



Vol. IV, No. III

May 1989

P.O. Box 630, New Millford, N.Y. 10959

Acting and Taijiquan

by John Raymond Baker, B.S.

Not long ago, in one of my quieter moments watching television, I was watching a rerun of the program *MAGNUM P.I.* and, as usual, they showed in the opening shots, film of actor John Hillerman (who plays a character in the program) doing part of the Yang Taijiquan form. I was struck in that, here you had a player playing that he was playing Taijiquan and the convolution of this at first struck me and then, I thought, how natural that one should think of acting and the art of Taijiquan as complementary. Now this needs a bit of explaining.

Many people who practice the art do not really realize the "playing of the form" and instead, they move through the form rather mechanically by rote as it were. The art is meant to be played and this means more than just having fun. For example, the movements of the art are very picturesquely named. You have "snake creeping down", "white crane spreads its wings", "playing the pipa", "wave hands in clouds", "Golden cock stands on one leg", "Fair lady works the shuttles", "Bend bow and shoot tiger" and these names not only give a sense of elegance to the art, but if the player of Taijiquan really attempts to capture the spirit encapsulated in the name, he or she can really add a whole new and exciting dimension to Taijiquan practice.

The actor and the Taijiquan player have many things in common. They in essence enter different states of reality, altered states of perception during their respective activities and excellence in their fields depends to a large extent on how completely and graceful they execute actions in that state. The best actors, like the better Taijiquan players, learn how important movement and breath control is and how important correct breathing is to increasing their ability to perform with stamina and endurance. They learn how important correct alignment of the spine and body parts are to presenting the character of the art they are presenting. Body language is therefore very important to Taijiquan as well as to the theatrical artist. Through body language, you have a most powerful and subliminal way of expressing the feeling you are trying to get across. In this context, we must realize that Taijiquan is not just a pugilistic art and a method of exercise, but it is also a performance art par excellence. Taijiquan, when performed expertly, can, like the

theatrical presentation, evoke powerful emotions in the viewer. Like mime, without words, Taijiquan somehow speaks to us on a very primal level. The focus, the calm demeanor, the fierce scowl, all speak volumes more eloquently than the best written dialogue.

I dare say that anyone who has watched someone playing the form on a beautiful beach under the red glow of sunset would be willing to put this up against the most skillfully produced Broadway play with the best lighting director, as being a thing of meaning and pathos and wonder which really and truly makes a powerful statement about the uniqueness of humanity and the eloquence of physical movements in expressing that grace and wonder.

I think that actors can derive immense benefits from studying Taijiquan. We have spoken about the benefits of learning correct breathing and movement techniques, but another aspect is that Taijiquan can be a very excellent way of both increasing your energy level and yet calming you. This seems somewhat paradoxical to some. Most things which stimulate you and increase your energy, also seem to make you a bit nervous and "hyper" (caffeine for example). Taijiquan really does both without making you anxious or uncomfortable.

Another plus for actors is that Taijiquan is an excellent stress reduction technique. Anyone who has ever tried to "make it" as an actor knows that it is a very stressful life, especially in those years while you are trying to become known. When you go into an audition for a part, the calmness and confidence which one derives from Taiji can make the difference between getting and not getting the part. An analogy is the one where you go to the bank. If you look and sound as if you need a loan, you may not get it, but if you walk in as if you really aren't that needy or worried, then is when you get it.

But, are we just talking about professional actors in this piece? Far from it. As Shakespeare observed "All the world's a stage" and all the men and women merely players. In our daily lives, consciously or subconsciously, we all play many parts. We are one person at our professional office, another at home, and yet another in the parking lot when someone takes our space! As we really all are actors in like, presenting different faces in different situations, we all can benefit from mixing acting and Taijiquan.

If you want to avoid just having an "hour" to "strut and fret" on stage, try mixing in some Taijiquan. You might find that you will be held over with standing ovations!

Chang Sang Feng Festival

The 17th annual Chang San Feng Festival will be held at the Tai Chi Farm on June 2, 3, and 4, 1989.

This year we have planned something educational and lots of fun. One Saturday morning session will include tournament guidelines for competing and judging. Competition rules will also be demonstrated by workshop leaders. The afternoon session will be the mock tournament. Everyone will have an opportunity to be a competitor and a judge. All are encouraged to participate in this event and share Tai Chi with others.

The tournament is only one event of the weekend. In addition, there will be workshop on Friday and Saturday morning, and sessions on Friday and Saturday evenings as well. (See the schedule.)

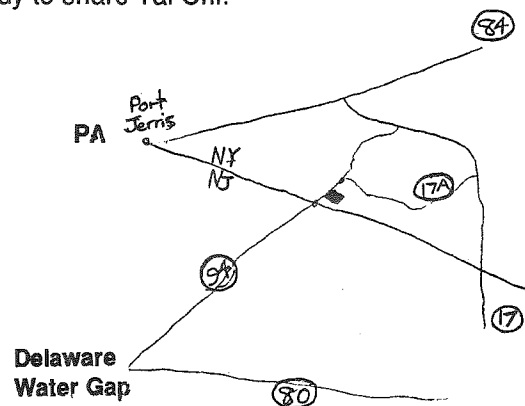
We have already received confirmations from some of the most respected Masters and famous names in Tai Chi:

Bob Klein
Sam Masich
MacKenzie Stewart
Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming
Nick Gracenin
William C. Phillips
Zheng Lu Ping

The festival is an excellent opportunity to meet and study with the best!

If you plan to stay overnight at the farm, please note the camping and cabin fees. Also, prepare to bring your own supplies: a sleeping bag, food and utensils, and toiletries. (The cabins are very rustic, so prepare for "roughing it"!)

Most important of all, bring yourself and your friends, ready to share Tai Chi!



The Tai Chi Farm is on Rt. 94, 1 mile north of the NJ border. Look for the red barn with the sign!



Festival Program

June 2, 1989 - Friday

7:00 PM Welcome and registration
 8:00-9:00 PM Special Video Viewing
 1) Cheng Man Ching
 2) 1988 Tai Chi Tour of China

June 3, 1989 - Saturday

7:30 - 8:15 Breakfast
 8:30 - 9:30 Workshop
 9:45 - 10:45 Workshop
 11:00 - 12:00 Workshop on Tournament Guidelines for all Festival Participants
 12:00 - 1:00 Lunch
 1:00 - 4:00 Tournament
 4:00 - 4:30 Rap-Up Session
 5:30 - 7:00 Dinner
 6:00 - 7:00 Annual Teacher's Meeting (during dinner)
 7:30 - 8:30 Workshop

June 4, 1989 - Sunday

7:30 - 8:15 Breakfast
 8:30 - 9:30 Workshop
 9:45 - 10:45 Workshop
 11:00 - 12:00 Workshop
 12:00 - 1:00 Lunch
 1:00 - 4:00 Annual Demonstration honoring Chang San Feng

Festival Costs:

3 day package \$50.00 (lodging extra)
 Saturday \$30.00
 Sunday \$30.00
 Cabin \$10 - 1 Night; \$15 - 2 Nights
 Campsite \$ 5 - 1 Night; \$10 - 2 Nights

Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are needed at the Tai Chi Farm to help with preparations for the Festival and this year's summer workshops. Any local students and friends are asked to contribute whatever time you can spare to help with projects here. Most of the work to be done is cleanup and renovation (like cleaning the outdoor class space and the cabins, and painting, and repairing windows, etc.) Projects will be held on the weekends in May. Can you help? Volunteers are welcome to join classes 8 AM Saturday and Sunday and stay over in cabins, too!

1989 Summer Workshops at the Tai Chi Farm

Master Jou Tsung Hwa:

1. The Master Key to Tai Chi Chuan
June 16-18 and July 14-16
2. The First Chen Routine - June 19-23
3. The Second Chen Routine - July 17-21

Master T.T. Liang:

Push Hands, Yang Long Form, Weapons Forms, and Taoist Philosophy - Aug. 7-11

Master B.P. Chan:

Pakua, Hsing I, and Tai Chi Workshop in Tai Chi Farm's lovely Pakua Garden.
 August date to be announced

Course Fees - 1989

	Weekend	5-Days
Tuition:	\$85	\$170
Lodging: Cabin	\$20	\$ 40
Camping	\$10	\$ 20

WEEKEND WORKSHOPS - begin at 9:00 A.M. Saturday and end at 3:00 P.M. Sunday, with registration and informal gathering on Friday night.

FIVE-DAY - seminars begin at 9:00 A.M. Monday and end at 12:00 Noon on Friday, with registration and informal gathering Sunday night.

The Tao Series

by Jou, Tsung Hwa

1. The Tao of Tai Chi Chuan

Way to Rejuvenation

Third revised edition,
 hardcover, \$17.00



2. The Tao of Meditation

Way to Enlightenment

hardcover, \$15.00



3. The Tao of I Ching

Way to Divination

hardcover, \$20.00



To order the book, send check or money order to:

Tai Chi Foundation

POB 828

Warwick, NY 10990

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM — 1989 TAI CHI FARM PROGRAM

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE (_____) _____

SUMMER WORKSHOP

DATES OF COURSE _____

COURSE TITLE _____

CABIN/CAMPING _____

TOTAL AMOUNT _____

CHANG SAN FENG FESTIVAL

I WILL ATTEND: _____ Friday
_____ Saturday
_____ Sunday

CABIN/CAMPSITE _____

TOTAL AMOUNT _____

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

I am enclosing \$_____ for a subscription to Tai Chi Farm Newsletter. (\$10.00 U.S. / \$15.00 foreign).
(Please send a separate check for your newsletter subscription)

Send To: Tai Chi Farm, P.O. Box 630, New Milford, NY 10959
Please return this Form as Soon as Possible!



TAI CHI FARM
P.O. Box 630
New Milford, NY 10959

Postage Paid
Permit 124
Non-Profit Rate
Warwick, NY 10990

Jay Dunbar
P.O. Box 7
Carrboro, NC 27510

Please Notify Tai Chi Farm if Your Address Changes