





Michel Chiambretto

### **Discovery** Publisher

©2020, Discovery Publisher All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Author: Michel Chiambretto
Translator (French to English): Vladimir Markov



616 Corporate Way
Valley Cottage, New York
www.discoverypublisher.com
editors@discoverypublisher.com
Proudly not on Facebook or Twitter

New York • Paris • Dublin • Tokyo • Hong Kong

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Internal Martial Arts	7
Introduction	9
The martial dimension	15
The "proper" approach to the internal arts	25
The stages of learning	35
1. The learning progression in martial arts	36
A. Unconscious incompetence	36
B. Conscious incompetence	36
C. Conscious competence	37
D. Lastly: unconscious competence	38
2. The progression in the internal martial arts	40
A. Unconscious incompetence	41
B. Conscious incompetence	41
C. Conscious competence	43
D. The last stage: unconscious competence	43
Our mental functioning	45
1. Synthesis of the theory of the triune brain	45
2. Applying the theory to the martial arts	47
3. The different types of rituals according to	_
Konrad Lorenz	50
4. One possible approach to the "spiritual"	51

IV • Internal Martial Art Michel Chiambretto

The breath: <i>Qi</i> , <i>Ki</i>	53
Complementary notions	61
1. The <i>Yi</i>	61
2. The Jingshen	63
3. Receptors and emitters of $Qi$	66
4. The transmission of knowledge	69
Standing meditation	71
1 <sup>st</sup> step	74
2nd step	78
3rd step	80
4th step	83
5th step	85
6th step	87
Notes	87
Guiding the breath in the movement	89
Pushing hands	105
Epilogue	115
In conclusion	121
Bibliography	123

# INTERNAL MARTIAL ARTS

Michel Chiambretto

#### Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help those who, having explored *the world of martial arts* for many years, are now searching for the so-called "internal" dimension of their practice. Indeed, every martial arts practitioner who has not become a professional in his chosen art, or has not taken a role in its administration, mulls over the objective pursued. With the apprentice's euphoria slowly declining and the desire to become invulnerable vanishing, the aspiration to discover *the hidden dimension* of the practice appears.

It should be made clear from the outset that what will be shown in this book is neither a theory, constructed by synthesizing esoteric texts from Buddhism or Taoism, nor a method, made of random pieces and according to subjective feelings. There are no miracles, nor magic, only a concrete and verifiable approach, as any martial art worthy of its name must deliver.

And here is the rub: nowadays, the so-called "internal" martial arts have become "products" intended for the largest number of people and must, accordingly, be easy to access, promising at the same time health, force, power and sometimes a spiritual dimension available to everyone. Promises also shared by all existing theories resulting from the New Age by the way. So, it is not surprising to see that many *experienced people* in the martial arts smile at such suggestions.

However, even though ease of access does not really exist in the traditional approach, it is true that the proposed internal work allows the discovery of an unexpected dimension inside oneself, or even the expansion of one's own field of consciousness. But to anticipate a future on this kind of path is not really advisable, something that is confirmed by any authentic transmission. How can we conceive something that we have never perceived, other than by relying on overdone images, as mentioned above?

In that case, what can this guide bring to the practitioner? The answer is to indicate a direction to follow, comprised of concrete

reference points spread along the path of an ancestral tradition, whose heritage has been transmitted to the present day. Its origin is Far Eastern, but it does not differ in any way, above a certain level of accomplishment, from either Eastern or Western traditions, as I have explained in my previous books. Everything that will be described in the following pages is the result of an experience, which is not only personal, but also that of people who have committed themselves to the Way. A personal experience<sup>1</sup> of half a century of practice with the guidance of knowledgeable Masters who, as the Tradition requires, have managed to indicate a path to follow, as well as the use of tools essential to any progress. In this kind of work it is important, and I will try to emphasize this, to know how to take advice from other traditions of the same nature; the purpose is to avoid any notion of community, which can only lead to self-centeredness unsuitable to any evolution. And it is widely known that, in "the world of martial arts", the taste for the exotic is often the common denominator, characterized by a sought-after appearance or even cultural speculation. However, the internal dimension is of an esoteric nature, that is to say hidden, because it is inaccessible to pure reason and also opposed to any trickery. Approaching it can only be done by following a precise path, with traditional tools, and mainly by providing the appropriate instruction.

To that end, and to avoid any misunderstanding, it seems useful to define precisely the notion of "internal".

The confusion between the internal dimension—Neijia—and the external one—Weijia—is frequent. In China, the origin of this differentiation dates back to either the  $16^{th}$  or  $19^{th}$  century, but it is only an illusion for those unwilling to accept this type of account.

As is often the case, oppositions stem from different interpretations of the same term. According to some, the *internal dimension* 

<sup>1.</sup> As a child, school of Judo Kawaishi, fencing, then twenty-five years of intensive practice of Karate, 1st to 4th dan, in Sankukai, Wadoryu, Shotokan, Shitoryu, contact Karate, with knowledgable Masters, such as Y. Nanbu, T. Weber, G. Gruss; 3rd dan in military empty hand combat; in parallel, assistant of many years to Rung, ex-champion of Thai boxing of Lumpinee. After that, twenty-five years of daily practice of an internal martial art, of which ten years of heart-to-heart training — Laoshi Wang XJ, Laoshi Wang SW; without forgetting the seminars of Master H. Plée; the buddhist monk H. M.; the illuminated advice of Wang YS; of L. B-M Yoga Master; Master A. Franceschini; Séverin Batfroi; as well as the Western initiatory tradition.

Introduction 1

pertains to all work done with attention on the neuromuscular and the tendinous, that is to say, the "mental gaze" of the practitioner is focused on his physical activity. For others, the association of some more or less sophisticated motor coordination, together with a virtual opposition allowing an isometric muscle action, also relates to this dimension, because it offers the desired external appearance. Finally, for most, the visualization by the practitioner of extreme confrontational situations, but also, antithetically, of states of "wellbeing", can also correspond to the desired convincing aspect.

It is true that the previously mentioned exercises can be useful in terms of combat preparedness, as well as for health or "well-being" improvement. Besides, some modern sports use them successfully in this way. However, the internal dimension that we are going to address here is of a different type and requires a different approach pertaining to both body and mind.

It is a path that allows to find one's *essential nature*. Which, shrouded by a set of conditionings, allows us to be in touch with what all traditions recognize as the shared "substance", or "breath" if you will—*Qi, Ki, Prana, Pneuma, Ruah, Ruh, Spiritus*—*a* "substance" that, in the martial arts, allows the practitioner to transcend himself and exceed his limits, not only physically, but also on the level of his consciousness.

Of course, this assertion may vex the reader, same as most practitioners of the internal arts have been in the beginning of a singular practice.

Nevertheless, there is no miracle, nor myth, only an authentic tradition, the likes of which can be found anywhere around the world. This one has had a martial usage for survival. But others, like Yoga in India, Taoism in China, Sufism in the East, Gnosis in the West, have had purely initiatory functions while using similar tools. Yet, as proven by numerous examples, the line between the two aspects becomes blurred, to say the least, as time goes on.

Also, this kind of practice will have at its base work in awareness of a so-called "profound" dimension, which escapes by its nature usual understanding. "Vanity!", one may think, but in fact the fruit of a tradition where each heir is but a link. Furthermore, contrary to any creation or compilation, it could be said, same as stated by

Confucius, "I am only transmitting without creating anything of my own", all credit going to the ancient Masters.

In addition, it is worth indicating the most important point, something I will not fail to repeat, because it is fundamental.

To be able to access this "profound nature", it is necessary to resort to a true "reeducation" of the motor function and, to do that, of the sensory perception. To address this issue I will not use a theoretical approach but rather, as the tradition wants it, an empirical one. The objective is to penetrate the principles to apply, the ones that have been bequeathed to us to activate a dimension of awareness that is today asleep. The mistake, as already mentioned, would be to develop a sophisticated theory, which only specializing scientists will be able to eventually acknowledge, or to make a synthesis of Buddhist and Taoist texts available to everyone. Which is nevertheless quite common.

And it is often here, as we will see, where the pitfall lies. To be comfortable in its choices and actions our rational mind needs to intellectualize the logic of the method used. Which is true in the sports today, where the scientific analysis has become an essential support to every federation, but is also becoming true for the field of martial arts. Arts like aikido are rationalized with catalogued techniques, precise, defined by diagrams, while the internal work of visualization, of intention, has disappeared, except in rare cases. Other arts approach the notions of Qi with anatomical atlases, explanations from Chinese medicine, "energy" centers, a thousand times cited and taken up in theoretical compilation works. Hence, it is easy to understand the rejection of such speculative explanations by experimented practitioners.

Another pitfall is just as common: the interpretation of the tools being shared. It is indeed surprising to see that followers of authentic Masters express the teaching received in contradictory ways. Some develop the heritage completely rationally, while others, coming from the same source, venture into abstractions that are difficult to comprehend. In the same way, in practice it is possible to see sports intended for the largest number of people and, in parallel, very discreet, to say the least, expressions of supra-sensory dimensions. Of course, as always, each side claims to be the only heir to the tradi-

Introduction 13

tion in question.

The conclusion, which seems obvious, is that the recipient will only develop what his profound nature allows him to, something we will address together.

For those who feel the need for it, my intention in this book will be to bring clarity on the essence itself of the internal arts, with the caveat that anything written can never replace a heart-to-heart exchange with a teacher of the Tradition.

Nevertheless, this guide can indicate a direction to follow at a given time.

#### My Thanks

Claudine, Marie, Paul, Thomas; Séverin Batfroi for his precious help, Éric Maton for the Aikido; Henri, Dinh, Yoshinao, Gilbert, Rung, Heinrich, Tamas, Ming, Xuan Jie, Shang Wen, Howe Man, Yi Shen, Henry, Antoine, Lucien, Jean-Paul, Didier, Claude, Gérard; without forgetting all the members of the Kong jin association.

#### DISCLAIMER

The author and the publisher are not responsible for any injury resulting from the practice of instructions included in this book. The described activities, physical or other, could be tiresome or dangerous for certain individuals and so the reader should consult a medical professional beforehand.

The author and the publisher do not recommend nor approve self-treatment by laymen in this matter, and cannot be held responsible for treatments done on the basis of information contained in this book.



The martial arts have as their objective, theoretically, to prepare the practitioner for a future confrontation. To prepare him not only physically but also and more importantly, mentally.

At the origins of most martial arts schools, Chinese or Japanese, we find military men such as the mythical general Yue Fei, warriors like Miyamoto Musashi orTakeda Sokaku, caravan guards like Ji Jike or Guo Yunshen, as well as civilians forced to defend themselves in a world where death was never far away.

It is not surprising then that the search for effectiveness was the main goal of practitioners in ancient times. The shadow of death was following them at every step.

Keeping that in mind, it can be said that today's martial arts practitioners, from the beginner to the expert, are, at the least, far removed from this type of reality. Knowing that tomorrow will be your last day gives an awareness of the practice that no visualization or codified combat can replace. Its daily repetition, year after year, leaves an indelible mark upon people's mind.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1.</sup> The fact that I have spent time with a grand-father who participated in the Great War, and more particularly the Chemin des Dames, and a father combatant in the Vercors and then in the Tabors, during the German campaign, allows me to make this affirmation.

Then, is it surprising that these "ancients", to bear the unbearable, have gone on to search in the midst of spiritual practices the acceptance of the notion of imminent death? Perhaps, it was during their meetings and work with Taoism, Buddhism and Shamanism, that they have discovered not only the awareness, which would have allowed them to accept dying at any moment, but also an increased martial ability?

The tool of spiritual awakening thus becoming a martial tool, an evidence-based paradox.

Are these tools the fruit of the primordial Tradition, coming from the origin of man, when his perception and his consciousness were still awake, a tradition that existed from East to West? It is possible to believe that, as I will elaborate on these pages, and as I have explained in my previous books.

However, every theoretical development requires a more concrete support, and particularly so when talking about the martial aspect.

The support I have chosen is an allegory. It will allow the reader to avoid any particular susceptibility to the subject matter.

Imagine men from some primitive tribe. To fetch their food, they have to regularly cross a precipice. To do that, they have to walk on a very narrow wooden beam and risk their lives at every step. The accidents abound and in turn volunteers are becoming rare, a critical issue.

So, in order to create vocations, the old sages of this tribe decide to prepare novices for the trial, in a way that exalts their solidarity.

With this goal in mind, they plan a training in several stages.

The first one is to make the apprentices walk on flat ground, while following a drawn rectangle symbolizing the beam. They are taught to make one step after another, without hurry, arms outstretched to maintain their balance, eyes on the objective.

They will be made to repeat the exercise day after day with the most restraint possible.

Over time, however, an entire group of people formalizes this practice, declaring that in its teaching lies the truth of the ultimate stage. Which is not wrong, it must be said. They then decide to create a school based uniquely on the precepts of this

stage. Pleasant and allowing them to have a friendly activity. Others, part of the same group and desiring to evolve their practice, develop acrobatics from the same bases, which, even

though useless, allow them to compare themselves to each other without any risk. The spectacular aspect is very attractive.

Finally, a third part of the group, sensing that the final trial is what calls into question the actual essence of Man, bonds with the shaman of the tribe. Together with him, they learn the tools to free themselves from the "bubble of individual consciousness" and to reunite with the undivided consciousness. They keep the core work but also add to it the teachings of the shaman. Over time, they end up forgetting the final trial, the objective becoming spiritual.

The second stage is more concrete and the future equilibrists are made to walk on a beam 30 centimeters above the ground. There is a risk, but only minimal. At worst, they would sprain an ankle. Which could scare a few. Same techniques, same principles.

In the same way as previously described another group decides to stop at this stage and formalize it. They know how to stay sober-minded and also search for the essence of the ultimate trial.

With the same desire to evolve, others develop acrobatics that are useless, but fun and demonstrative.

The only comment to be made here is that, in both cases, the adherents give themselves the appearance of being used to the precipice. A very human egotistic attitude.

Following the progression, the third stage puts the beam at one meter above the ground. The risk is bigger. If they fall, they could break an arm, a leg, maybe get knocked out; and this, even though there is a foam mat on the ground.

Some, arriving at this stage, think that it must be generalized as it allows, without a huge risk, to get closer to the ultimate trial. The bravest, without being reckless, follow this tendency but, same as the ones before, refuse to proceed onto the next stage.

Following the logic, those who want stronger sensations or to show off add impressive acrobatics. It is all very appealing.

The followers of these two trends, same as the ones before, give themselves the appearance of being used to the precipice.

The fourth stage is reserved for those who, having went through the previous ones, want to anticipate the feel of the final trial. It is

true that the "dominant male" or "alpha male" side compels them to make this choice.

The beam is placed three meters above the ground. Every fall will lead to either an injury or a knock out and, in a few cases, to serious short and mid-term consequences. The trial is psychologically difficult.

Seeing an opportunity to profit financially, a few shameless elders decide to exploit human nature. The part of this nature that enjoys the risk taken by others without exposing oneself to it, i.e., being a spectator to the risk taken by others.

Thus, the elders recruit and manage to convince some to place themselves in danger for the pleasure of others. This way they create shows based on the principles of this stage in the neighboring tribes. The more there are falls and injuries, the more there are spectators and profits. For the protagonists taking risks for the pleasure of others is not easy. So, to gain some courage, a few use the benefits of certain plants. An understandable attitude.

Finally, there is the end of the preparation, the objective, which is to walk day after day across the beam above the bottomless abyss, this giving the impression of it sucking in every tiny person who is passing.

Those who have managed to make their balance natural, who can advance without hesitation, without thinking, with restraint in their movements, who can ignore the bottomless abyss that can swallow them in a terrifying absolute, who can forget themselves day after day, complete the trial. Of course, the wind, the rain, a passing weakness, can all provoke a fatal error, but they know this and accept it.

Note that, as mentioned above, some have stopped at the previous stages and are not part of this final group.

Others, however, react differently when facing the trial, even though they have overcome the previous stages without issues.

The following behaviors can be observed:

- Those who, refusing to cross, run in the opposite direction. An instinctive form of wisdom?
- Those who stall, frozen by fear, unable to take a single step, but also incapable of fleeing.

This last case obviously corresponds to the inhibition that can strike any individual. Something also true for those passing the trial every day, as they can become victims of such mental blocks at any time.

It should be noted that, for the individuals who have completed the trial in extreme conditions, a storm of wind and rain, where everything becomes uncertain, where at every moment a gust can blow them away, this crossing is like a "black hole". The "lizard brain" takes over, no thinking, a spontaneous instinctive action to survive, which will not leave any memory other than a few elusive images.

What can be seen in those people who cross the precipice by necessity, is that they do not take pride in it, nor do they have any pretense—though there are exceptions, as always.

What do they want? Well, for a footbridge to be made so they would not need to risk their lives anymore and, above all, subsequently, the lives of their children. It can be observed that they have lost any desire to brag about the subject, contrary to what they have been doing in the previous stages, with friends and close ones having often perished at their side.

Let us end here this allegory.



The readers would have without doubt made the connection with their own practice and placed themselves on the progression ladder described. To facilitate reading, I have allowed myself, as you have noticed, to develop the stages in the martial arts in a colorful diatribe.

However, it is not my intention to criticize the scale of values of this or that practice.

At ground level, the artistic expression can exist. So can a choice

involving work on concentration and motor control, or else leisure, mental relaxation and a place to meet friends, passionate about the same activity. Nothing to blame, on the contrary. These can also be a Path to spiritual realization.

At one to three meters above the ground courage is needed to measure oneself against the risk or the other person. But these experiences cannot be compared to that of the ultimate decision.

Indeed, does anyone believe that "someone who wins a championship with his bamboo sword" will succeed in defeating the same adversaries in a real situation where any mistake is to be paid with one's life?

Nothing is less certain, as the situation does not require the same fundamental resources of the human being, nor the same martial arts techniques—any fantasy, any aesthetic or theoretical aspect is out of place.

Nevertheless, a characteristic of the martial art is, and must be, to surpass oneself at a given moment. The tools used in these arts have as their objective the improvement of both mind and body. Just like the sculptor working the stone to extract his artwork, the martial artist must work on himself. And if, in a similar way, he can and must sublimate his at a given moment, it is essential for him to go through concrete steps. Steps that will help to avoid any illusory pretense.

Therefore, the practitioner can be advised to carry out a friendly encounter at "30 centimeters" or "one meter" above the ground, but especially by coming out of his *microcosm*. Of course, it is necessary to have some experience in the art beforehand.

To do that, my advice is:

- Choose an opponent who is "rustic", doing manual labor—therefore acting naturally and spontaneously;
- Afterwards, to test the kung fu, the level of accomplishment, without brutality but "vigorously".

This type of opponent will allow you to avoid the predictable reactions of the practitioners of your own art and, above all, the "synchronicity"—and will, perhaps, allow you to question your own conditioning.

By synchronicity, I mean the programmed, achieved by repetition, reaction to a stimuli. The stimuli being the execution by one of the practitioners of a "given set of techniques", which instantly brings about in the other a "conditioned reaction". Irrelevant of whether this set of techniques is "effective" or not.

#### The most obvious examples:

- In modern aikido, one learns to fall at the slightest touch. In fact, reproducing the same "scenario" is enough to provoke the fall. It can sometimes even be seen that the fall precedes any action;
- In karate, bunkai of kata—the implementation of techniques corresponding to some of its phases—are often unrealistic;
- There is also the formal tuishou<sup>1</sup>, which can equally lead to the same phenomenon of "synchronicity" not to be confused with voluntary work in "harmony".

Tuishous based solely on pushing and thrusting, while the practitioners remain vulnerable to a blow, are a pure martial heresy. Not to mention the "fixed step" where the practitioners are not supposed to move around at all.

But the aberrations are numerous, including in the so-called combat sports. Doing ground work while talking about an "ultimate fight", where twisting, biting and tearing are forbidden, as well as any attack against the eyes or the genitals, probably is not really accurate. The same when standing. But we are drifting away from the perspective of working on oneself and the notion of art.

Remaining in the "patterns of physical activity" where each and everyone is conditioned the same way can only lead to many martial disillusions.

Also, in the internal arts, this type of friendly encounter might avoid you to be in the same company as those who feel the "energy" inside themselves, or sense the "fields of energy", or some other subjective phenomenon. Mainly, it allows to consciously "substantiate" the "substance" inside you and its use—something I will develop subsequently—that is to say, the pragmatic aspect of your practice.

Even if it means, depending on your wishes, taking a path out-

<sup>1.</sup> See chapter "Pushing hands".

side of the martial arts. But this phase is necessary, so as to be under no "illusion".

Let us get back to our allegory.

Why did I develop it in the form of a diatribe?

Simply because we must be honest with ourselves and, possibly, with the others. I admit, as without doubt you do, smiling at the fierce warrior contrivance of some martial arts experts who have never known a real confrontation.

Additionally, the allegory allows to readjust one's practice. Talking about combat, have we tried it on the ground, at 30 centimeters above the ground, at one meter, at three, above the abyss? And, consequently, what is the conclusion that can be made?

Conversely, we can, with time passing and thanks to an authentic practice, realize that the notion of "art" in martial arts has not been misused. On the condition, of course, that we have found the tools that allow the individual to accomplish himself after working with them for years.

On this, we should also be sincere and precise. What is meant by "accomplishment" or, if you prefer, the "Way"—*Dao or Do?* 

Firstly, we should put aside everything that is common to many fields. This is to say: what are we searching for precisely?

• To become stronger and more powerful?

But, as one Japanese Master was saying: "A gorilla is stronger than a man, but who wants to be a gorilla?"—Although some might answer: "Me!"...

• To become the dominant male, to seduce the female?

Why not, but this desire diminishes with age.

• Exercise power over a microcosm?

This is natural for our mammalian brain.

• To be loved or even worshipped?

An obvious need of the heart.

Make money?

Essential in our society. Also, everything that is free loses its value in the eyes of our contemporaries.

• To play the wise man from fairy tales and legends, to adorn oneself with mysterious powers?

A comfortable situation, because it allows to remain in the dreams of childhood.

• To forget one's own fear of nothingness, synonymous with the deadly disease that is life?

So common!

• A bit of everything?

But we should focus on the more essential:

• To be able to defend oneself from a potential aggression?

This is the vocation of the martial arts and the development of your inner force will allow you to go beyond your physical ability. Unfortunately—or fortunately—same as you will always find someone weaker, you will always find someone stronger.

However, surpassing oneself is already an achievement.

• To live a passion and use the tools offered by the practice to calm down the inner fire that consumes one's being?

This can be found in some internal martial arts. Yet, it is necessary to feel the need for it. This need, or lack of it, explains without doubt the different paths extant in every style of the internal martial arts.

You are the sculptor but also the artwork.

In the end, it must be emphasized that this internal work allows some practitioners to broaden their field of consciousness. We will see how.





**Discovery** Publisher is a multimedia publisher whose mission is to inspire and support personal transformation, spiritual growth and awakening. We strive with every title to preserve the essential wisdom of the author, spiritual teacher, thinker, healer, and visionary artist.

# MARTIAL ARTS

owadays, internal martial arts have often become "products" intended for the largest number of people and "must," accordingly, be easy to access, promising at the same time health, force, power and sometimes a spiritual dimension within everyone's reach. However, it is a mistake to believe that spiritual dimensions can immediately be offered. Rather, it is to be found inside ourselves.

Through *Internal Martial Arts*, Michel Chiambretto offers us a precious guide, which will give practitioners a proven path to follow. The first part of this guide concerns the martial dimension, providing reference points which, once understood, allow to adjust one's bearings in the quest for a proper approach to the internal arts. Next, the author introduces essential notions, such as the *Qi*, to serve as tools in the quest. Lastly, the author proposes a set of exercises (standing meditation, guiding the breath in the movement, sticky hands principle) to naturally guide practitioners on the spiritual path.

Showing the mistakes to avoid and the important points to remember, *Internal Martial Arts* will be a real guide, both for martial arts practitioners wishing to discover or deepen the internal side of their practice, and for those interested in the question of energy.



never been before · never seen before



New York • Paris • Dublin • Tokyo • Hong Kong discoverypublisher com

nting: 四王天政孝-Kuniyoshi