

The Essence of Kung-fu

TAIKI-KEN

by **Kenichi Sawai**

JAPAN PUBLICATIONS, INC

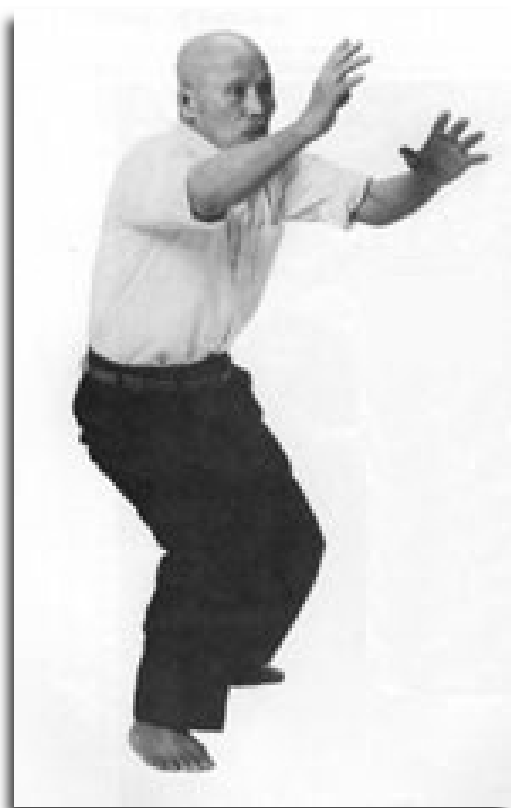


In the Taikiken Pages you only find a brief introduction to the book:

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Preface of the book Taiki-ken the essence of Kung fu

Never in its history has budo, the martial way, prospered so much as it has in the three decades that have passed since the end of World War II. Today many different kinds of combat techniques are taught in many place throughout the world. But I am puzzled by at least one aspect of this phenomenon: among the styles of budo currently fashionable, there are things that can on no account be considered combat techniques. Because television and the motion pictures carelessly pass off any kind of fighting as oriental martial arts, I find myself at a loss to know what the word budo means today. But, leaving the question of quality aside, I can say that it is a good thing that many people are now learning the martial arts in one form or another and are putting into practice in their own lives and ways of thinking some of the good points of budo.

Nonetheless, it is wrong to sacrifice or distort the true nature or the content of the combat techniques solely for the sake of introducing them to larger numbers of people. It is true that each age must develop its own interpretation of budo, but such interpretations must not diverge from the basic nature of the martial way. And I believed that budo as taught today can often be said to have gone too far.

If each practitioner of the martial arts does not stop bowing to the times for the sake of spreading his own individual teaching and devote serious thought to the true nature of budo itself, there can be no development for the martial arts in the future.

Fundamentally the martial arts are matters of severity and gravity because, in the past, their very practice involved risk of life and limb. People who engaged in them often found themselves on the brink of death. Today, of course, there is little risk of life involved in the martial arts, but this does not mean that their essential nature has altered. Even though the martial arts today are treated as sports, the people who practice them must never forget the element of severity based on the risk of life. Furthermore, instructors must bear this nature in mind always. Men who use teaching of the martial arts as no more than a way to make a livelihood, who try to sell martial techniques piecemeal for their own advantage, or who use their knowledge for the sake of selfish gain contribute nothing to the growth of budo.

While I was on the front lines of the fighting in China during World War II, I learned the nature of human life. At the same time, I learned the true value of ch'üan-fa (kempo) as a result of being able to study with Wang Hsiang-ch'i, the greatest ch'üan-fa expert in China of his time. Although before meeting him I had developed self-confidence in the martial arts-especially kendo and judo Wang taught me the greatness of true budo.

Wang Hsiang-ch'i's teaching method required immense amounts of time and would be considered highly ineffectual in these days of unquestioning faith in rationalize ways of thought. For instance, the development of ki-the subject of much of this book 'was taught by means of a long and, to a young and impatient man like me, arduous method of repeating standing Zen for years until the individual developed the power of ki from within his own body. But now, after thirty

years have passed since I parted with him, I have come to realize the meaning of Wang Hsiang-ch'i's teaching because throughout that time I have believed in them and have put them into practice.

In other words, understanding the martial arts requires a long time in which the individual must perfect his techniques and become convinced of their value and effectiveness. No amount of rationalism or scientific thinking can produce the effect needed. The person who would pursue the true nature of the martial arts cannot hope to understand what he is doing if he is concerned with which training methods are progressive and which are old-fashioned, for the only method is to throw oneself into the martial arts with total devotion and to cultivate both one's body and one's ki.

Because I feel this way, after I left China, I continued my own training but made no effort to teach others or spread this particular approach to the martial arts. During this long time, a number of people have become convinced that my approach is right, however, and have joined me in training. Lately the number of such people has grown and now even includes people from other countries. Still I have no intention of opening a training hall or of teaching in the manner of an ordinary instructor.

When Japan Publications, Inc., asked me to produce this book, I hesitated, since I wondered if it were possible to explain in text and photographs my kind of kempo, which must be learned and mastered with the body. In addition, I entertained doubts about the value of martial arts learned from books. But then I reconsidered. First, I thought that perhaps there are people who can understand the true meaning of something from no more than examining a photograph. Then, realizing that the conditioning of my internal organs resulting from Taiki-ken has enabled me to live to a ripe old age in good health, I saw that my knowledge might help others enjoy the same good fortune. And these considerations caused me to decide to go ahead with the writing and publishing of this book.

In closing, I should like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to two groups of people who assisted me in this project. First, my fellow trainees in Taiki-ken: my son-in-law Yoshimichi Sato; my eldest son, Akio Sawai; Mikio Goto; Kazuo Yoshida; Norimasa Iwama; Yukio Ito; Masashi Saito; Yasuo Matsumura; Mitsuo Nakamura; Jan Kallenbach; and Roland Nansink. Second the cameraman, Hideo Matsunaga, and Chikayoshi Sanada, who was in charge of the editorial work.

March, 1976
Kenichi Sawai

History of Taiki-ken

The tradition that the Chinese martial arts began with the practices of the Indian Buddhist priest and mystic Bodhidharma, who came to the Chinese temple Shaolin-szu in the sixth century and who is considered the founder of Zen, is without substantiation. Nonetheless, since many martial arts are still called by the name Shao-lin-szu, it is likely that martial training at that temple is of great antiquity. Hand-to-hand combat (ch'üan-fa in Chinese and kempo in Japanese) is one of the most important of the many Chinese martial arts.

The minor varieties of kempo are virtually numberless, but some of the most famous of the schools into which it has gradually been divided are Shao-lin-ch'üan, T'ai-chi-ch'üan, Hsing-i-ch'üan, and Pa-kua-ch'üan. Taiki-ken, the subject of this book, has developed from Hsing-i-ch'üan. Chinese hand-to-hand combat schools may be divided into two major categories: the inner group and the outer group. Hsing-i-ch'üan, T'ai-chi-ch'üan, and Pa-kua-ch'üan belong to the inner group, whereas Shao-lin-ch'üan belongs to the outer group. Though there are problems inherent in the very act of making such a division, an understanding of the difference between the inner and outer groups is of the greatest importance to an understanding of Chinese hand-to-hand combat in particular and of all the martial arts in general.



In the schools of the outer group, practice is devoted to training the muscles of the body and to mastering technical skills. On the surface, this method seems to produce greater strength. Since the techniques themselves can be understood on the basis of no more than visual observation, they are comparatively easy to learn. The schools of the inner group, however, emphasize spiritual development and training. They develop progress from spiritual cultivation to physical activity. In general, the inner schools give a softer impression than the outer schools; but training in them requires a long time, and mastery of them is difficult to attain.

It is generally said that Hsing-i-ch'üan was originated by a man named Yueh Fei, but there is nothing to prove this attribution. Later a man named Li Lo-neng of Hupei Province became very famous in Hsing-i-ch'üan combat. His disciple Kuo Yun-shen became still more famous for his overwhelming power. It is said that of all the men who participated in combat bouts with him only two escaped deaths. These two were his own disciple Ch'e I-ch'i and Tung Hai-chuan of the Pa-kua-ch'üan School. Kuo Yun-shen himself killed so many martial-arts specialists from various countries that he was imprisoned for three years.

While in prison he perfected the mystical technique that is known as the Demon Hand. With the appearance of Kuo Yun-shen, the fame of Hsing-i-ch'üan spread throughout China. Other outstanding specialists in this tradition include Kuo Shen, Li Tien-ying, and Wang Hsiang-ch'i. Wang was the founder of Ta-ch'eng-ch'üan in this capacity he is known as Wang Yü-seng and was my own teacher. Sun Lu-t'ang, a disciple of Li Tien-ying, saw the elements shared in common by Hsing-i-ch'üan, Pa-kua-ch'üan, and T'ai-chi-ch'üan and developed a school consolidating all of them. Lu Chi-lan, who was a student at the same time as Kuo Yun-shen, accepted the teachings of Hsing-i-ch'üan in their pure form, passed them on to his disciples Li Ts'un-i, who in turn passed them on to his disciple Hsiang Yunhsing. In this way, a conservative school was established. Three strains have developed since the time of Kuo Yün-shen within the larger Hsing-i-ch'üan school: the conservative strain of Li Ts'un-i, the Hsin-I branch of the Ta-ch'eng-ch'üan of Wang Hsiang-ch'i, and the conservative strain of Sun Lut'ang. In a two-volume work entitled - Hsing-i-ch'üan, Sun Lu-t'ang has written in detail about Wang Hsiang-ch'i. The Hsin-i group, as I have indicated, is another name for the Ta-ch'eng-ch'üan, which is a subgroup founded within Hsing-i-ch'üan by Wan Hsiang-ch'i. I can explain the origin of the name Ta-ch'eng in the following way. Wang Hsiang-ch'i believed that the power of the mystical techniques of Kuo Yun-shen was to be found in a force called ki in Japanese (the word is pronounced ch'i in Chinese.)

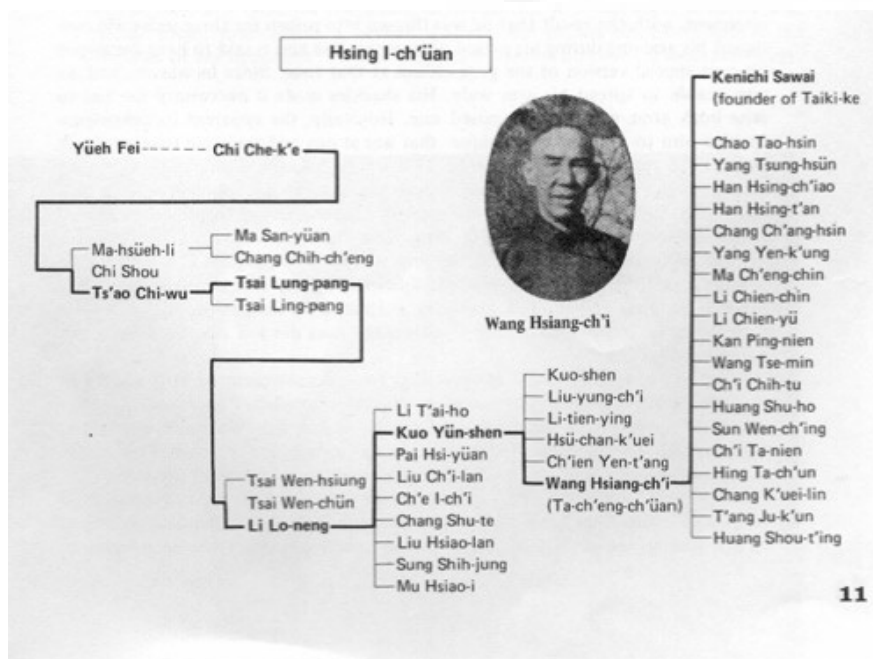
He also believed that, unless a person learns to control and use ki, he cannot master any of the combat techniques. In order to develop the needed mastery, Wang concentrated on standing Zen meditation. In combat with another person, the man who can control ki and manifest it to the extent required has attained and understanding of the kempo of Wang Hsiang-ch'i. Such attainment is called ta-ch'eng in Chinese (the same characters are read tai-sei in Japanese). This is the reason for using ta-ch'eng in the name Ta-ch'eng-ch'üan. I met Wang Hsiang-ch'i while I was working in China. He was a small man with a most ducklike walk. But he was extremely difficult to study with. When people came wanting to learn his system, he ignored them. They had no recourse but to observe his actions and, practicing together, try to imitate his techniques. Fortunately, being a foreigner, I was able to ask questions and do things that would have been considered very rude in another Chinese.

Since at the time I was a fifth dan in Judo, I had a degree of confidence in my abilities in combat techniques. When I had my first opportunity to try myself in a match with Wang, I gripped his right hand and tried to use a technique. But at once found myself being hurled through the air. I saw the uselessness of surprise and sudden attacks with this man. Next I tried grappling. I gripped his left hand and his right lapel and tried the techniques I knew, thinking that, if the first attacks failed, I would be able to move into a grappling technique when we fell. But the moment we came together, Wang instantaneously gained complete control of my hand and thrust it out and away from himself. No matter how many times I tried to get the better of him, the results were always the same. Each time I was thrown, he tapped me lightly on my chest just over my heart. When he did this, I experienced a strange and frightening pain that was like a heart tremor.

Still I did not give up. I requested that he pit himself against me in fencing. We used sticks in place of swords; and, even though the stick he used was short, he successfully parried all my attacks and prevented my making a single point. At the end of the match he said quietly, 'The sword- or the staff- both are extensions of the hand.' This experience robbed me of all confidence in my own abilities. My outlook, I thought, would be very dark indeed, unless I managed to obtain instruction

from Wang Hsiang-ch'i. I did succeed in studying with him; and, acting on his advice, I instituted a daily course in Zen training. Gradually I began to feel as if I had gained a little bit of the expansive Chinese martial spirit. Later, after I had mastered Ta-ch'eng-ch'üan, I founded another branch of combat training, which I call Taiki-ken. (This is the Japanese reading of T'ai-ch'i-chuan. Since I am Japanese, I shall use the Japanese reading throughout this text.) As a foreigner, I was able to gain the permission of Wang Hsiang-ch'i to substitute characters in the name of his school of kempo to form the name for my own school. And this is the way the name Taiki-ken came into being. I am proud to be part of a martial-arts tradition as long as that of Ta-ch'eng-ch'üan. Whenever I think of the past, I see Wang Hsiang-ch'i and hear him saying, 'No matter if you hear ki explained a thousand time, you will never understand it on the basis of explanations alone. It is something that you must master on your own strength.'

My course of training in China was arduous and long- eleven years and eight months. When World War II ended, I returned to Japan. Once in my training hall in Japan, I was suddenly surprised to feel something that I suspected might be the ki of which Wang Hsiang-ch'i used to speak. This surprise was the rebeginning of Taiki-ken, to which I intend to devote myself for the rest of my life.



About Hsing-i-chuan in the history of Taikiken

I should like to add more details to the explanation I have already given of Hsing-i-ch'üan in the discussion of the history of Taiki-ken. Hsing-i ch'üan (also known as Ksin-i-ch'üan) is said to have been originated in the Sung period (tenth to thirteenth century) in China by a man named Yueh-fai, though there is nothing to prove this. From the late Ming to the early Ch'ing period (about the second half of the seventeenth century), in province of Shansi, there appeared a great expert in the use of the lance; his name was Chi Chi-ho. By about this time, the basic nature of Hsing-i-ch'üan was already determined. The tradition was inherited and carried on by Ts'ao Chi-wu and Ma Hsueh-li. In the Ch'ing period (which lasted from 1644 until 1912), Tsai Neng-pang and Tsai Ling-pang became disciples of Ts'ao Chi-wu.



Lin Neng-jan, who lived in Hopei province, heard rumours about Tsai Neng-pang and decided to study with him. In his late forties, Li Neng-jan became so skillful and powerful that he was called 'divine fist.' His skill and speed were so great that opponents never had a chance to come close to him. After he returned from the place in which he had been studying to his home province of Hopei, he concentrated on training disciples, with the consequence that Hopei Hsing-i-ch'üan became famous throughout China. He had many disciples, but among them Kuo Yun-shen was the most famous. He was said to have no worthy opponents in the whole nation. Kuo Yun-shen was especially noted for his skill in a technique called the peng-ch'üan, with which he was able to down almost all corners. In one bout, he employed this technique and killed his opponent, with the result that he was thrown into prison for three years. He continued his training during his period of incarceration and is said to have developed his own special version of the peng-ch'üan at that time. Since he was chained, he was unable to spread his arm wide. His shackles made it necessary for him to raise both arms whenever he raised one. Ironically, the apparent inconvenience enabled him to develop a technique that was at one and the same time an attack and a steel-wall defence. He learned to maintain a sensible interval between his own body and his opponent and to counter attacks and immediately initiate attacks. It took him the full three years of his term in jail to perfect this technique. Although he was not a big man, Kuo Yun-shen was very strong. Once a disciple of another school of martial arts asked Kuo to engage in a match with him. Kuo complied with the man's wish and immediately sent him flying with one blow of his peng-ch'üan. The man rose and asked for another bout. Once again Kuo did as he was requested, but this time the man did not rise, because one of his ribs was broken.

The study of Hsing-i-ch'üan involves first basic development of ki through Zen then the study of the Chinese cosmic philosophy called T'ai-chi-hsueh, which originated as a system for divination and reached full development during the Sung period. The physical aspects of training involve five techniques called the Hsing-i-wu-hsing-ch'üan: the p'i-ch'üan (splitting fist), peng-ch'üan (crushing fist), tsuan-ch'üan (piercing fist), p'ao-ch'üan (roasting fist), and the Kuo-ch'üan (united fists) plus a fifth that is an advanced application technique called the lien-huan-ch'üan (connected-circle fist). As a person practices using these techniques in training sessions and bouts with opponents, he gradually learns which suits him best. Hsing-i-ch'üan is further characterized by forms (hsing in Chinese and kata in Japanese) based on the instinctive motions of twelve actual and mythical animals: dragon, tiger, monkey, horse, turtle, cock, eagle, swallow, snake, phoenix, hawk, and bear. The very name Hsing-i-ch'üan means that it is the ability to use these motions without conscious consideration that gives the system its meaning. The practitioner of Hsing-i-ch'üan must use the forms automatically and without reference to his conscious will. The point that sets Hsing-i-ch'üan most clearly apart from other martial arts is related to this theory, for in Hsing-i-ch'üan training, no matter how thoroughly a person may have mastered the techniques, if he is unenlightened about the basic meaning of the forms, his efforts are wasted. People striving for progress in the martial arts must be aware of this point and must keep it in mind throughout their daily practice. Relations between opponents in Hsing-i-ch'üan are especially distinctive in three respects. First, since there is no way of knowing what kind of attack the opponent will try, Hsing-i-ch'üan does not prescribe such things as maintaining fixed distances and employing kicking techniques. Instead, the individual must always move toward his opponent and counter his moves as he attacks. Second, since defense must always be perfect, in Hsing-i-ch'üan, one arm is always used for defence purposes (it may be either the mukae-te or the harai-te method; see p. 34 and 60). Third, there is no strategy, and no restraints are used in Hsing-i-ch'üan matches. Since the individual's body must move naturally, easily, and rapidly in conformity with the opponent's movements, there is no time for mental strategy. Nor is there any need for restraining the opponent with one hand while kicking. At all times, maintaining a perfect defense, the person must conform to the motions of his opponent. This, as I have said, leaves no time for mental strategy.

Taiki-ken: Characteristics, the principle of Ki and more.....

The principle of ki, without which there could be no Taiki-ken, is not especially difficult. Though there are differences in its strengths, ki is found in every one. Students of the martial arts attempt to train their ki to the point where, upon coming into contact with an opponent, they can give full manifestation to it. This is only as it should be, since there would be no meaning in training, no matter how assiduous, if the individual found himself incapable of bringing forth his ki at the moment of need.

There is no method for ensuring the ability to call upon the strength of ki, but standing Zen as practiced by specialists in the martial arts in China and as employed in Ta-ch'eng-ch'üan and Taiki-ken, can develop a capability to do so. Standing Zen calms the nerves, sharpens the perceptions, and regulates the breathing. When a person begins standing Zen, his mind is clouded with all kind of thoughts. Soon, however, he will experience pain in his hands, feet, or hips. When this happens, all of his thoughts concentrate in the part of the body that hurts, and he is unable to think of anything else. The pain figuratively removes the hurting part of the body from the realm of sense perception. As one continues to suffer discomfort of this kind for a period of years, one cultivates the ability to derive great refreshment from standing Zen. Before one is aware of it, the power of ki begins to grow to maturity.

I suffered when I practiced standing Zen with my teacher Wang Hsiang-ch'i and wonder what good such practice would ever do me. When I felt this way, Wang would tell me, 'Even if I explain it to you hundreds of times, you will not understand ki;' it is something that you must experience yourself.' Today I tell my own students the same kind of thing. One finds it impossible to cultivate ki in himself through Zen training he will never be able to cultivate it in himself. It is because ki is not mastered easily that it is of immense value.

In spite of the difficulty of explaining the profound meaning of ki in words, I think I can make something of its nature clear by referring to the spinning of a child's top. A top that turns rapidly about its axis, seems to be standing still, but anything that comes into contact with its whirling sides is sharply and forcefully dashed away. A practitioner of the martial arts who generates the power of ki is like the spinning top. Though from the outside he seems perfectly calm and still, an opponent who comes into contact with him is immediately driven away by the force of the man's ki. There are no fixed forms in Taiki-ken. Although this book presents methods of defense and attack they are only examples of the kinds of attacks and defenses that are possible. Practicing to perfect Zen and hai constitute the basis of training. When one comes into contact with an opponent, one's body must be able to move with complete freedom. Forcing large and small people to practice the same forms is meaningless. Furthermore, excess attention to forms only kills freedom of motion. Taiki-ken aims at allowing each individual to use the body motions that suit him. This is both the outstanding merit and one of the greatest difficulties of Taiki-ken. A person only begins to bud as a true practitioner of martial arts of the inner school when he is able to employ the movements that are inherent in his own body. It is because Taiki-ken allows the person to evolve his own forms of motion that it is sometimes referred to as lacking, yet having, forms.



.One of the important points in Taiki-ken training is the disassociation of the body parts; the arms must be trained to act on their own and alone. The same is true of the feet and legs.

This is connected with the lack of fixed forms in Taikiken. For instance, there are no such things as right positions or left positions in Taiki-ken. The arms are antenna constantly sensitive to what can be done for the sake of protection. The hips are like the earth in that they provide stability. It is, true that sometimes we employ training in lowering and raising the hips, but this is only for the sake of developing flexibility. There are no definite hip techniques, because a person whose body is trained and flexible can use his hips as he needs to. Generally, the steps taken in Taiki-ken are small; it has been said that among the great men of Taiki-ken there are none with wide strides.

Defense and attack constitute all of the hand work in Taiki-ken. The two techniques for the hands are called mukae-te. and harai-te. In the former, one uses the inside of the arm to block the opponent's arm and to pull it inward. In the latter, one uses the outside of the arm to parry the opponent's techniques. It is further important to know how to move from mukae-te to harai-te.

For the sake of discussion, I assume that the word arm means everything from the shoulder to the fingertips. When a person stands as shown in Fig. A, Taiki-ken practice assumes that the arm will move like the antenna of an insect. Whether to defend oneself by blocking with the inner side or with the outer side of this antenna will be determined naturally when the opponent attacks. The arm must act independently on its own; the defense involving it is not a matter of the eye or the head. It is important to remember that, when the right hand rises or lowers, as in Fig. A, the left hand must move with it as reinforcement (what is called soe-te). For example, if the right hand is unsuccessful in blocking the opponent's attack, the left hand must be ready to block on its own.

Of course the entire body must respond to the motions of the arm-antenna. If the arm lowers, the hips must be lowered at the same time. If the arm advance, the hips must advance too. Allowing the motion of the body to follow the motion of the arm, greatly increases the power of the arm.

All people who practice Taikiken must constantly keep this characteristic use of the arm in mind as they train. It is good to conduct Taiki-ken training out of doors. A training hall is unnecessary. It is wrong to feel that facilities of this kind are prerequisites of practice. Out-of-doors training, especially in the woods in the morning is best because a setting of this kind enables one to learn many things from nature. Since martial arts are matters of gradual, personal growth, daily training in a natural setting is the one and only way to true progress. I sometimes compare a life of training in the martial arts to a tree. When a person is young, strength fills his body and enables him to withstand any amount of training. This is like the thick, strong trunk of the tree, But as one grows older, one becomes less durable, just as the branches of a tree grow smaller toward the top and finally become slender twigs that shake in the wind and that can be easily broken.

Zen meditation

In Japan the most widely practiced Zen discipline is zazen, or seated meditation.

But the Chinese practitioners of the martial arts often use a standing Zen devised to reinforce the person's inner power and to enable him to generate sudden, violent bursts of energy.

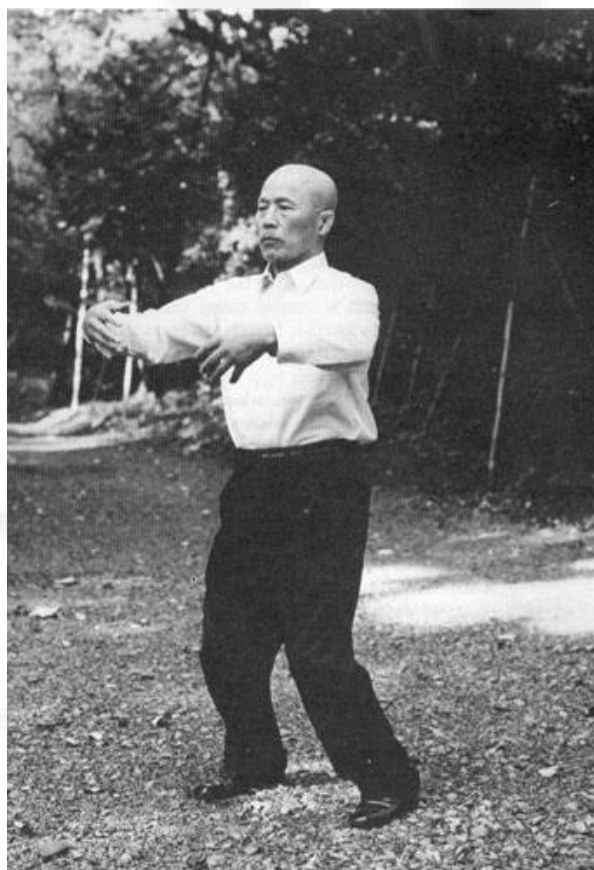
This energy is generally called ki, and standing Zen is the best way to cultivate it.

As I have already said, verbal explanations of ki are no more than empty words because they cannot lead to a true understanding.

Self training through standing Zen, training sessions, and combat with opponents are the only things that lead to an awareness of the meaning of ki.

The famous men of Hsing-i-ch'üan, Ta-ch'eng-ch'üan, and Taiki-ken have all taught that Zen and training are the only ways. My own enlightenment to the nature of ki did not occur until I had returned from China and had spent many years in combat training in Japan.

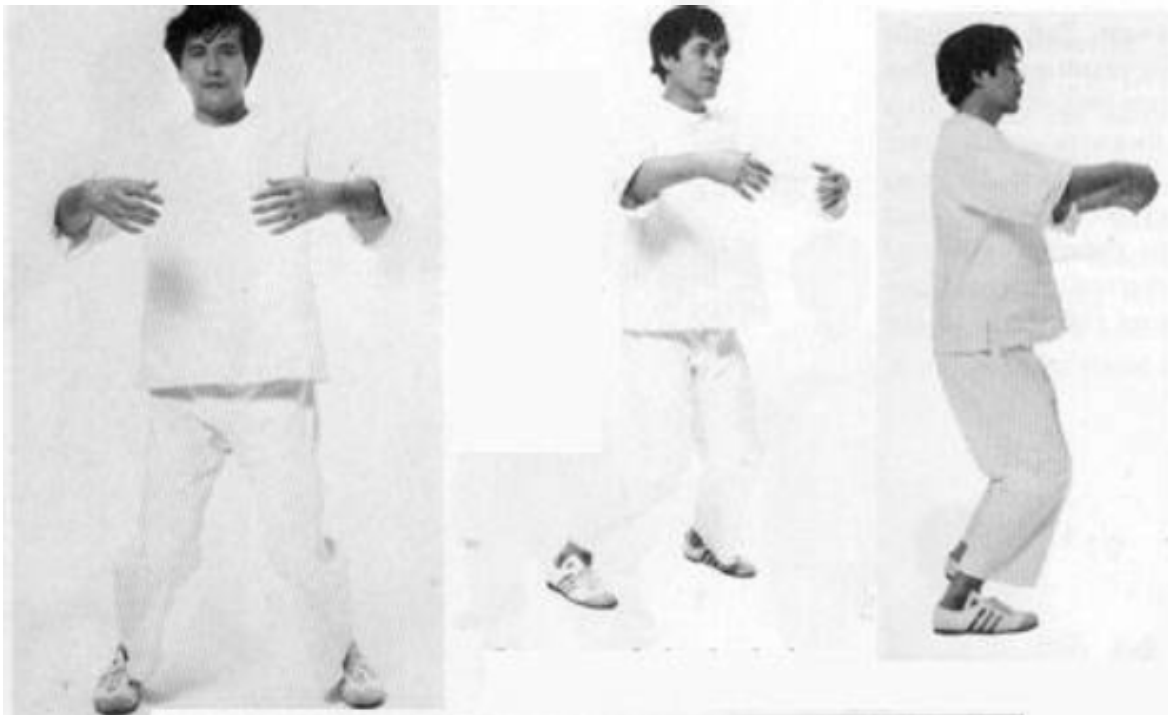
Wang Hsiang-ch'i used to say that the atmosphere of ki can be suggested by comparison with a fish swimming in a pond. When a small stone is dropped into the pond, the fish instantaneously swims away. This reaction is more than what is usually called the operations of the motor nerves. Believing what he said to be true, I teach the same thing to my students.



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The person who understands ki is always able to generate it and to use perfectly natural bodily motions to counter the attacks of whatever opponents may arrive on the scene. A person who does not understand it, however, may train his muscles as much as he wishes, but he is likely to be pulled into the attacks of his opponent. Of course, it is possible to pounce on an opponent and to be prepared to die if need be for the sake of victory, but this is the attitude of the young, not that of the man mature in the martial arts. No matter how long one trains to accelerate punches and kicks, it is impossible to double their speed. As one grows older, they are bound to slow down. A mastery of ki, on the other hand, enables any one to punch and kick speedily on the instant. In other words, a person who understands ki is always capable of moving toward the opponent with natural ease, of defending himself, and of turning defense into attack. Speed is not the issue; it is mastery of ki that counts. The standing Zen used to gain an understanding of ki is performed only by martial arts men and is different from the seated Zen meditation of Zen Buddhism, the ultimate goal of which is psychological discipline. Of course, in standing Zen too psychological discipline is important, for the person must be able to react in a mindless way to the opponent's moves and must not rely on conscious judgments. But the standing meditation regimen has physical aspects as well. These are related to the physical training of the martial arts and are based on the premise that instantaneous motion must be possible at all times. (There is a modification of full standing Zen that is called half-Zen or han-Zen).

It is best to practice standing Zen in the morning and out of doors. New spiritual powers only well up in human minds when people are in a natural setting. Furthermore, each person must be entirely flexible in his attitude toward place and conditions of training. That is to say, each person must be able to train anywhere and at any time. The idea that training halls, training equipment and opponents are requirements of training may express interest in the martial arts but does not reveal the attitude of a person truly devoted to them. Standing Zen among the trees gives one an indescribably good feeling of being in harmony with nature. Ki is born of this kind of Zen even when the person is temporarily out of sorts or not in the mood for what he is doing.



.Ritsu-zen (Standing Zen)

Because of the basic importance of standing Zen to Taiki-ken, it is imperative to learn the proper way to do it. Stand with your feet spread somewhat wider than the width of your shoulders. Raise your hands to the front as if you were embracing a tree. Allow your eyes to rest in front of you but do not stare at one point. Lift your heels slightly off the ground and bend your knees inward slightly. Lower your hips a little. In the beginning, you need stand this way for no more than from ten to fifteen minutes. As you become more experienced, strive to be able to hold this position for from thirty minutes to one hour. Once you have assumed the position, do not move your hands, feet, or hips.



Han-Zen (Half Zen)

This modification of the full standing Zen position allows you to hold your arms in a position that you might assume if you were carrying a small child. In this case, rest your weight on your heels.

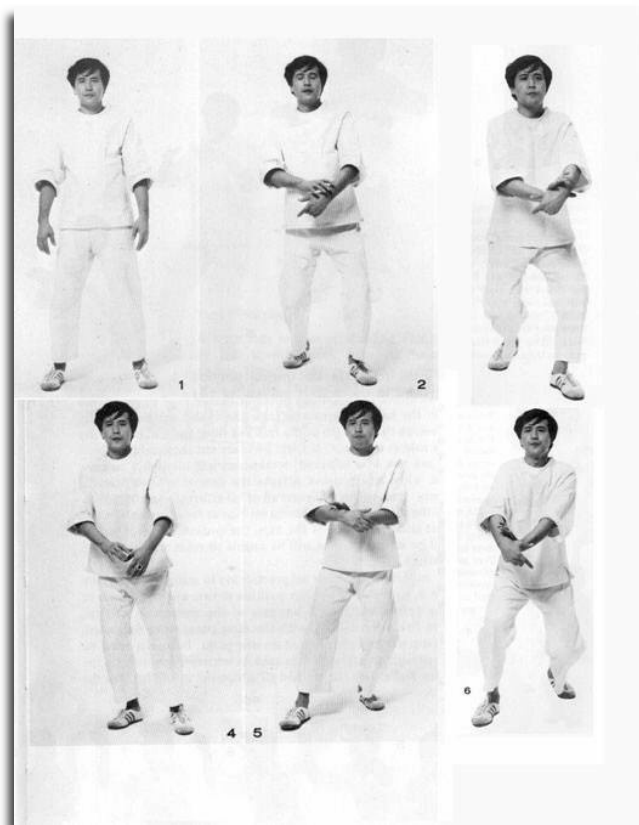


Yuri (Swaying)

After a long session of standing Zen, return to ordinary activity by first lowering your arms. At the same time straighten your knees. Then, slowly composing yourself, sway. Zen calms the body and the mind; but the mood of repose resulting from Zen would be wasted if you began to leap and run immediately after a session.

.For this reason, it is important to move gently from the still world of immobility to the world of action. Swaying is the first step on the way back to ordinary activity. You must take great care to do it in such a way as to preserve the mood of the standing Zen. An awareness of the martial arts must pervade this whole process since transition from the static to the active modes is a basic element of Taiki-ken.

Slowly lowering your arms, return to the original position (Figs.1 and 2) Gently return to the original position as you move into the sway, which leads you out of the static mode. Taking one-half step forward on your left foot, execute a pulling action with your hands (Figs.3,4 and 5). At this time do not consciously lower your hips; perform the actions as slowly as possible. Now extend your hands forward (Figs.6 and 7). Do not tense your arms. Repeat these actions three times (Figs.8 and 9). Next, taking a half step forward on your right foot, repeat these 7 motions three times more (Figs. 11, 12,13 and 14).



Intake of Ki

At the conclusion of the swaying motion, return to the original position (Fig.1). Taking a half step on your left foot, bring your right hand to your left hand and inhale deeply (Figs.2 and 3). Next, taking a half step forward on your right foot and bringing your right hand to your left and, inhale deeply again (Figs.4 through 6). This intake of breath represents a concentration of strength and psychological force

Hai (Crawling)

Crawling training for the protection and safety of your body is designed for use when the opponent attacks. Chinese T'ai-chi philosophy has a classification of the cosmos into three large divisions: heaven, earth, and man. Taiki-ken applies this division to the human body, which it divides into the same heaven, earth, and man realms.

These are designated t'ien (heaven), ti (earth), and jen (man) in Chinese and ten (heaven), chi (earth), and jin (man) in Japanese. Of the three, jen is considered the most important. When an opponent attacks, it is sufficient if you defend the jen zone of the body. In order to do this, however, it is essential to develop the legs and hips (the ti, or earth, zone). Defense of the jen part of the body obviously entails knowledge of that part. And such knowledge must not be solely mental, but must arise from an unconscious awareness on the part of the entire body. Furthermore, the arms must act as the antennae of an insect in detecting the kind of attack the opponent intends to make.

Practice in the hai is designed to train the ti and jen parts of the body. Ti develops the strength of the feet and hips; and jen, that of the hands in the role as antennae. If these parts are not thoroughly trained and if they are not well balanced, weaknesses will inevitably emerge. For instance, when an opponent attacks the face of an insufficiently trained person, that person will exert all of his efforts in an attempt to escape from the attack by straightening his hips as far as possible. Or, if the individual lacks flexibility in the hips, the motions of the ti part of his body will be so dull that he will be unable to react suitably to the opponent's attack.

The most important points in hai practice are to assume the position shown in Fig. 3, to maintain the hip position shown, and to advance so slowly that a person watching is unaware of the movement. At first, move forward five meters. Then, with the same pace, move backward. Your gaze must not be concentrated on one point; instead it must be unrestricted enough to allow you to take in whatever movements the opponent may make. For the method of advancing in the hai, see the chart on p. 26. Advancing method for the hai. Front view.

From the original position (Fig. 1), lower your hips and raise both arms (Fig. 2). Leaving your hips and abdominal region at the same level, put your weight on your right foot and take one step forward (Figs. 3 and 4). Then, leaving your hips and abdominal region at the same level, switch your weight to your left foot and take another step forward (Figs. 5 through 8). Using the same stepping method, advance about five meters. Your eyes must be directed, without being fixed on any one point, at a distance of about three meters in front of you.

Using the motions explained in the preceding section, step backward (Figs. 17 through 30). Return to the original position (Fig. 3 1). Do not forget that, though you are moving backward in this part of the exercise, your ki 26 must be directed forward.



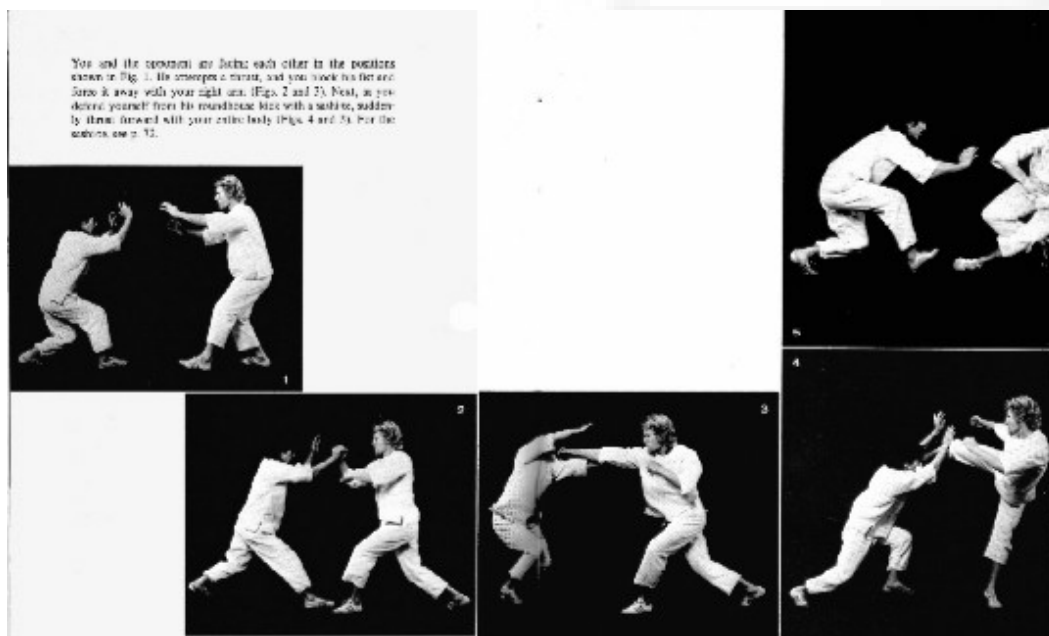
Neri (Kneading)

Zen and hai are ways of developing the inner ki of the individual; they are therefore basic elements of Taiki-ken. But the development of inner ki alone does not constitute a martial art. To lesser or greater extents, ki exists in all animals. In order to convert ki into part of a martial art, the person must be able to use it to generate explosive bursts of power without conscious thought at the moment when he comes into contact with an attacking opponent.

Neri trains the outer part of the person, the muscles of his body. It might be called a training method for attacks and defenses. The word *neri* itself is a Japanese term applied to the act of kneading as practiced on clay by the potter. Just as the potter presses and stretches clay from all sides, so neri is applied to all parts of the body to develop strength, toughness, and resilience. It does not prescribe training for special parts of the body for use in specified defenses against given kinds of attacks. As I have said, it strives to produce bodily flexibility and toughness; consequently, the kinds of neri training used may vary with the person involved. The following four kinds of training methods are used in kneading the body into good condition: mukae-te, harai-te, sashi-te, and daken. In the early stages, practice slowly and gradually build up speed. The degree of perfection of an individual's neri can be clearly seen by observing the way he executes the tanshu.

Mukae-te

This method is termed mukae-te (meeting hand) because, when an opponent attacks, the arms go forward, within the person's limits of defense, to meet the attack. The word *mukae-te* is used to describe methods of warding off the opponent's attack as well. The characteristic merit of mukae-te is reduction of the maximum strength of the opponent's strike. Although this is similar to Basic Movement III (see p. 32), the ways in which the arms are pulled inward and pushed forward differ. From the original position (Fig. 1), pull your right arm upward and inward to a position at the side of your right ear (Figs. 2 and 3). Then, as you pull your right foot inward, push your right hand to the front and pull your left hand toward you (Figs. 4 and 5). The remainder of the practice method consists in repetitions of these movements (Figs. 6 through 9). It is important in this method to turn the palm of the hand forward to agree with the forward push. The body motions and the pushing of the hands and arms must be coordinated.



Harai-te

Harai-te is a method used to parry the opponent's attacks from the inner side of your own body. It is executed by twisting your body and using your hips in a minimum of motion. Do not use greater force than necessary and do not parry wider than necessary. When you parry always do so with your hips lowered and with the intention of moving into the opponent's limits of defense.

Leaving your right foot advanced one-half step, assume the position shown in Fig. 1. Imagine that the opponent is striking with his fist in your middle region (chudan). Practice parrying as you pull his fist toward you with your left hand (Figs. 2 through 4). The right hand must be a soe-te; it can be used in an attack to force the opponent off balance. With your feet in the same positions, but exchanging the positions of your hands, repeat the same motions (Figs. 5 and 6). For the practice method, see p. 98.

Sashi-te

Of the training methods set forth in an earlier section mukae-te, harai-te, sashite, and daken-sashi-te is considered the most difficult. But it must be mastered because it is so important that it might be called the ultimate basis, not only of Taiki-ken, but also of Hsing-i-ch'üan and Ta-ch'eng-ch'üan. Sashi-te involves advancing toward the opponent as he attacks and executing defense and attack simultaneously. The moment the opponent attacks, you must already have moved boldly and forcefully toward him. Furthermore, your own bodily defense must already be ensured. As is the case in the mukae-te, harai-te, and daken, the hand that is not used in defense must serve as the soe-te.



Mastering the sash-te is difficult. As a person who has a degree of training in the martial arts will readily understand, moving close to an attacking opponent is not easy.

How to do this often remains a major problem. First of all, the approach must be instantaneous. Second, if the opponent is a man of strong skills, approaching him may be accompanied by psychological uneasiness. This emotional condition is the same even if the opponent is a person who has been practicing the same methods for the same length of time as you.

The only way to overcome the feeling is through practice in Zen and hai, which enable one to move toward the opponent in a state of virtual unconsciousness.

Zen and hai training develops abundant power to manifest ki; and this, in turn, enables you to move boldly into an opponent's sphere of defense, no matter what kind of attack he attempts.

With such training, the person who might have been uneasy and nervous if he tried such a move consciously can approach his opponent in a sashi-te with unconcern. But this cannot be achieved with the head alone: you must be able to move naturally, instantaneously, and without conscious consideration.

Finally, as I have said before, in order to be able to react to any and all of the opponent's movements, you must not fix your gaze on any one point.

From ancient times, Chinese specialists in the martial arts have held that the eye is unreliable.

If you stare at the opponent, any feint or diversion he may try to make is likely to upset you.

Instead of permitting this to happen, allow your gaze to rest vaguely on the opponent so that you can take in his entire body and all of his actions.

Tanshu

Since the tanshu is performed by one person alone, it gives an excellent idea of the way that person has been training. It is therefore a fine method for revealing the extent to which the performer has mastered Taiki-ken. Of course, within tanshu there are places that differ entirely with the person performing them, and each person must discover the movement forms that suit his individual personality and body. This characteristic of the tanshu emphasizes a trait of Taiki-ken itself, for this is the martial art that is described as having, yet lacking, forms. Ordinarily, the motions in tanshu move gradually from the calm to the highly active. The person performing the tanshu must keep in mind the idea that he is training his body while he imagines the presence of an opponent. For this reason, he must aim at a complete set of motions including all Taiki-ken techniques. He must sometimes use large gestures and sometimes small motions. He must include thrusts in his movements. I think that what the following remarks say about the attitude of the hunter with a blowpipe and darts has bearing on the approach one must adopt toward Taiki-ken. The skilled hunter with the blowpipe matches his own motions to those of his prey. But more important still, he remains prepared to blow the dart from the tube even as he moves about. In short, he concentrates his entire body and awareness in his mouth, the part of the body that provides the compelling power for the dart. Furthermore, he must be charged with the power of ki.



Finally, I should like to urge you to pay special attention to the following points when you are executing tanshu.

- a. When you make attack motions, pay attention to the position of the soe-te.
 - b. In hai movements forward and backward, always use natural strides.
 - c. When you have made one daken motion, immediately either strike or pull with your arm again.
- Another Taiki-ken characteristic is the insistence that the second and third push or pull with the arms and hands when an opponent pursues spell either defeat or victory.
- d. Do not attempt more elaborate footwork than is actually necessary.
 - e. When you move, your drive must be always directed forward. Do not forget the matter of drive when you move to the rear.
 - f. Do not select a certain form and leave your body in it.

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