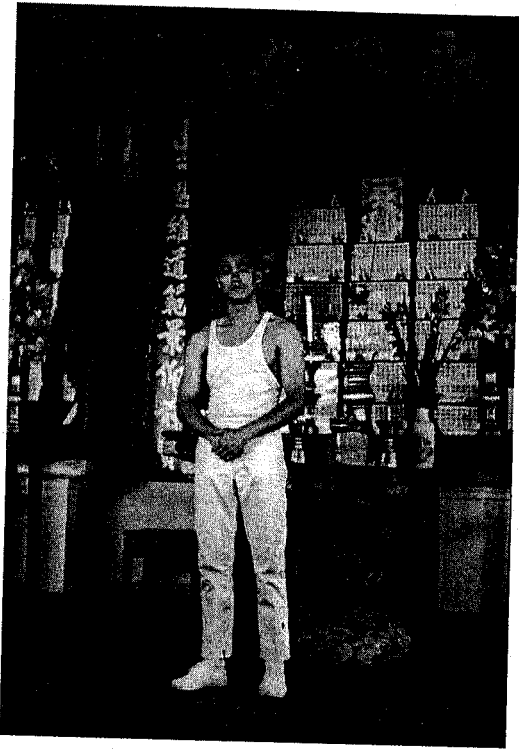


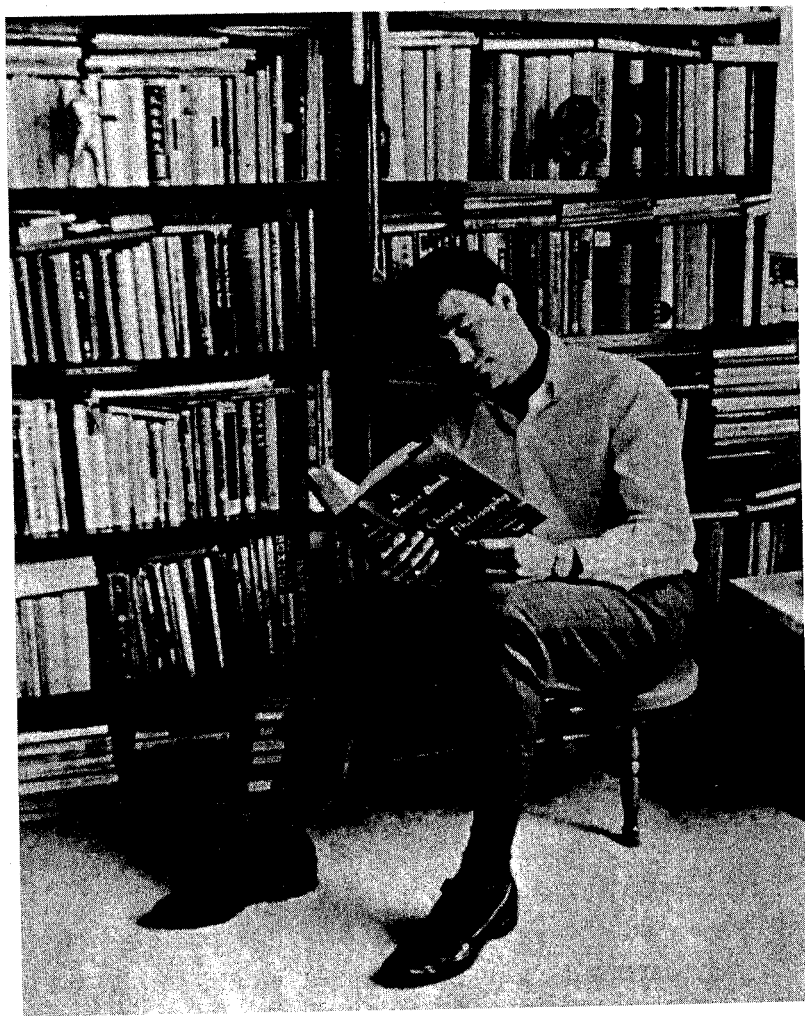
THE TAO OF GUNG FU



Gung fu is more than just an excellent physical exercise or a highly scientific method of self-defense. To the Chinese, gung fu is a Way of training the mind as well as a Way of life. The spiritual side of gung fu cannot be learned by fact-finding or instruction in facts. It has to grow spontaneously, like a flower, in a mind free from desires and emotions. The core of this principle of gung fu is Tao—the spontaneity of the universe.

The philosophy of the Tao is called Taoism and is expressed chiefly through the writings of Lao-tzu in his book, *The Tao Te Ching* (*The Book of the Way*). The philosophy of Taoism reveals the essential unity of the universe (monism)—or reversion, polarization (yin/yang), and eternal cycles—of the leveling of all differences, the relativity of all standards, and the return of all to the primeval oneness, the divine intelligence, the source of all things. From this

naturally arises the absence of desire for strife and contention and fighting for advantage. Thus, the teachings of humility and meekness of the Christian "Sermon on the Mount" find a rational basis and a peaceable temper is bred in man. It emphasizes non-resistance and the importance of gentleness.



The basic idea of the *Tao Te Ching* is naturalism in the sense of wu-wei (nondoing), which really means taking no unnatural action. It means spontaneity; that is, "to support all things in their natural stage" and thus allow them to "transform spontaneously." In this manner Tao "undertakes no activity and yet there is nothing left

undone." In ordinary life it is expressed in "producing and rearing things without taking possession of them" and "doing work but not taking pride in it"—thus the natural Way stands in complement to all artificial ways such as regulation, ceremonies, etc. This is the reason why the Taoists don't like formalities and artificiality.

The natural Way is compared with the ways of water. The female and the infant; that is, the way of the weak. While there seems to be glorification of the weak, the strongest stress really lies with simplicity. A simple life is one of plainness in which profit is discarded, cleverness abandoned, selfishness eliminated, and desires reduced. It is the life of "perfection which seems to be incomplete and of fullness which seems to be empty." It is the life which is as bright as light but does not dazzle. In short, it is a life of harmony, unity, contentment, tranquillity, constancy, enlightenment, peace, and long life.

The word *Tao* has no exact equivalent in the English language. To render it into *Way*, *principle*, or *law* is to give it too narrow an interpretation. Lao-tzu, the founder of Taosim, described Tao in the following words:

The Way which can be expressed in words is not the eternal Way; the Name which can be uttered is not the eternal Name. Conceived of as nameless, it is the cause of heaven and earth. Conceived of as having a name, it is the mother of all things. Only the man eternally free from passion can contemplate its spiritual essence. He who is clogged by desires can see no more than its outer form. These two things, the spiritual (yin) and the material (yang), though we call them by different names, are one and the same in their origin. The sameness is a mystery of the mysteries. It is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful.

In Masterpieces of World Philosophy

Tao is the nameless beginning of things, the universal principle underlying everything, the supreme, ultimate pattern, and the principle of growth.

Huston Smith, the author of *World Religion*, explained Tao as:

The Way of Ultimate Reality—the Way or Principle behind all life, or the Way man should order his life to gear in with the way the universe operates.

Although no one word can substitute its meaning, I have used the word *Truth* for it—the Truth behind gung fu; the Truth that every gung fu practitioner should follow.

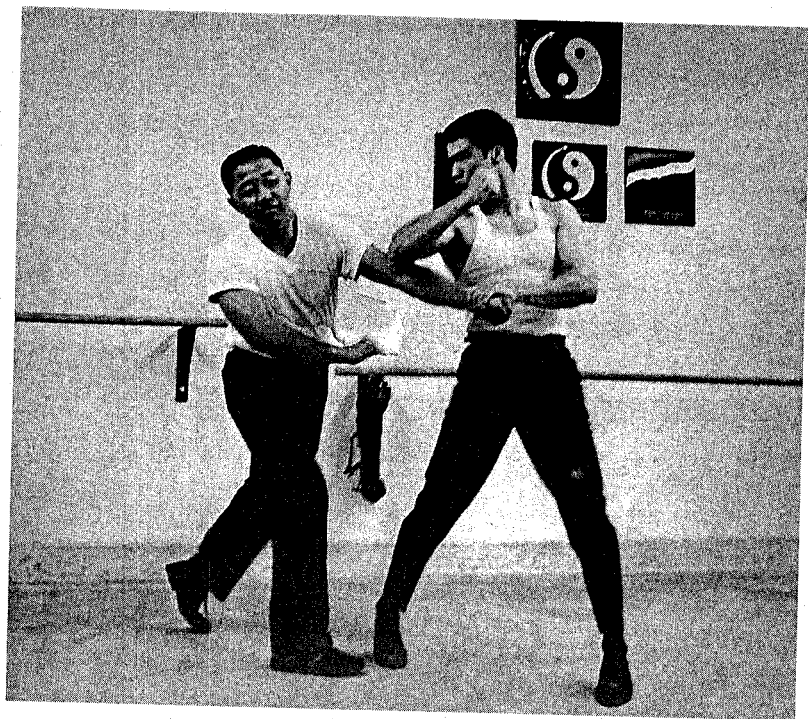
Yin and yang

Tao operates in yin and yang, a pair of mutually complementary forces that are at work in and behind all phenomena. This principle of yin/yang, also known as t'ai chi, is the basic structure of gung fu. However, as I've gone into detail about yin/yang elsewhere in this book, I will simply refer you to Chapter Two for additional information on this very important principle.

Applied yin–yang: the Law of Harmony

The application of the theory of yin–yang in gung fu is known as the Law of Harmony, in which one should be in harmony with, and not in opposition to, the strength and force of the opposition. This means that one should do nothing that is not natural or spontaneous; the important thing is not to strain in any way. Suppose opponent A applies force on opponent B; B should not give way to it (for these are the two extreme opposites of B's reaction to A's force). Instead, B should complete A's force with a lesser force (firmness in gentleness) and lead him to the direction of his own force and movement. This spontaneous assisting of A's movement as he aims it will result in his own defeat. As the butcher preserves his knife by cutting along the bone and not against it, a gung fu man preserves himself by following the movement of his opponent without opposition.

Therefore gentleness alone can't forever dissolve away great force, nor sheer brute force to subdue one's foe. In order to survive



in combat, the harmonious interfusion of gentleness and firmness is necessary; with one sometimes dominating the other and vice versa, in a wavelike succession. The movement will then truly flow; for the true fluidity of movement is in its interchangeability. This is also true in life.

The Law of Noninterference with Nature

The above idea gives rise to a closely related law, the Law of Noninterference with Nature, which teaches a gung fu man to forget about himself and follow his opponent (strength) instead of himself; he does not move ahead but responds to the fitting influence. The basic idea is to defeat the opponent by yielding to him and using his own strength against him. That is why a gung fu man never asserts himself against his opponent, and never puts himself in frontal opposition to the direction of his force. When being attacked, he will not resist, but will control the attack by swinging with it. This law illustrates the principles of nonresistance and nonviolence, which were

founded on the idea that the branches of a fir tree snapped under the weight of the snow, while the simple reeds, weaker but more supple, can overcome it. In the *I' Ching*, Confucius illustrated this: "To stand in the stream is a datum of nature; one must follow and flow with it."

In *Tao Te Ching*, the gospel of Taoism, Lao-tzu pointed out to us the value of gentleness. Contrary to common belief, the yin principle, as softness and pliability, is to be associated with life and survival. Because he can yield, a man can survive. In contrast, the yang principle, which is assumed to be rigorous and hard, makes a man break under pressure (note the last two lines, which make a fair description of revolution as many generations of people have seen it):

Alive, a man is supple, soft,
In death, unbending, rigorous.
All creatures, grass and trees, alive are plastic but are pliant
too,
And dead, are friable and dry.
Unbending rigor is the mate of death,
And yielding softness, company of life.
Unbending soldiers get no victories;
The stiffest tree is readiest for the ax.
The strong and mighty topple from their place;
The soft and yielding rise above them all.

The way of movement in gung fu is closely related to the movement of the mind. In fact, the mind is trained to direct the movement of the body. The mind wills and the body behaves. As the mind is to direct the bodily movements, the way to control the mind is important; but it is not an easy task. In his book *Power in Athletics*, Glen Clark mentioned some of the emotional disturbances in athletics:

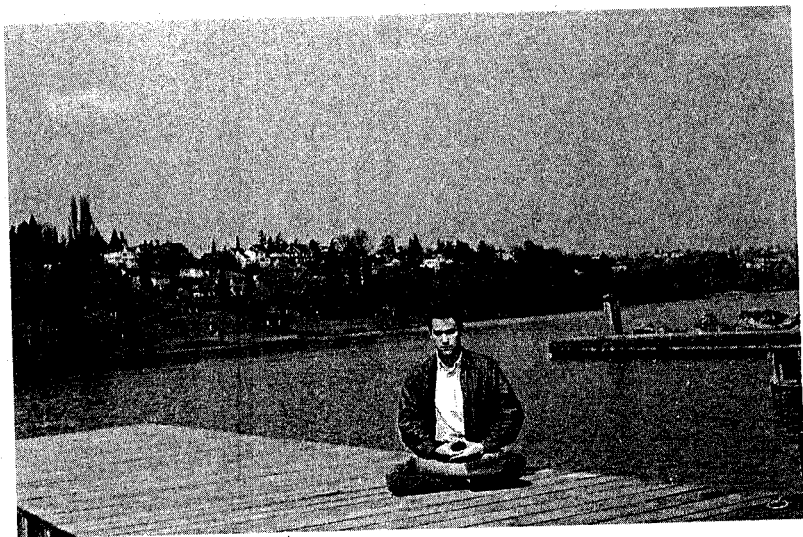
Every conflicting center, every extraneous, disrupting,
decentralizing emotion, jars the natural rhythm and reduces a
man's efficiency on the gridiron far more seriously than
physical jars and bodily conflicts can ever jar him. The



emotions that destroy the inner rhythm of a man are hatred, jealousy, lust, envy, pride, vanity, covetousness, and fear.

To perform the right technique in gung fu, physical loosening must be continued in a mental and spiritual loosening, so as to make the mind free and agile. In order to accomplish this, a gung fu man has to remain quiet and calm and to master the principle of no-mindedness (wu-hsin).

ON WU-HSIN (NO-MINDEDNESS)



The phenomenon of wu-hsin, or “no-mindedness,” is not a blank mind that shuts out all thoughts and emotions; nor is it simply calmness and quietness of mind.

Although quietude and calmness are necessary, it is the “non-graspingness” of thoughts that mainly constitutes the principle of no mind. A gung fu man employs his mind as a mirror—it grasps nothing and refuses nothing; it receives but does not keep. As Allan Watts puts it, the no-mindedness is:

A state of wholeness in which the mind functions freely and easily, without the sensation of a second mind or ego standing over it with a club.

What he means is: Let the mind think what it likes without interference by the separate thinker or ego within oneself. So long as it thinks what it wants, there is absolutely no effort in letting it go; and the disappearance of the effort to let go is precisely the disappearance of the separate thinker. There is nothing to try to do, for whatever comes up moment by moment is accepted, including

nonacceptance. No-mindedness is, then, not being without emotion or feeling, but being one in whom feeling is not sticky or blocked. It is a mind immune to emotional influences.

Like this river, everything is flowing on ceaselessly without cessation or standing still.

No-mindedness is to employ the whole mind as we use the eyes when we rest them upon various objects but make no special effort to take anything in. Chuang-tzu, the disciple of Lao-tzu, stated:

The baby looks at things all day without winking, that is because his eyes are not focused on any particular object. He goes without knowing where he is going, and stops without knowing what he is doing. He merges himself with the surroundings and moves along with it. These are the principles of mental hygiene.

Therefore, concentration in gung fu does not have the usual sense of restricting the attention to a single sense object, but is simply a quiet awareness of whatever happens to be here and now. Such concentration can be illustrated by an audience at a football game; instead of a concentrated attention on the player that has the ball, they have an awareness of the whole football field. In a similar way, a gung fu man's mind is concentrated by not dwelling on any particular part of the opponent. This is especially true when dealing with many opponents. For instance, suppose ten men are attacking him, each in succession ready to strike him down. As soon as one is disposed of, he will move on to another without permitting the mind to stop with any. However rapidly one blow may follow another, he leaves no time to intervene between the two. Everyone of the ten will thus be successively and successfully dealt with. This is possible only when the mind moves from one object to another without being stopped or arrested by anything. If the mind is unable to move on in this fashion, it is sure to lose the combat somewhere between two encounters.



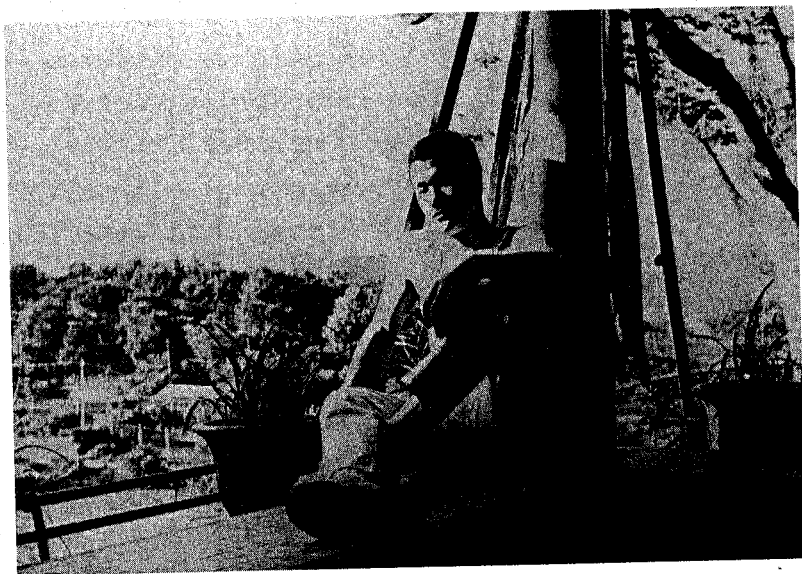
His mind is present everywhere because it is nowhere attached to any particular object. And it can remain present because even when related to this or that object, it does not cling to it. The flow of thought is like water filling a pond, which is always ready to flow off again. It can work its inexhaustible power because it is free, and be open to everything because it is empty. This can be compared with what Chang Chen Chi called "serene reflection." He wrote:

Serene means tranquility of no thought, and reflection means vivid and clear awareness. Therefore, serene reflection is clear awareness of no-thought.

As stated earlier, a gung fu man aims at harmony with himself and his opponent. It also stated that harmony with one's opponent is possible not through force, which provokes conflicts and reactions, but through a yielding to his force. In other words, a gung fu man promotes the spontaneous development of his opponent and does not venture to interfere by his own action. He loses himself

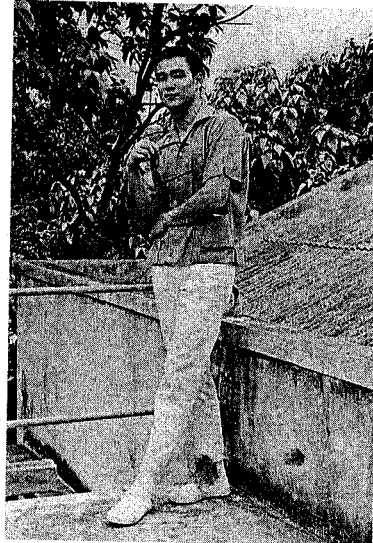
by giving up all subjective feelings and individuality, and becomes one with his opponent. Inside his mind oppositions have become mutually cooperative instead of mutually exclusive. When his private ego and conscious efforts yield to a power not his own he then achieves the supreme action, nonaction (wu wei).

ON WU-WEI (NONDOING)



Wu means “not” or “non” and wei means “action,” “doing,” “striving,” “straining” or “busyness.” It doesn’t really mean doing nothing, but to let one’s mind alone, trusting it to work by itself. Wu wei, in gung fu, means spontaneous action or spirit-action, in the sense that the governing force is the mind and not that of the senses. During sparring, a gung fu man learns to forget about himself and follows the movement of his opponent, leaving his mind free to make it’s own counter-movement without any interfering deliberation. He frees himself from all mental suggestions of resistance, and adopts a supple attitude. His actions are all performed without self-assertion; he lets his mind remain spontaneous and ungrasped. As soon as he stops to think, his flow of movement will be disturbed and he is immediately struck by his opponent. Every action, therefore, has to be done “unintentionally” without ever trying.

Through wu wei, a reposeful ease is secured. This passive achievement, as Chuang-tzu pointed out, will free a gung fu man from striving and straining himself.

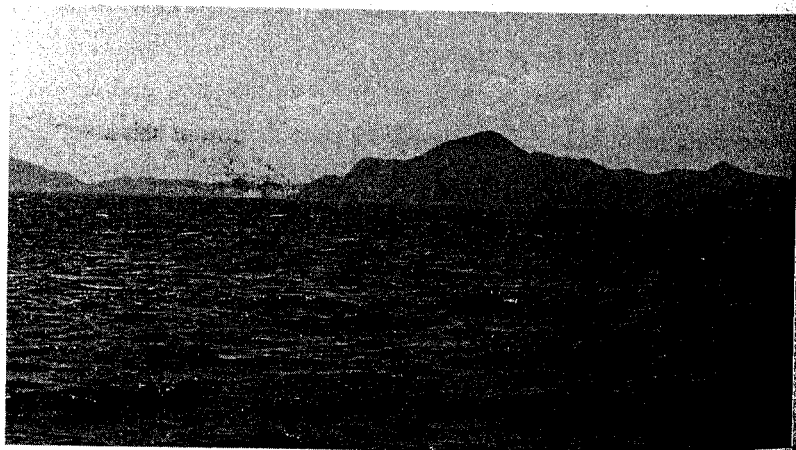


A yielding will has a reposeful ease, soft as downy feathers, a quietude, a shrinking from action, an appearance of inability to do. Placidly free from anxiety, one acts with the opportune time; one moves and revolves in the line of creation. One does not move ahead but responds to the fitting influences. Establish nothing in regard to oneself. Let things be what they are, move like water, rest like a mirror,

respond like an echo, pass quickly like the nonexistent and be quiet as purity. Those who gain, lose. Do not precede others, always follow them.

The natural phenomenon which the gung fu man sees as being the closest resemblance to wu wei is water:

Nothing is weaker than water,
But when it attacks something hard,
Or resistant, then nothing withstands it,
And nothing will alter its way.



The above passages from the *Tao Te Ching* illustrate to us the nature of water: Water is so fine that it is impossible to grasp a handful of it; strike it, yet it does not suffer hurt; stab it, and it is not wounded; sever it, and yet it is not divided. It has no shape of its own, but molds itself to the receptacle that contains it. When heated to the state of steam it is invisible, but has enough power to split the earth itself. When frozen it crystallizes into a mighty rock. First it is turbulent like the Niagara Falls, and then calm like a still pond, fearful like a torrent, and refreshing like a spring on a hot summer's day. So is the principle of wu wei:

The rivers and seas are lords of a hundred valleys. This is because their strength is in lowliness; they are kings of them all. So it is that the perfect master wishing to lead them, he follows. Thus, though he is above them he follows. Thus, though he is above them, men do not feel him to be an injury. And since he will not strive, none strive with him.

The world is full of people who are determined to be somebody or give trouble. They want to get ahead to stand out. Such ambition has no use for a gung fu man, who rejects all forms of self-assertiveness and competition:

One who tries to stand on tiptoe cannot stand still. One who stretches his legs too far cannot walk. One who advertises himself too much is ignored. One who is too insistent on his own view finds few to agree with him. One who claims too much credit does not get even what he deserves. One who is too proud is soon humiliated. These are condemned as extremes of greediness and self-destructive activity.

Therefore, one who acts naturally avoids such extremes.

Those who know do not speak;

Those who speak do not know.

Stop your senses: Let sharp things be blunted,

Tangles resolved, The light tempered

And turmoil subdued;
For this is mystic unity in which the wise man is moved
Neither by affection,
Nor yet by estrangement
Or profit or loss
Or honor or shame.
Accordingly, by all the world,
He is held highest.

A gung fu man, if he is really good, is not proud at all. Pride is a sense of worth which derives from something that is not organically part of oneself. Pride emphasizes the importance of the superiority of one's status in the eyes of others. There is fear and insecurity in pride because when one aims at being highly esteemed, and having achieved such status, he is automatically involved in the fear of losing his status. Then protection of one's status appears to be his most important need, and this creates anxiety.



The less promise and potency in the self, the more imperative is the need for pride. One is proud when he identifies himself with an imaginary self; the core of pride is self-rejection.

As we know that gung fu is aiming at self-cultivation; and, therefore, the inner self is one's true self; so in order to realize his true self, a gung fu man lives without being dependent upon the opinion of others. Since he is completely self-sufficient he can have no fear of not being esteemed. A gung fu man devotes himself to being self-suffi-

cient, and never depends upon the external rating by others for his happiness. A gung fu master, unlike the beginner, holds himself in reserve, is quiet and unassuming, without the least desire to show off. Under the influence of gung fu training his proficiency becomes spiritual and he himself, grown ever freer through spiritual struggle, is transformed. To him, fame and status mean nothing.

Thus wu wei is the art of artlessness, the principle of no principle. To state it in terms of gung fu, the genuine beginner knows nothing about the way of blocking and striking, and much less of his concern for himself. When an opponent tries to strike him, he instinctively parries it. This is all he can do. But as soon as his training starts, he is taught how to defend and attack, where to keep the mind, and many other technical tricks—which makes his mind stop at various junctures. For this reason whenever he tries to strike the opponent he feels unusually hampered (he has lost altogether the original sense of innocence and freedom). But as months and years go by, as his training acquires fuller maturity, his bodily attitude and his way of managing the technique move toward no-mindedness which resembles the state of mind he had at the very beginning of training when he knew nothing, when he was altogether ignorant of the art. The beginning and the end thus turn into next-door neighbors. On the musical scale, one may start with the lowest pitch and gradually ascend to the highest. When the highest is reached, one finds it is located next to the lowest.

In a similar way, when the highest stage is reached in the study of Taoist teaching, a gung fu man turns into a kind of simpleton who knows nothing of Tao, nothing of its teachings, and is devoid of all learning. Intellectual calculations are lost sight of and a state of no-mindedness prevails. When the ultimate perfection is attained, the body and limbs perform by themselves what is assigned to them to do with no interference from the mind. The technical skill is so automatized it is completely divorced from conscious efforts.

ON EASTERN AND WESTERN HYGIENE



There is a big difference between the Chinese hygiene and the Western hygiene. Some of the obvious ones are these: Chinese exercises are rhythmic, whereas the Western ones are dynamic and full of tension; the Chinese exercise seeks to merge harmoniously with nature, Western exercise seeks to dominate it; the Chinese exercise is both a way of life and mental cultivation, while the Western exercise is merely a sport or a physical calisthenic.

Perhaps the main difference is the fact that the Chinese hygiene is yin (softness), while the Western hygiene is yang (hardness). We can compare the Western mind with an oak tree that stands firm and rigid against the strong wind. When the wind becomes stronger, the oak tree cracks. The Chinese mind, on the other hand, is like the bamboo that bends with the strong wind. When the wind ceases, that is, when it goes to the extreme and changes, the bamboo springs back stronger than before.

Western hygiene is a gratuitous waste of energy. The over-exertion and overdevelopment of bodily organs involved in Western athletics is detrimental to one's health. Chinese hygiene, on the other hand, throws its emphasis in conservation of energy; the principle is always that of moderation, as opposed to going to extremes. Whatever exercise there may be consists of harmonious movements calculated to normalize but not to excite one's bodily regimen.

It starts out with mental regimen as a basis, of which the sole object is to bring about peace and calmness of mind. With this as the basis, it aims at stimulating a normal functioning of the internal process of respiration and blood circulation.

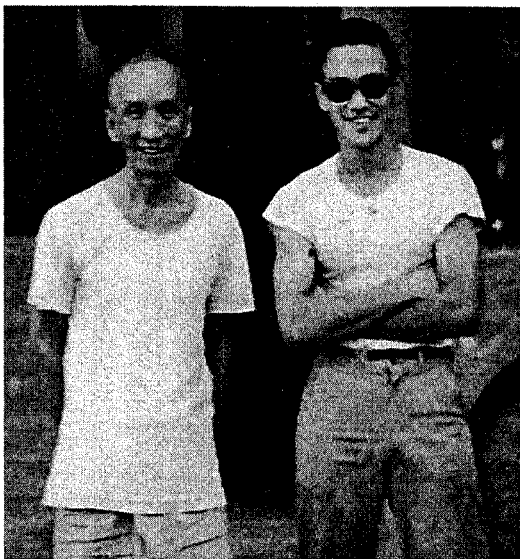
A MOMENT OF UNDERSTANDING



Gung fu is a special kind of skill; a fine art rather than just a physical exercise. It is a subtle art of matching the essence of the mind to that of the techniques in which it has to work. The principle of gung fu is not a thing that can be learned, like a science, by fact-finding and instruction in facts. It has to grow spontaneously, like a flower, in a mind free from emotions and desires. The core of this principle of gung fu is Tao—the spontaneity of the universe.

After four years of hard training in the art of gung fu, I began to understand and felt the principle of gentleness—the art of neutralizing the effect of the opponent's effort and minimizing the expenditure of one's energy. All these must be done in calmness and without striving. It sounded simple, but in actual application it was difficult. The moment I engaged in combat with an opponent, my mind was completely perturbed and unstable. And after a series of exchanging blows and kicks, all my theory of gentleness was gone. My only thought at this point was "somehow or other I must beat him and win!"

My instructor at the time, Professor Yip Man, head of the Wing Chun school of gung fu, would come up to me and say "Loong, relax and calm your mind. Forget about yourself and follow the opponent's movement. Let your mind, the basic reality, do the counter-movement without any interfering deliberation. Above all learn the art of detachment."



“That was it!” I thought. “I must relax!” However, right then I had just done something contradictory against my will. That occurred at the precise moment I said “I” $\langle + \rangle$ “must” $\langle - \rangle$ “relax.” The demand for effort in “must” was already inconsistent with the effortlessness in “relax.” When my acute self-consciousness grew to what the psychologists refer to as the “double-bind” type, my instructor would again approach me and say “Loong, preserve yourself by following the natural bends of things and don’t interfere. Remember never to assert yourself against nature; never be in frontal opposition to any problems, but to control it by swinging with it. Don’t practice this week. Go home and think about it.”

The following week I stayed home. After spending many hours of meditation and practice, I gave up and went sailing alone in a junk. On the sea I thought of all my past training and got mad at myself and punched the water! Right then—at that moment—a thought suddenly struck me; was not this water the very essence of gung fu? Hadn’t this water just now illustrated to me the principle of gung fu? I struck it but it did not suffer hurt. Again I struck it with all of my might—yet it was not wounded! I then tried to grasp a handful of it but this proved impossible. This water, the softest substance in the world and what could be contained in the smallest jar, only



seemed weak. In reality, it could penetrate the hardest substance in the world. That was it! I wanted to be like the nature of water.

Suddenly a bird flew by and cast its reflection on the water. Right then as I was absorbing myself with the lesson of the water, another mystic sense of hidden meaning revealed itself to me; should not the thoughts and emotions I had when in front of an opponent pass like the reflection of the bird flying over the water? This was exactly what Professor Yip meant by being detached—not being without emotion or feeling, but being one in whom feeling was not sticky or blocked. Therefore in order to control myself I must first accept myself by going with and not against my nature.



I lay on the boat and felt that I had united with Tao; I had become one with nature. I just laid there and let the boat drift freely according to its own will. For at that moment I had achieved a state of inner feeling in which opposition had become mutually cooperative instead of mutually exclusive, in which there was no longer any conflict in my mind. The whole world to me was as one.

CENTERED THOUGHTS— SOME GUNG FU PRECEPTS



The assimilation of the Tao has its foundation in meekness, tenderness, poverty of spirit, and quietness. These are expressed sometimes by one word, emptiness. An aggressive spirit will be brought low, pride leads to a fall, violence will end in defeat, all which come from misunderstanding the real use of Tao.

Quiescence and nonactivity; not seeking the actual but taking the empty.

In stillness and quietness, without striving or crying; not allowing outside things to entangle one's mind.

Outward change does not move the mind—move forward in harmony with the fluctuating movements of the cosmic spirit.

The yielding will has a reposeful ease, soft as downy feathers; a quietude, a shrinking from action. An appearance of inability to do (the heart is humble, but the work is forceful). Placidity free from anxiety, one acts in harmony with nature; one moves and revolves in the line of creation. One does not move ahead but responds to the fitting influence.

He that humbles himself shall be preserved entire; he that keeps behind shall be put in front; he that bends shall be made straight.

Yielding will overcome anything superior to itself; its strength is boundless.

The highest skill operates on an almost unconscious level.

Who is there that can make muddy water clear? But if allowed to remain still, it will become clear of itself. Who is there that can secure a state of absolute repose? But keep calm and let time go on, and the state of repose will gradually arrest.

Greatness of yielding illustrated by water: Nothing in the world is more yielding and softer than water; yet it penetrates the hardest. Insubstantial, it enters where no room is. It is so fine that it is impossible to grasp a handful of it; strike it, yet it does not suffer hurt; stab it, and it is not wounded.

If you try to remember you will lose.

Empty your mind, be formless, shapeless. Like water.

Now you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup.

You pour water into a bottle, it becomes the bottle.

You put water into a teapot, it becomes the teapot.

Now water can flow or creep or drip—or crash!

Be water, my friend.

Alive, a man is supple, soft;

In death, unbending, rigorous.

All creatures, grass and trees, alive
are plastic but are pliant too.

And death, are friable and dry

Unbending rigor is the mate of death.

And yielding softness, company of life.

Unbending soldiers get no victories;

the stiffest tree is readiest for the ax.

The strong and mighty belong to the bottom.

The soft and yielding rise above them all.

To yield is to be preserved whole.

To be bent is to become straight.

To be hollow is to be filled.

To be tattered is to be renewed.

To be in want is to possess.

To have plenty is to be confused.



One should be in harmony with, not rebellion against, the fundamental laws of the universe. This means that we should do nothing that is not natural or spontaneous. The important thing is not to strain in any way. This is best illustrated by the cook, who has used his knife for twenty years and didn't have to replace it. Familiar by long habit with each bone and sinew of the carcass to be cut up, the cook could arrest his sight and other senses and wield the well-tried carving knife with his mind, his method being to work *along* and not *against* the various parts, thus following nature.

Unity of mind and body discards all thoughts of rewards, all hopes of praise and fears of blame, all awareness of one's bodily self, and finally closing the avenues of sense-perception and letting the spirit act as it will.

Emptiness (no mind)

A subtle art of matching the essence of the mind to that of the medium in which it works.

The secret waits for the insight.

Of clouds unclouded by longing; those who are bound by desire see only the outward container.



Tao

Before Confucius, the term *Tao* usually meant a road, or a way of action. Confucius used it as a philosophical concept standing for the right way of action—moral, social, and political. The Taoist used the term *Tao* to stand for the totality of all things, equivalent to what some philosophers have called “the absolute.”

The Tao was the basic stuff out of which all things were made. It was simple, formless, desireless, without striving, supremely content.

Endurance is to keep one's place.

Nothing should be consciously planned.

Spontaneous action

Spontaneous action—of which nature (Tao) was the grand practitioner. This action of nature was real action. The second was action taken with design, premeditated and directed to chosen ends. This, however attractive it might seem, was a forcing of nature and therefore unreal.

That man in whom the truth is bright has no anger.
Be still while you work and keep full control over all.

To know, but to be as though not knowing, is the height of wisdom.

The stillness in stillness is not the real stillness; only when there is stillness in movement does the universal rhythm manifest.

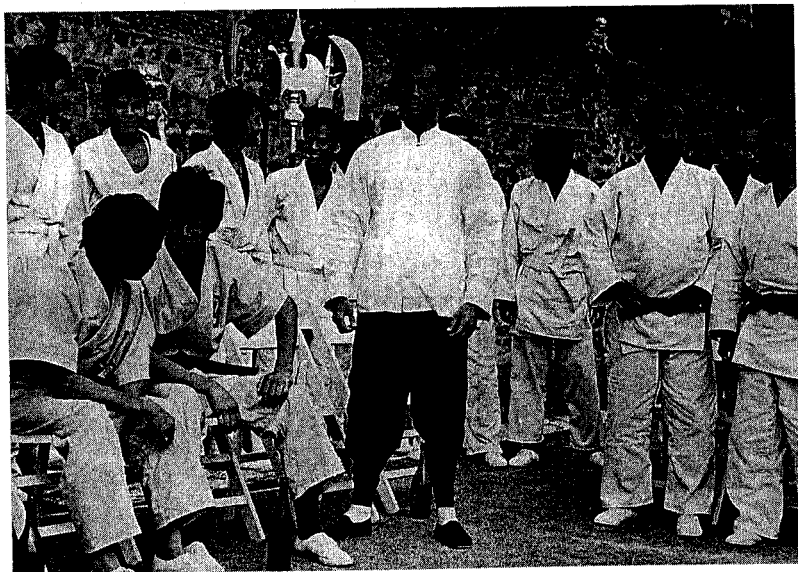
Firmness is concealed in softness; softness in firmness. Activity includes inactivity; each being the cause of the other.

Avoid trials of skill; at first it's all friendliness but in the end it's all antagonism.

To defend is to attack, to attack is to defend.

Firmness cannot be for long, and softness cannot be always in the defensive.

If you feel emptiness, strike in a straight line.



Sparring

In sparring the mind must be quiet and calm; the attention concentrated, and the energy lowered. Besides, straightening the head and body, hollowing the chest, raising the back, lowering the shoulders and elbows, loosening the waist, setting right the sacrum, and keeping the waist, legs, hands, and other parts of the body in perfect harmony are all important. The postures must be natural, capable of stretching and drawing as intended without any awkward strength, and responding immediately after sensing.



Striking

In striking, the momentum of the waist and legs, the motivation and the intrinsic energy must also be added; the hands are employed only as a means to put it through.

Establish nothing in regard to oneself. Let things be what they are, move like water, rest like a mirror, respond like an echo, pass quickly like the nonexistent, and be quiet as purity. Those who gain, lose. Do not precede others, always follow them.

To rest in weakness is strength.

If you would contract, you must first expand. If you would weaken, you must first strengthen. If you would overthrow, you must first raise up. If you would take, you must first give.

The good man wins a victory and then stops; he will not go on to acts of violent winning, he boasteth not, he will not triumph, he shows no arrogance. He wins because he cannot choose. After his victory he will not be overbearing.

The virtue of not striving

The best soldiers are not warlike; the best fighters do not lose their temper. The greatest conquerors are those who overcome their enemies without strife. The greatest directors of men are those who spread peace to the others.

Leave all things to take their natural course, and do not interfere.

Stillness conquers heat.

In the waist, not the limbs, lies the mainspring of the movements of the body. The movements of the limbs are slow and short, while those of the waist are free and long. One turning of a big axis is equivalent to hundreds of turnings of small axes.

Attain complete vacuity, and sedulously preserve a state of repose.

I take softness as my opponent takes firmness, and I take pursuing as he takes retreating.

The pugilism is desirable in activity, and combinable in inactivity. There is no overdoing and no insufficiency; it bends and stretches as intended. It withstands promptly when attacks are quick, and it follows leisurely when attacks are slow. The movements are exact in position, and are invisible at times and visible at others. Too much weight on the left makes the left weak, and too much on the right weakens the right. It is lofty when it rises, and it is deep when it falls. It is far ahead when it advances, and prompt when it retreats. A feather cannot be added, and a fly cannot be placed.

One has ease of mind and absorption in one intention, with neither motives nor presentiments but an outer look of emptiness. Such is the way during practice by yourself.

Give up all thoughts. Set your eyes forward, directed to the spot just in front of the outgoing hand (imagine that an opponent is in front of you). Close your mouth and breathe through your nose. Press your tongue against your palate. Set your shoulders down, lower the elbows, straighten the head, hollow your chest and raise your back in the natural way, loosen the waist with your sacrum right in the middle. Do not force your strength. Raise your spirit and breathe down from the psychic-center (2½ inches under the navel), so that you may feel at ease in every part of your body and the blood may circulate smoothly. The chief movements are done with the waist, rising and lowering alternately like waves. The four limbs and all other parts of the body should correspond with each other, as music with rhythm. The hand movements are composed of two kinds: one of yang (substantiality, firmness, positive, etc.) and one of yin (insubstantiality, softness, negative, etc.). Steps are light and changeable like those of a cat, and also of two classes (yin and yang). Be natural and in the right position while standing and you will be filled with spirit and energy.

You must will to use your energy.

Unperturbed mind.

Be soft yet not yielding; strong yet not hard.

Self-culture—reduction of desire; suppression of the senses—gives power to govern the mind.

To see oneself is to be clear of right. Mighty is he who conquers himself.

Sideways force can be broken though by straight force. Straight force can be stopped by sideways force.

Footwork, hand technique, and body movement; these three ways, if performed right, will floor even a giant.

If there is firmness in softness, you can never break through; if there is no softness in firmness, then it is not strong at all.

When facing an opponent your expression must be like a cat ready to get a mouse.

When he uses strength, I don't use it; when he doesn't use it, I use inner energy. In other words, softness for firmness and firmness for softness.

When you reach a certain point, stop and don't go any further. After bending, stretch. Fit your movement into that of your opponent. Remember every movement should be connected. Although outside seems like it's stopped, inside your energy must not stop, your mind being ahead of your opponent all the time.

In the morning, never face east; at night or rather in the evening, never face west.

Move like a wave, turn like a wheel, slow like an eagle, walk like a cat, fast as lightening, jump up like a monkey, come down like a bird, stand like a tree, stop suddenly like a cock.

The division of gung fu techniques

The gung fu techniques are roughly divided into four ways:

1. Striking of the hand
2. Kicking of the leg
3. The thirty-six throws
4. The seventy-two wrist and arm locks (which also include other parts of holding and choking techniques)

To become one with nature

If I feel in my heart that I am wrong, I must stand in fear even though my opponent is the least formidable of men. But if my own heart tells me that I am right, I shall go forward even against thousands and tens of thousands.

You are required only to perform your own mission—without any thoughts of aggressiveness or competition. Follow the will of nature and coordinate your mind and your act; become one with nature and nature will protect you.

If you would not spill the wine, do not fill the glass too full. If you wish your blade to hold it's edge, do not try to make it over-keen.



Selections from the Tao Te Ching

Rank and arrogance add up to ruin.
The ten thousand things come into being
And I have watched them return.
No matter how luxuriantly they flourish
Each must go back to the root from which it came.
This returning to the root is called quietness;
It is the fulfillment of one's destiny.

That each must fulfill destiny is the eternal pattern.
To know the eternal pattern is to be enlightened.

He who knows it not will be blasted and withered by
misfortune.

He who knows the eternal pattern is all-encompassing; is
completely impartial.

Being impartial, he is kingly;

Being kingly, he is like heaven;

Being like heaven, he is at one with Tao.

Being at one with Tao he is like it, imperishable.

Though his body may disappear into the ocean of existence,

He is beyond all harm.

On tiptoe your stance is unsteady.

Long strides make your progress unsure.

Show off and you get no attention;

Your boasting will mean you have failed.

Asserting yourself brings no credit;

Be proud and you never will lead.

To persons of the Tao, these traits can only bring distrust;

They seem like extra food for parasites.

So those who choose the Way,

Will never give them peace.

Sit and forget; and breathe softly like a little child.

Desire not to desire, and you will not value things difficult
to obtain.

Learning without thought brings ensnarement. Thought
without learning totters.

The heavy is the foundation for the light;

So quietness is master of the deed.

The wise man, though having traveled all the day,

Will not be separated from his goods.

So even if the scene is glorious to view,

He keeps his place, at peace, above it all.

For how can one who rules ten thousand chariots,

Give up to lighter moods, as all the world may do?

If he is trivial,
His ministers are lost;
If he is strenuous,
There is no master then.

Those who know do not talk.
Those who talk do not know.
Stop our senses, close the doors;
Let sharp things be blunted,
Tangles resolved, the light.
Tempered and turmoil subdued;
For this is mystic unity
In which the wise man is moved
Neither by affection nor yet by estrangement
Or profit or loss
Or honor or shame.
Accordingly, by all the world,
He is held highest.

