arrow (preferably a target or field arrow) in the hollow of his throat. The assistant slowly pushes on the knock of the arrow, bending the shaft until it breaks. It is possible to do this with a razor-edged hunting arrow, but I have been cut this way and do not recommend it. The reason I was cut is that we used a narrow-pointed hunting arrow. If a razor-edge arrow is used it must be a wide blade that will be supported on the cords of the neck muscles.

Here are the keys to this stunt. (1) A good forward stance is essential, or you will be pushed back. (2) The arrow must break while you are exhaling your first breath, or it may break the skin while you take another breath, as happened with me once. (3) The point of the arrow must be inserted in the hollow of the throat, in the V of the collarbones. (If it is a hunting arrow, place the blade placed horizontally so that the loose skin in that spot and the neck muscles take up the pressure. Remember that the blade will not cut if it is pushing directly on your skin and does not slice. See #8, "Walking on Swords," below. Remember also, though, that the point can penetrate if the neck muscles are not fully supporting the blade edges.) (4) Lower your chin to shorten and strengthen the neck muscles on which the arrow is supported. (5) If the assistant pushes the arrow too slowly the practitioner will have to take another breath, but too quickly and it will shatter and may cause injury to the eyes. (6) A certain amount of pain-control is needed because of the point pressing directly on your skin.

In a fraudulent method of this stunt, the tip of the arrow (spear, metal rod, etc.) is placed on the breastbone just below the hollow in the throat. Also, some practitioners will actually trap a spearhead between their chin and chest and thus take pressure off their neck, but to me this is fraudulent. Again, if long steel rods are used, they bend quite easily, especially if the assistants holding them are pushing down on their end!

6. Transference energy—In this stunt the practitioner chooses which of several items (or people) into which he will put his energy. White Dragon Kung Fu Grandmaster Daniel Pai had a demonstration stunt in which he would line up three men, back to front. After placing his hands on the stomach of the front man and the back of the rear man he could knock out the breath of any one of the three at will. However, this stunt is easily explained. Power to the front hand affects only that man's breath when hit into his solar plexus, power to the back hand in the right spot affects only that man as it pushes his solar plexus into the back of the man in front of him, and power to both hands positioned correctly knocks out the breath of the middle man.

Some practitioners do the same thing with a stack of three bricks. They will announce which of the three bricks they will break, and then of course break just that one. Stephen Frerichs explains this one. "The middle brick trick is my personal favorite and I am reluctant to give away the secret. I will say this much: The trick depends on very simple sleight of hand, which is used to conceal a shim between the bricks. Using several shims, which direct the force of your strike, the stunt can be performed on stacks of four, five or six bricks. Anybody who can break one brick can pull it off." ("Martial Arts Magicians: Can they Con You?" from *Inside Kung Fu* of July, 1986, pp. 46-51)

7. Short-range striking techniques—In this stunt, the practitioner strikes (usually with a vertical-fist punch, sometimes with an “iron palm”) his assistant from a very short distance (it is usually one inch), driving him back 10 to 15 feet. In Bruce Lee’s famous demonstration of his “one-inch punch” the assistant was driven back about 6 feet to sit in a chair. (For a description, see “Bruce Lee’s 1-Inch Power Punch, Fact or Fiction?” by Joseph J. Snider, in *American Karate*, July, 1987.) This technique is different from most of the others in that it involves actual martial arts training, but in the GMAU Japan Clinic of July, 2001, I was able to teach the technique successfully to lower belt ranks in just an hour. It depends not at all on *ki/chi* and completely on physics and body mechanics. There are several versions of the punch, notably from the kung fu styles of Hsing I and Wing Chun. The trick in the Hsing I version, which I learned in 1987 at an internal martial arts camp, is to keep the punching fist stationary and drive the punch from the ground up by pushing off with the feet and exploding into the target. The body must be kept relaxed, believe it or not (martial artists who cannot relax their bodies cannot do the one-inch punch), or the power of the legs will be diverted to other parts of the body rather than traveling through the bone structure to the target. The Wing Chun version is slightly different, involving some wrist action, but the basic principle is the same, involving what is called a “push hit.” In a “push hit,” you genuinely hit though from a short distance, but you continue the power (from the legs) in a follow-through that amounts to a very powerful push.

Short distance striking is also not unknown in Western martial arts. One boxer who demonstrated tremendous power in a short-range punch was Muhammad Ali. In his famous fight with Sonny Liston, he knocked Liston out with a punch to the head so short and fast that it was called “the phantom punch,” and some even claimed that the fight was thrown. However, careful viewing of the punch in slow motion reveals that it was a short left hook that only traveled 6-8 inches and was delivered with full body weight behind it. When one considers that boxing rules prohibit a foot pivot when punching, the power of that punch becomes even more amazing. Against an unprepared and untrained opponent such a punch could well become a deathblow. (Boxers lower the jaw and freeze the neck muscles to take punches to the head.)

8. Walking on swords—In this stunt, the demonstrator has several samurai swords in a rack with their razor-edges aimed up. He proceeds to walk on them with no injury. The key to this stunt is a simple fact of physics: No sharp edge will cut you unless the edge is drawn across the skin or tremendous brute force is used to shove the sharp edge straight into the skin. You can test this yourself by carefully pushing the edge of a razor blade onto your palm. It will not cut you unless you slide it. The same principle is used by those demonstrators who cut fruits or vegetables in two on the stomach, neck, etc. of the assistant. As long as the blade is brought straight down and back up again without sliding it, the assistant will not be cut.

9. Extinguishing a candle—The demonstrator faces a lighted candle and, by a punch or his *ki/chi*, extinguishes the candle from a distance. If the technique is done by a punch, there are two ways to do it. First of all, a genuinely fast punch to within an inch or so of the flame can produce a wind strong enough to extinguish the candle. Secondly, the demonstrator may put a slight flip of the wrist at the end of the punch to produce a breeze, and this is obviously a fraudulent method.

There are two other fraudulent methods to extinguish the candle. One is by using a chemically treated candle which will stop burning when it reaches the treated section. (See *Behind the Incredibles*, by Dr. Leung Ting, p. 115.) In the other fraudulent method, a thin stream of air is blown at the candle. One who was unmasked doing similar stunts was martial artist fraud James Hydrick. (See “James Hydrick: Savant or Pretender?” by James William Holzer in *Inside Kung Fu*, October, 1983, p. 65.)

10. Iron Shirt (Iron Body, Iron Vest)—This is a form of hard *ch’i kung* (breath training) in which the practitioner learns to take blows to various parts of his body, with the sole exception of the head, of course! Many *ch’i kung* or martial arts demonstrators challenge people from the audience to hit them in the stomach, etc. Such practice activities as tension breathing and hitting one’s self with bamboo poles, etc., are common. Supposedly the practitioner learns to direct his *ki/chi* to the needed area to resist the blow.

Actually, though, this is not a difficult skill to learn with a little bit of training and knowledge, as well as

the courage to invite people to take a shot at your gut! Western boxers and wrestlers have been doing such stunts for over a hundred years at carnivals. Boxers in particular practice taking blows, sometimes with the heavy “medicine ball” being thrown at them or dropped on them. The human body is actually able to take quite a bit more punishment than most people think. Even the skinny but famous magician, Harry Houdini, was able to perform this stunt. (*The Great Houdini*, by Beryl Williams and Samuel Epstein, p. 241)

There can be a fraudulent element in this stunt though. James Cravens points out, “Many times when one punches a demonstrator who can take a punch we never see a real powerful punch delivered. Also the person receiving the punch is doing a technique such as turning slightly on contact or bending or actually throwing motion into the punch to jam and surprise the attacker. Usually the person receiving the punch does not receive the punch in the true sense or if he does, he does not have a powerful puncher delivering the blow.” (*Chinese Boxing Core Curriculum*, p. 323)

A well-known kung fu master from Taiwan was known to turn his ample stomach slightly at the moment of impact, thus lessening the blow and possibly even injuring the attacker’s wrist. Also, it is usually fairly safe to allow the average untrained audience member to take a shot at your stomach. I have seen this same master perform on videotape, and the punches being thrown were laughable—and the master laughed!

Be careful, though. If you are not ready to take a punch to your body you can be hurt badly. The above mentioned kung fu master always crossed his arms over his chest to make sure he was not punched over the heart, which cannot take too much punishment. Also, Harry Houdini, who sometimes demonstrated this ability, may have died because a teen-aged boy punched him in his stomach when he was not ready. It was speculated that the boy’s punches may have ruptured Houdini’s appendix, and indeed he died of appendicitis. (Williams and Epstein, p. 243)

11. The Death Touch—Many Asian martial arts have a legend of a mysterious master who has the power to kill with just a touch, or in the more elaborate versions, touch a person and predict when he will die (the so-called “delayed death touch”). There is a major problem with any attempt to prove or disprove the existence of such a technique: someone must die before the technique is proven effective. Therefore the legend of the “death touch” will probably never be proven or disproved by western scientific methods.

There are several accounts by Westerners claiming to have seen the technique in action. One such is by John F. Gilbey in *Fighting Arts of the World*. The first chapter, “The Delayed Death Touch,” provides a fascinating description of the technique as done by a Chinese master, “Oh,” to his son, “Ah.” Before the story is over, Oh rescues Ah from certain death after his “death touch” by special medicines and massage.

There is one serious discrepancy in the story. After Ah passes the danger point, Oh says it will take three months for convalescence. However, four days later Oh and Ah are sprinting onto the pier as Gilbey’s boat leaves! The truth is that this story was written “tongue in cheek” by a well-known martial arts author. Robert W. Smith now admits in his autobiography (*Martial Musings*, pp. 113-118) that he is “John F. Gilbey” and that the book is “tongue in cheek!” His chapter on a fighting art in France involving bad breath is a classic yarn!

There is some medical evidence for a delayed death strike, although it would be carrying it a little far to say that a mere touch could do such damage. There is the possibility that a powerful short-distance strike (see 7) could do great damage while being thought of by observers as just a touch. Bruce Lee brought the attention of the public to such short-distance striking techniques, though many styles of kung fu teach similar techniques.

Such a blow to the body could produce internal damage not immediately evident. In an injury my brother Andrew sustained while wrapping his motorcycle around a tree during a dirt bike race, his spleen was crushed. Medics on the scene thought there was no injury. However, Andy later went into shock from internal bleeding, and was only saved from death by the removal of his spleen. To an unsophisticated observer, death from internal bleeding after a blow to the spleen, kidney or other internal organs would certainly look like a “death touch!” (For further research see *The Medical Implications of Karate Blows*, by Brian Adams.)

More advanced or sophisticated versions of the “death touch” include instructions for the “touch” that differ according to the time of day. This is not so far out as it might seem. Modern science has proven that the body has a biological clock, with different levels of awareness and alertness at different times of the day. Those of us who travel internationally can testify to the strange feeling of tremendous tiredness in broad daylight

known as jet lag! It stands to reason that a blow may do a different amount of damage depending on when it is received. However, some accounts of the “death touch” go to ridiculous extremes in delineating such skills.

One further word to provoke thought. If the death touch and other such skills truly exist, may they not be actually supernatural and assisted by demon power? There have been martial artists who were demon-possessed. Let us be extremely careful as Christian martial artists to know where martial art power comes from.

12. Fraudulent breaking stunts—Breaking boards, bricks, concrete, ice, etc., is a time-honored way of showing the power of the martial arts. However, dishonest martial artists have invented various ways to fool the public. A martial arts supply company here in Japan is openly advertising cinder blocks that are 60% easier to break! (See the Isami Co. ad in *Gekkan Karatedo*, August, 2002, p. 37. In the same issue is an article about the training methods, legitimate no doubt, of a karate master who can break the neck of a beer bottle with his sword-hand!) There are, of course, many other ways to obtain weaker breaking materials, or even to weaken them yourself.

There is also a fraudulent way to break stones or bricks in which you place the object to be broken on the edge of a hard object (stone wall, cinder block, etc.), and raise up the edge slightly. When you release the stone or brick just as you hit it, the extra impact caused by it hitting the hard base makes it easier to break.

There are many other fraudulent ways to deceive the public in breaking demos. The key word here is “deceive.” If you explain exactly what you are doing, and the audience sees what you are doing, it is not fraudulent. Therefore, for example, some expert breakers feel that the placement of spacers between the bricks, boards, or blocks, is cheating. Personally, though, I once chipped my elbow on a stack of concrete blocks with spacers, failing to break the bottom block. I am positive that was not a fraudulent break!

13. Moving a person with *ki/chi*—The *ki/chi* master prepares with mental exercise and breathing techniques. He then simply gestures towards the subject and amazingly moves the subject with nothing more than his *ki/chi*! Bob Orlando, who has seen several such demonstrations, describes this as a result of autosuggestion, and says, “I have yet to see one produce effects that can be explained as the result of chi power.” (Orlando, pp. 127-128) He then humorously describes how to approach the “master.” “Most of the time, *chi* claimants demonstrate their power on their own students. When asking for a demonstration with someone *other than one of the claimant’s students*—even offering yourself for the test—you are usually handed some lame excuse like, ‘I would gladly demonstrate my power on you, but it could very well kill you or at the least, make you deathly ill, and I cannot assume that responsibility.’ When asked to demonstrate on, say, an empty box, you will hear *chi* claimants say something like, ‘Transmitting *chi* on an inanimate object has no effect. It only works on living things.’ (I beg your pardon. I thought *chi* existed in everything.) Ask them to affect, then, a living (potted) plant—make it wilt or something—and you receive another lame and condescending excuse like, ‘How can you expect me to use my power to harm this poor plant?’” (Orlando, p. 129)

Robert Smith describes a similar demonstration. “Ben Lo . . . properly asked if the master would do it to him, but was rejected, ‘It works on my wife because she has qi, but it won’t work on you because you don’t have it.’ Ben responded wryly, ‘Then you’re saying that it’s better not to have qi than to have it!’ For which, of course, the old man had no answer.” (*Martial Musings*, p. 339)

Appendix B

A LINGUISTIC LOOK AT *KI/CHI*

NOTE: This material first appeared as two installments of my column in the GMAU Journal, “The View From Mt. Fuji. The material on the Japanese words appeared in January, 2000, as “A Linguistic Look at Ki,” and the material on the Chinese language appeared as “The Chinese View of Chi” in the April, 2000 issue. I feel these articles are very germane to the issues raised in the whole paper, but did not want to simply insert the articles as part of the entire paper. Please note, too, that the material as it appears here is slightly different from what appeared in the journal.

The first game of the 1999 Japan Series is beginning and I’m rooting for the Hawks. Their manager, Sadaharu Oh, is a walking inspiration. A Chinese-Japanese, he holds the record for home runs for all of professional baseball at 868 dingers. Part of his original training regime was swinging a samurai sword! Okay, Noguchi, the Dragon’s pitcher, is glaring at Muramatsu, the Hawks batter. The announcer says, “Kiai ga haitte iru, ne,” which means, “He’s got his ‘*kiai*’ into it, isn’t he?”

The average American martial artist will be surprised that the word “*kiai*,” usually translated as “spirit shout,” is very commonly used in all of Japanese culture, not just the martial arts. The word literally means “*ki* meeting,” and only the martial arts use this word for a shout. It normally means concentration or perhaps energetic style. I have heard lovely Christian ladies at camp relay races saying, “Put your *kiai* into it!” In fact, in a TV program showcasing young singers recently, the voice teacher of one used the same phrase for her girl’s solo!

I had a great feeling of culture shock in 1981 when I learned how to say “How are you?” from my tutor. The phrase is, “Ogenki desu ka?” meaning, “Do you have your original *ki*?” The truth is, as I learned later at the prestigious Tokyo School of the Japanese Language, there are many Japanese idioms and compound words with the Chinese character “*ki*” in them. “Put out your *ki*” means, “Be careful.” “It becomes *ki*” means, “It bothers me.” “Don’t make it *ki*” means, “Don’t let it bother you.” The list goes on and on.

Let’s think linguistically. Most Western martial artists think of *ki* as some kind of special internal energy. Are they right? Let’s learn what Japanese dictionaries say about *ki*. Let’s start with the huge *Kenkyusha’s New Japanese-English Dictionary* (4th Edition; Tokyo, 1974), edited by Koh Matsuda. Its definitions of *ki* are: “(1) spirit; (a) mind; (a) heart. (2) a mind; an intention; will. (3) one’s feelings; a mood; (a) humor; (a) frame of mind. (4) a nature; (a) disposition. (5) care; precaution; attention. (6) atmosphere; gas; vapor. (7) ether; essence; spirit; breath. (8) flavor; savor; smell; fume.”

Well, that didn’t sound too good for the internal energy theory, did it? Let’s try a strictly Japanese dictionary, then. I have no time to translate the entire page of tiny Japanese script so I’ll cut to the chase. The first definition says, “A changing, flowing natural phenomenon. Or, the substance that causes that natural phenomenon.” (*Kokugo Daijiten*, p. 602) Sub-definition (3) under that says, “The universal energy (or spirit) that causes all things to grow.”

Now we’re getting somewhere, right? Wrong! That definition is actually a Taoist concept from China that never got very far in Japan. The truth is almost all Japanese I’ve used the term “Taoist” with were ignorant of that philosophy. The same is true of the idea of *ki* as a specific kind of internal energy. The Japanese don’t think of it that way, but more as a general force of life developed by hard practice and positive attitude.

But don’t Japanese martial artists think differently than the actual citizen? Sorry, but very seldom is that true. None of the four books in Japanese on Karate that I have discuss *ki* at all except for brief mentions of *kiai*. The same is no doubt true for Judo, Kendo, Iaido, etc. I don’t know enough about Aikido to comment on it, except to say that its founder, Morihei Ueshiba, spent many years in China before founding his art, and therefore no doubt had his concept of *ki/chi* from Taoism and possibly the *Pa Kua* style of internal kung fu. (*The*

Power of Internal Martial Arts, by B. K. Frantzis, p. 118.) According to B. K. Frantzis, who trained both under Ueshiba and in China, “In Japanese history, there was no martial art to compare to it, and no one else in Japan could do anything like it.” (Frantzis, p. 118)

There is an application here for the Christian life. “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.” (Mark 12:30) If your ki represents the cumulative energy of your life, then you need to commit it entirely to the Lord to be used by Him. Oh, and by the way, the Hawks won the Japan Series, four games to one. Congratulations, Mr. Oh!

So what about the Chinese language? Are things different there? The word Chinese word “*chi*” (“*qi*” in Pinyin romanization, “*ki*” in Japanese) means “breath, air, vapor, flavor.” (*Chinese*, by H. R. Williamson, p. 41) Hmm, that’s strange. I thought it meant inner strength, or maybe some unknown substance that flows through my body on meridians as yet undiscovered by Western science. At least those are the definitions given by the masters of various Asian martial arts.

Linguists often determine a word’s exact meaning by its actual current usage by average people. Let’s check the word “*chi*” out in the most commonly used Chinese Bible, the *Union Version* of 1919. We find there that, indeed, the Chinese character for chi occurs meaning “breath” in Gen. 2:7, “air” in Job 41:16, as part of a compound for “breath” in Acts 17:25, as part of a compound for “air” in 1 Cor. 9:26. This last compound word is used also in Japanese for “air”, though a different character is normally used in Japanese for breath. It is obvious that the normal meaning of *chi* is simply “air!”

So how in the world did *ki/chi* come to mean “inner power” in the martial arts? The only answer is that it came from Taoism (pronounced “dao-ism” and sometimes spelled Daoism). This is a Chinese philosophy first expounded in the 4th century BC by Lao Tzu in his book, *Tao Te Ching*. However, “Taoism also developed on a popular level as a cult in which immortality was sought through magic and the use of various elixirs. Experimentation in alchemy gave way to the development, between the 3rd and 6th centuries, of various hygiene cults that sought to prolong life. These developed into a general hygiene system (called “*chi kung*”–JRH), still practiced, that stresses regular breathing and concentration to prevent disease and promote longevity.” (“Taoism,” *Microsoft® Encarta® 97 Encyclopedia*. © 1993-1996 Microsoft Corporation. [CD-ROM] All rights reserved.)

According to Chinese thinking, especially in Taoism, we have a mysterious substance within us which flows through our body in meridians, much like blood. The idea of chi is the basis for such things as acupuncture, and is used in kung fu especially in the esoteric art of the so-called “death touch” and other arts which attack certain spots on the body at certain times of the day. (For a representative treatment of this type of kung fu, see *Shaolin Chin Na*, by Yang Jwing-Ming.)

Again, Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming says, “Many Chinese believe that everything in the universe has its own energy field—every animal and plant, and even inanimate objects like rocks. Living things have a particularly strong energy field circulating through them.” (*Tai Chi Theory and Martial Power*, p. 27)

So how did the term *chi* come to mean “inner strength” in some martial arts? The answer is that Taoists founded various Chinese martial arts, chief of these being the three so-called “internal arts” of Tai Chi Chuan, Pa Kua and Hsing I. These Taoist martial artists incorporated their view of air (*chi*) into their training. In particular, they believed that the air was filled with a special kind of energy that was the substance of the universe. If only they could tap this power they would be invincible! This is similar to the old, disproved notion that space was full of an unknown substance called “ether”!

How then does a Taoist martial artist tap into this chi energy? According to Robert Smith, “The chi is breathed in and combines with the *ching* in the *tan-tien*, thus creating heat. The inspired chi...thus becomes *yuan-chi*, an electrical substance, which travels through the blood vessels and enters the bone structure through the sacrum.” (*Chinese Boxing: Masters and Methods*, p. 34) You get the picture: lots of mysticism is involved.

Many Chinese do not believe in the Taoist version of things. To them *chi* is simply air. For that matter, not all masters of the internal martial arts believe in chi. Robert Smith mentions one such man: “Chou (Chou Ch’i-Ch’un) believed differently about *chi*. He believed it was simply air, not energy. Skill and technique, not *chi*, were the important things.” (Ibid, p. 84) Significantly, Smith also mentions several other teachers who

believed in chi but taught that it only came through long and hard practice.

If you still believe that there is a mysterious internal energy that a martial artist can harness to increase his fighting ability, I do not condemn you for that. I simply urge you to acknowledge that this view comes from a Taoist world view and not a Christian one. Please think through carefully the implications of your position. Please also remember the words of Paul to the Colossians: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” (Col. 2:8)

To sum things up, Dr. Kent Haralson’s definition is the best one I’ve seen of the view of a good Christian views of *ki/chi*: “The cumulative energy to be gained by developing the spiritual, mental and physical elements of the human being.” (*Ki/Chi Power and the Christian*, p. 36) Why take a Taoist definition of the wonderful internal energy God gives us? What not have a Christian view?

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