



Nei Jia Quan: Internal Martial Arts, Jess O'Brien, Blue Snake Books, 2007, 1583941991, 9781583941997, 395 pages. In this illuminating book, prominent masters offer an informed, inside view of the Chinese internal martial arts known collectively as 内家拳 (nei jia quan) — those practices that emphasize awareness of the spirit, mind, qi (breath, or energy flow), and the use of relaxed leverage rather than brute force. Drawing from enduring traditions practiced in China, America, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Taiwan, Nei Jia Quan features a wide range of perspectives on tai ji, xing yi, ba gua, and others. Each teacher gives a sense of the history of his or her art, its philosophical and spiritual underpinnings, and training techniques, offering students simple strategies for incorporating a variety of approaches into their own studies. Probing questions elicit thoughtful answers throughout, giving the book the feeling of a personal conversation with the master. Authoritative biographies and photographs both recent and historical provide additional insight into teachings of instructors such as Gabriel Chin, Tim Cartmell, Paul Gale, Fong Ha, Luo De Xiu, Allen Pittman, William Lewis, Tony Yang, Zhao Da Yuan, Bruce Frantzis, and others. This revised, completely updated edition profiles four new teachers, with new photographs and artwork included.

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The Tao of Yiquan: The Method of Awareness in the Martial Arts, Volume 2 The Method of Awareness in the Martial Arts, Jan Diepersloot, Apr 1, 2000, , 251 pages. Based on the techniques and practices of various masters of Yiquan, this book focuses on the ability to defeat power and speed with the softness and stillness taught by this

The Whirling Circles of Ba Gua Zhang The Art and Legends of the Eight Trigram Palm, Frank Allen, Tina Chunna Zhang, 2007, Sports & Recreation, 238 pages. "Relates the history & legends of ba gua zhang, has detailed basic training, step-by-step practice of both open-hand and weapons forms, new translations of ba gua zhang

Chinese Boxing Masters and Methods, Robert W. Smith, 1990, Sports & Recreation, 160 pages. Distilling the martial art known in the West as kung fu, Robert Smith presents Chinese boxing (chuan shu) as an art that combines the hardness of a wall and the softness of a

Xing Yi Quan Xue The Study of Form-Mind Boxing, Sun Lu Tang, Jun 1, 2000, Sports & Recreation, 312 pages. The name Sun Lu Tang rings familiar to almost anyone who has studied one or more of the major "internal" styles of Chinese martial arts. Because Sun was highly skilled in Xing

The lost scrolls Air, Tom Mason, Dan Danko, 2007, , 64 pages. Aang revisits his former monastery, Katara learns the truth of Aang's past, and Sokka reveals how he saved the Northern Air Temple from the Fire Nation..

Bagua Swimming Body Palms , Shujin Wang, 2011, Sports & Recreation, 89 pages. A book with 100 photos offers a complete guide to the rare Chinese martial art of Bagua Zhang, connect its physical movements to the cultural meanings of the I Ching. By the

Xing Yi Nei Gong Xing Yi Health Maintenance and Internal Strength Development, Dan Miller, Tim Cartmell, Oct 1, 1998, , 200 pages. This book includes: the complete xing yi history and lineage going back eight generations; written transmissions taken from hand-copied manuscripts handed down from third and

Kurikara The Sword and the Serpent, John Maki Evans, 2010, Philosophy, 138 pages. Explains the eight basic principles of swordsmanship common to all Japanese sword schools, emphasizing the cultivation of power and mental focus, in a book with photos and

Wing Chun Illustrated Manual, Volume 2, Wayne Belonoha, 2009, Sports & Recreation, 471 pages. "An illustrated manual of wing chun movements and applications in the three hand forms, underscoring the philosophy and theory on which they are based"--Provided by publisher..

Hidden Hands Unlocking the Secrets of Traditional Martial Arts Forms, Phillip Starr, 2010, Sports & Recreation, 235 pages. "Hidden Hands teaches readers how to "dissect" traditional martial arts forms to uncover the key offensive and defensive maneuvers of the arts themselves"--Provided by publisher..

The Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu, Sep 28, 2006, Religion, 222 pages. The Tao Te Ching is universally renowned as a sublimely poetic spiritual teaching by the legendary sage, Lao Tzu. Its easily assimilated aphorisms provide a continuous source

Bagua Linked Palms, Wang Shujin, 2009, Sports & Recreation, 86 pages. Master Wang Shujin (1904-1981) was one of the world's foremost exponents of Chinese internal martial arts, with legendary expertise in the disciplines of Bagua Zhang, Taiji

In this illuminating book, prominent masters offer an informed, inside view of the Chinese internal martial arts known collectively as 'nei jia quan'; those practices that emphasize awareness of the spirit, mind, qi (breath, or energy flow), and the use of relaxed leverage rather than brute force. Drawing from enduring traditions practiced in China, America, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Taiwan, Nei Jia Quan features a wide range of perspectives on tai ji, xing yi, ba gua, and others. Each teacher gives a sense of the history of his or her art, its philosophical and spiritual underpinnings, and training techniques, offering students simple strategies for incorporating a variety of approaches into their own studies. Probing questions elicit thoughtful answers throughout, giving the book the feeling of a personal conversation with the master. Authoritative biographies and photographs both recent and historical provide additional insight into teachings of instructors such as Gabriel Chin, Tim Cartmell, Paul Gale, Fong Ha, Luo De Xiu, Allen Pittman, William Lewis, Tony Yang, Zhao Da Yuan, Bruce Frantzis, and others. This revised, completely updated edition profiles four new teachers, with new photographs and artwork included.

This book and the insights it can offer are nothing short of exceptional. Originally, I thought I would only read a portion of the people interviewed. Instead, I've gone through the whole volume. In having studied taijiquan for nearly five years and baguazhang for almost two, this book provided me with a lot information that isn't always available. Additionally, there is a lot of misunderstanding and ignorance surrounding qi, its effects and how to effectively train it. This book provides enough information for the astute reader and novice practitioner to be able to piece a workable view together and more importantly, a training regime to enhance and provide for it.

For those of us that are, at best part-time in pursuing our learning, this book introduces a range of people who, in large part, are full time instructors. Their dedication to preserving the skills passed to them is worthy of recognition alone, aside from their obvious technical abilities. For this I salute them!!

All books have flaws. This is not an exception. The selection of Sifus' for inclusion is obviously

driven by geography and economics. The vast majority are based in the US, although of Chinese origin. Maybe the subtitle should reflect that. It also provides an opportunity to expand the book into a series by connecting with the Masters in China, Taiwan and elsewhere, who would be worthy additions in a second and third volume. Then we would have a true classic!! - can we hope?

I don't practice Taiji, Xing Yi, or Bagua, but I think this is one of the best martial arts books out there. I practice a blend of eastern and western martial arts -- Jeet Kune Do, Kali, Muay Thai, Wing Chun, and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. I feel that as a martial artist progresses, the external blends into the internal or vice versa.

The real value in this book is in the numerous interviews with accomplished martial artists. This gives multiple pieces of the puzzle that are the keys to the internal arts. When you're done with the book, the concepts of health, yi, chi, jing, shen, etc should be much clearer. There are numerous golden nuggets spread out in each of the interviews. A must have!

I'll be honest - some of interviews in this book sucked. There were 2 interviews that were mostly a waste of time, and probably another one which was mediocre. However, all the rest of the stuff in this book is pure gold, and proves to be a very enjoyable read. Overall this is a very interesting book, with lots of good insight on martial arts and life, and through most of it's hard to put down. Kudos to Jess for the effort and time spent in creating this great piece of wisdom documentation.

Using an interview format, this book brings out the many different facets of the Nei Jia Quan, the umbrella name for Tai Ji Quan (Tai Chi), Xing Yi Quan, and Ba Gua Zhang. Each teacher gives a sense of the history of their art, its philosophical and spiritual underpinnings, and their training philosophy, giving students strategies for incorporating a wide range of approaches into their own studies. Included is additional commentary on these traditions, along with biographies of each of the teachers. Nei Jia Quan also features interviews with Tim Cartmell, Gabriel Chin, Gail Derin-Kellog, Bruce Kumar Frantizis, Paul Gale, Fong Ha, William Lewis, Luo De Xiu, Allen Pittman, James Wing Woo, Tony Yang, Zhao DaYuan, and Albert Liu.

- Luo De Xiu <p align="left"> <p align="left">“I've wanted to get my hands on this book for some time now, and I've dog-eared page after page with insights and instruction for future review. O'Brien visited scores of instructors and whittled his compilation down to 16 interviews that are solid gold for students of the Chinese Martial Arts.”

Thirdly, the author was able to get the interviewees to discuss the core, the heart and soul of their practice and their arts. The interview approach allows the voice of the teachers to really come through. Each teacher has a clearly unique approach to internal martial arts and this makes for very interesting reading.

We are living in a sort of "post-martial arts" era, where the once-almighty mysticism and magic of the martial arts is fading away at an increasing clip. No longer can an instructor (no matter what style) get by on a vague premise of exotic Asian traditions or some secret teachings that may or may not have ever existed; instead, the perception of martial arts as a more pragmatic activity has become the norm.

The expectations from students have changed as well, as the mask has been taken off of the invincibility of Asian martial arts due to renewed interest in competitive fighting sports such as boxing and wrestling. No longer can instructors waive their hands around and have subservient students unquestionably cower in awe. As more martial arts students are aware of the multitude of options out there, and as the number of experienced martial arts students has greatly increased, instructors will need to relate to their students in a more straightforward, and ideally, honest way.

The book is the first one written that begins with such a premise, and accepts that Chinese-based martial instructors are humans, and as such are free to have widely different views. Readers aren't asked to play the "style" card, and discount teachers' ideas because they aren't okay with another martial arts system's dogma. Instead, a down-to-earth dialogue is presented, where instructors

freely give what they feel comfortable giving.

Mr. Jess O'Brien has done the internal martial arts community a wonderful favor by putting together this book. Detailed interviews with 12 diverse internal martial arts masters provide unique insights into qi, training (including a few pearls), technique, understanding/perspective, and various "secrets".

Most entertaining to me was the diversity of perspective that these 12 masters brought to the table. It's like interviewing different witnesses of the same crime-- they all see things a little differently, and express it thusly. Being able to glimpse so many different viewpoints in the span of 300-ish easy-to-read pages is a luxury that few until now could ever have experienced.

What was the most satisfying to me was that the majority of masters were able to express themselves clearly, using modern terminology and clear language. Vague references from medieval China were limited to only a few interviews-- and interestingly, some of the most clear masters were from the most traditional, Chinese cultural upbringing, whereas the master that seemed most immersed in tradition-laden terminology was a Caucasian female of Western upbringing, trained by an instructor that was himself of similar upbringing!

The internal arts have a growing following in the West, and this book offers the most comprehensive compilation of the insights and experiences of contemporary masters to date. Drawing heavily (but not exclusively) from the Hong family lineages of Taiwan, the breadth of perspectives presented is inspiring. For internal martial arts practitioners, this book is simply a must-have. For folks into more external forms like karate and tae kwon do, this book is an excellent intro to Tai Chi, Xing Yi, and Ba Gua. The interviewees go a long way towards demystifying the internal fighting arts, and offer observations about martial arts, the roots of aggression, meditation, and spirituality, without sounding overly esoteric.

able Ba Gua Zhang Ba Ji basic become better breath called Cartmell Chen Chen Yun China Chinese martial arts circle comes Daoist demonstrates develop energy everything exercises external feel Feng fighting focus force Gong-Fu grab gung fu hard hurt I-Liq Chuan idea inside internal martial arts internal styles James Wing Woo Ji Quan Jing Judo keep kick kind legs look martial artists master means meditation mind Ming Dynasty move movement muscles never opponent person physical posture practice principles punch Push Hands qi gong relaxed San Shou Shaolin Shen Shou Sifu skill someone sparring started strength structure Tai-Ji talk Tang taught teach teacher techniques there's things throw tial arts traditional understand walking what's Wu Shu Xing Yi Quan Zhan Zhan Zhuang

(J.O.): My boss said I could publish anything I wanted. So after I thought about it for a while, I started making a list of everyone I'd ever heard of that would be cool to talk to and train with. I think I had close to 200 names. After that it was a matter of luck and timing as I was on the lookout for visitors to the Bay Area as well as on my own travels. Unfortunately I wasn't able to go to Asia, so it was only people here in the states that I was able to access. Luck was with me and many good teachers either came through or were teaching here. So the book developed quite randomly. I wish I could have done it more systematically with a budget for time and travel, but that was impossible. I did about one interview a month for two years and picked from the best of them. I hope other people will interview their teachers and publish them, because this was just a tiny drop in a huge bucket.

What was really amazing was how open these teachers were to speaking with me. Most interviews were done after a day seminar or class, and often on my first meeting with the person. I was expecting to be turned down often, but virtually all of the teachers in the book were willing to go out of their way to speak with me. Furthermore they all answered honestly and with depth, never did anyone deny any of my questions, even about their own teachers! A number of times their students said to me that they were surprised at how much was said at the interview, as Chinese martial arts teachers are fairly conservative about what they say. Normally they only tell the student what would actually be useful during that stage of their practice. Since I was an outsider they could expound more deeply on the topics I mentioned, not speaking to me as an individual but to the public at large

through me.

Many of the discussions I had in the book didn't make much sense to me at the time, but have gradually become more clear as I've trained more. Various things pop out at me and I go, wow why didn't I pick up on this before? Which is cool, I'm as much a reader of the book as anyone else, all I did was copy down what the teachers said, without trying to interpret it beyond editing for clarity.

My intention for the book was to follow on the footsteps of great writing like Pa Kua Chang Journal, RW Smith's books, BK Frantzis's books, and all the others out there that kept inspiring me whenever I got bored in training. Not focusing on the mystique and uniforms, but on the people, the history and the day to day training. PKCJ was especially a ground breaker. Dan didn't use the word master or grandmaster, only people's names, and that made a lot of sense to me. We are past the era of inflated expectations and mystical flying combat nonsense. Chinese martial arts offer very pragmatic and utilitarian training concepts, whether on a physical, mental or energetic level. That's plenty, we don't need to use the word "devastating" any more. We can speak of effective and useful, we don't need to carry the weight of being secret and deadly, that just leads to fear and frustration.

Part of the mystique of Chinese martial arts is this image of a wise, unapproachable master who sits above the crowd. I found the opposite to be true, all of the teachers I spoke with were gracious and friendly and open to questions. They didn't feel threatened at all by my questions. I hope readers of the book will seek them out. They were normal people who had trained to an extraordinary degree. They all emphasized cultivation and hard work, not short cuts or fantasies. However, each had a somewhat different take on the path. Some liked combat sports, some focused on chi, some were TCM oriented, some were fascinated by the intricacies of physical mechanics. Some were oriented toward mindfulness and awareness, some loved to fight in the street, and others gave me very cool lessons in history and culture. Chinese martial arts has all of these things and much more within it. I set out trying to find out how to define internal martial arts, but in the end the definition is much wider than any one person can ever uncover, in my opinion.

(J.O.): I remain open to all ideas on Chi. Whether it is a substance, or a metaphor, whether it is at the core of IMA, or irrelevant. In Religious Studies we speak of simultaneous truths. For Islam to be right doesn't mean Taoism is wrong. A Native American who believes in the Creator doesn't negate a Buddhist who doesn't believe in God. Both are right. I apply this thinking to martial arts as well. Our idea of what works and doesn't, our framework of how we construct our training and interactions contain multitudes of unspoken assumptions. That's how humans work, and trying to scientifically define everything and put it all in its correct place is somewhat futile on a grand scale. We can only pick our favorite worldview and work from it, while keeping an open mind. If it gets results, it works. What you want as a result may be radically different from someone else, however. So for me it's a constant process of allowing new insights to arise and keeping the ones I like.

If I learn a technique that doesn't use Chi, then that's how I practice it. If someone else teaches me something energy based, I follow those instructions to the best of my ability. It all doesn't have to fit together neatly in some unified theory of everything. I'm not smart enough to put it all together. That's why I created this book, I couldn't define Internal Martial Arts, so I asked all these other folks to do it. When you look at the mosaic that their answers form, you can find things that you agree with and things that you don't. But all the teachers in the book are or were effective fighters, so that in itself is a lesson for me. Different paradigms can achieve great results.

All these different paths are to suit different personalities and inclinations, not because one way is better than the others. And I think that goes all the way back to historical Chinese martial arts. There have always been the mystics, the nerds, the soldiers, the bodyguards, the sport fighters, the calligraphers, the farmers, etc. Each one needs a martial art to suit them, and no one art will ever give everyone what they need. Different things inspire different people.

(J.O.): Martial arts in the west is certainly an interesting situation. I think the initial appeal of Asian martial arts made a big splash here. It's something we didn't have, the culture of discipleship where a master helps a student forge himself. That's very cool and outside of sport it was hard to find such

a situation here. It's part of human nature I think to want to experience such a mentorship. These Asian martial arts had new fighting methods as well, new ways of sparring and competing. They also had ideas about meditation, healing, and developing and training the body in new ways. The emphasis on self-cultivation rather than winning sport matches was also something new that appealed to many of us who were burnt on competitive sports. The focus on longevity and training for life was another new concept in the USA where we watch sports and don't participate as much. So Asian martial arts brought many cool things to the west that we've really come to enjoy. And I think the west is now influencing Asian martial arts with our emphasis on effectiveness in NHB and sport fighting in general. So it's come full circle in that regard. However new circles are being created as our medical and psychological world has become fascinated with the mindfulness and mind training that all Asian arts use as a base, including martial arts.

Working on this book really brought home to me how martial art and sport are two different worlds. As I've ranted on RSF and other message boards for years, they are simply different fruits, you don't get much out of comparing them. For instance, playing the flute and playing football both take time and effort and dedication. But flute is in the ear of the beholder, and football has stats that show who is better or not, clear cut, no BS. Art will always have this undefineable quality, for the creator and for the observer. Sport is great because it has rules and measures to determine quality. If you win the Superbowl, you are the best. If you sell a lot of albums, people may still hate your flute playing. There is no standard that applies across the board.

Many people are frustrated by this, and want to define martial arts in one way or another. Say, if it isn't good in the ring, toss it out and modernize it. However, you risk losing the baby with the bath water. The practices you toss out now, may have benefitted you in some other way down the road. Asian martial arts have many sides to them, sport fighting is one of them. But training the mind is another. Training your nervous system, training your knowledge of yourself, training your ability to heal, to survive. Not all of these things help you in a fight right this minute, but they could save your life in another context.

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