



Martial Esoterica

Chi Kung's
Mystical
Origins

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Treasures from the Sea of Chi Publishing

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Note to reader: This book is intended as an information guide. The remedies approaches, and techniques described herein are meant to supplement, and not to be a substitute or, professional medical care or treatment. They should not be used to treat a serious ailment without prior consultation with a qualified health care professional.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Joiner, Thomas Richard, 1943 - Martial Esoterica: Chi Kung's Mystical Origins / Thomas Richard Joiner. _1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes biographical references and index.

ISBN: 978-0-615-79484-6 (alk. Paper)

1. herbs-Therapeutic use. 2. Martial arts-Alternative treatment. 3. Medicine, Chinese. I. Title.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014930051

Printed and bound in USA.

Manufactured in the USA.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Editor: Naomi Long, ExpertSubject.com

Cover Designer: Peter Burkot

Interior Designer: Catherine Murray, ExpectSubject.com

Indexes: Judy Joiner

This book was typeset in Perpetua and Gill Sans

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Dedication

In all likelihood the reason that I consider martial arts training more of a spiritual practice than a sport is probably influenced by the fact that I consider myself more spiritually attuned, rather than a gifted athlete. Since my baptism at the tender age of eight, I have always had an interest in spiritual matters. It is in fact my interest in the journey of the soul and the spiritual benefits afforded those who practice martial arts more than the rewards of athleticism or the desire to become more combat proficient that has inspired my dedication to its practice for more than a quarter century. I'm convinced that when the martial arts are practiced correctly, not only do their guiding principles address profound human issues effecting the mind and body, they also raise consciousness and nurture the spirit.

Even though most would agree that having the ability to defend oneself against violence and personal injury is one of the greatest benefits afforded those who practice the martial arts, I believe that its underappreciated spirit-nurturing capability contributes more to enhancing the quality of one's life than acquiring the ability to kick someone's ass. It's my deep appreciation for the spiritual enrichment I have received as a result of martial practice that inspired me to write this book. I hope that in some small way, *Martial Esoterica* will inspire greater appreciation for this scarcely recognized divine element of traditional martial arts training.

This book is dedicated to the person who, above all others, is responsible for my baptism into "the religion of kung fu," Grandmaster Shidoshi Ron Van Clief.

*"Chinese Goju is my secret,
I bear no arms,
may God help me if
I ever have to use my art."*

Thomas Richard Joiner, Shihan 6th Dan
Chinese Goju Martial Arts
Oakland, California
Winter, 2013



Foreword

Mystical Revelations from the Mao Shan Mountains

By most estimates, a major turning point in the evolution of Chinese internal martial arts like *hsing yi*, *ba gua*, and *tai chi chuan* occurred more than 5,000 years ago as the sun slowly rose above the frigid Mao Shan Mountains in Northern China. According to historians, that was when secret Taoist esoteric practices were first recorded by the Shang Ching Sect in the text titled *Huang Ting Ching*. More commonly referred to by its English translation *Yellow Court Canon*, the centuries-old Taoist scriptures, primarily written by the ancient Chinese religion's founder, Lao Tzu, included the keys for unlocking the secrets to little-known practices such as *chi kung* (respiratory work), *nei kung* (internal work), and *shen kung* (spiritual work). The manuscript also contained treatises describing the use of Polestar magic (the use of astrological and astronomical techniques based on the North Star), heliotherapy (treatment of disease using sunlight), and sexual alchemy (the practice of sexual conservation and the transmutation of sexual energy). Along with these quasi-mystical practices, the ancient document contained detailed instructions for preparing herbal prescriptions associated with these occult procedures. Not only did *Huang Ting Ching* allow the uninitiated to gain access to information about therapeutic methods and internal practices that previously had been hidden, it was also instrumental in the growth of Taoism as a popular religion. Over the next five millennia, the religious practices that were first divulged in *Yellow Court Canon* would have a profound influence on every aspect of Asian culture. If I had to single out a particular segment of Eastern culture in which its influence is most heavily felt, I would say it is in the practices of traditional Chinese medicine and the martial arts.

In the aftermath of its publication, the principles theories and practices set forth in *Yellow Court Canon* inspired some of the most notable figures in Chinese martial arts. Among these legendary figures was the celebrated teacher Chang San Feng. After adopting an ascetic lifestyle, Master Feng was inspired to take up residence in the now famous Wu Tang Mountains, where he developed the

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art of tai chi based on trigrams and hexagrams from the Chinese classic *I-Ching* (more familiarly known as *The Book of Changes*). Although tai chi's popularity is greatly over-shadowed by Japanese arts like karate, ju jitsu, and some of the external kung fu styles, whose primary goal is developing combat proficiency, the influence of Chinese internal martial arts can be seen in all of the Asian combat systems.

The fundamental concepts of these soft/internal styles are exemplified by arts such as the Grand Ultimate Fist, aka tai chi chuan, and the mother of all of the internal arts, chi kung. It is no mere coincidence that these two illustrious arts are both outgrowths of the practices and governing principles that were first disclosed in *Huang Ting Ching* on that bitter cold morning high in the mountains of Northern China nearly fifty centuries ago.

Foreword



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Preface

Over the course of our lives, most of us will have at least one experience unlike any other, an epiphany that is etched in our memory, where it remains for the rest of our lives. I experienced such an event in 1978 as the sun rose on what from all appearances was an ordinary day that suddenly and inexplicably changed, as I began examining the results of an experiment that was required to advance into the “temple degrees” of the Rosicrucian Order.

The details of the experiment (which I am not at liberty to discuss because of an oath of secrecy that was part of my initiation) made me redefine my reality. Following that life altering experience, my life would be forever changed after I was presented with irrefutable evidence of the existence of nonphysical things. What I observed during my research put an end to my unwillingness to accept the fact that although there are many things that can't be seen, it does not mean that they do not exist.

After studying the results of the experiment many times over, I was convinced that it is possible, through dedication, study, and perseverance, for anyone who engages in mystical practices and conforms to their rigorous disciplines, to develop his or her sensory faculties and perceive things that would otherwise be invisible.

Needless to say, developing the psychic abilities that make us capable of experiencing these refined elements is not a simple matter. Students of mysticism and the occult must adhere to strict guidelines and principles that have been followed throughout history by those who sought to gain types of knowledge for which there are no short-cuts, excuses, or exceptions.

Throughout history, mystics and practitioners of the occult have adhered to a rigid set of disciplines in their search for answers to the mysteries of life and fulfillment of their highest potential during their physical incarnation.

A familiar form of martial arts, irrevocably tied to these occult practices, happens to be the subject of this book. Not only has this ancient art been practiced by aspirants in search of spiritual enlightenment, it has also been undertaken by seekers of radiant health as well as by martial artists whose ultimate goal is to perfect their art. The ancient divine art, to which I refer, is none other than chi kung.

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In addition to its well-known benefits to overall health, on a deeper level, this supreme internal art is also about ancestral worship, ancient history, life and death, and the journey of the soul that is every person's spiritual quest for answers and understanding about mortal existence. Like its predecessor mysticism, the ultimate goal of chi kung is to harmonize the physical and spiritual vehicles, elevate consciousness, and promote physical, spiritual, and psychic development.

One of the most notable characteristics of this divine art is its ability to expand the mind of the practitioner and increase awareness. Those committed to its practice soon discover that unlike most forms of martial arts whose focus is on developing combat capability, the ancient internal art is more about teaching us the art of living. An important feature of the art which is also a familiar part of mystical practices is the practice of meditating while circulating the vital energy, a practice commonly referred to as circulating the chi.

This occult practice—which contrary to popular belief is not a Chinese invention—has been performed by Chinese adepts for thousands of years. Variations of the ancient practice have been performed by Tibetan lamas, Sufis, Jesuits, Buddhist priests and monks, yogis, shamans, and medicine men. Although some informed martial artists are well aware of this, far too many are unaware that the ancient practice of circulating the vital energy (chi) within the body existed long before China's imperial dynasties and the creation of organized martial arts systems. Interestingly, despite exhaustive research by some of the world's most respected historians, archeologists, and anthropologists, the exact origin of the practice that is known in Chinese culture as dao yin meditation (internal methods used to cultivate and guide the chi) remains unknown.

After an extensive study of hieroglyphics, cave drawings, and ancient texts, historians tell us that credible archeological evidence that can be traced all the way back to the earliest stages of recorded history suggests that the mystical practices performed by modern-day mystics and students of the occult have been performed by shamans and spiritual adepts for thousands of years. The practices are carried out for the purpose of influencing "invisible entities" that can provide the practitioner with insight into acquiring extraordinary psychic and physical powers.

Preface

Esoteric teaching maintains that through the performance of sacred practices like circulating the vital energy (chi), reciting incantations, invoking spiritual deities, and the use of certain elixirs or potions, we are able to connect with omnipotence on a deeper level and gain insights into secrets that would otherwise be beyond human experience. According to ancient documents, throughout history, ascetics have sought to access sacred universal knowledge by summoning ghosts, divination, and petitioning spiritual deities through meditation, ritual, and sacred ceremonies.

Developing the ability to circulate the vital energy during meditation has been the focus of serious chi kung devotees as well as students of mysticism, for two important reasons. Not only does it enhance meditation, it also allows them to reach the introspective practice's deepest, most transcendent levels. Mastering this entry-level skill, we are told, is essential to performing many higher-level chi kung methods.



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