



# The World Of A.S.P.

Spring 1997, Volume 22, Number 1. The American Self Protection Newsletter  
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## OF EYES AND JOINTS

by Evan S. Baltazzi

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The quality and length of our life depend on four factors that I have described and discussed in my books and articles, namely: our genes, strain management, nutrition, and how we use our bodies. We cannot stop the aging process, the wear and tear of our bodies, and the rate at which they deteriorate. At best, we can slow it down somewhat.

After our genes about which we cannot do anything at this time, the most important element is the way we manage strain. Mind-body coordination is essential in that respect. We cannot control the forces around us (stress), but we have a certain degree of control on their impact upon us (strain) and here mind-body coordination is essential. Directing the vital force at our disposal, the *prana* of the Hindus, the *chi* of the Chinese or the *ki* of the

Japanese, which in practice amounts to mind-body coordination, can be achieved in several ways some of which may be made simple or extremely complicated. T'AI-CHI, one of these methods, is now practiced in one of four different styles or *pai* (*Wu, Ho, Sun, Yang*). T'ai-chi is classified as a martial art, but its practical use for self-defense is accessible only to few after many years of training. Yet its other benefits on the mind and the body are undeniable.

While much very useful knowledge came from the Orient, this does not mean that it has to remain invariant, or that it cannot be improved upon. Knowledge is always built on previous knowledge and progress results from efforts to add and refine the legacy of existing knowledge. People take refuge in traditions when a given practice cannot be justified either by original teachings, facts, logic or

common sense. Almost always traditions have been adopted to serve those who initiated them.

A.S.P. is a novel general approach to developing motion skills, the validity of which is recognized by physical educators here and abroad. The A.S.P. method has been applied to T'ai-chi mainly, understood as mind-body coordination. T'ai-chi A.S.P. is thus quite different from the traditional styles.

Those who approach it with an open mind will soon realize that they can acquire much faster practically useful knowledge, not only in terms of relaxation and mind-body coordination, but also in practical means to avoid the brunt of an attack.

From the very first lesson students learn to use chi statically and in motion. They become aware of the use of breathing, balance, and relaxation as essential

mental and spiritual parameters needed to achieve mind-body coordination.

Every participant is encouraged to exercise at his/her own rhythm, with the understanding that this is not a ballet class. He/she limits repetitions to suit his/her ability.

T'ai-chi A.S.P. comprises breathing exercises, active and passive relaxation, directing the vital force of chi, static and dynamic stretching, exercises for strengthening major joints, exercises for balance, static and in motion, exercises for the eyes, and very short forms.

In T'ai-chi A.S.P. we do not have long and short forms, but only very short ones, all based on evasive A.S.P. techniques. Seniors find T'ai chi A.S.P. exercises very helpful and quite accessible, while young people benefit even more by getting accustomed to these exercises early in their lives.

If one had to describe very briefly the major benefit derived from T'ai chi A.S.P. it is the ability to handle strain, the major culprit for most illnesses. As I have pointed out in my books and lectures, the term "stress management" is an

oxymoron. Elementary physics defines stress as "a force or a system of forces which applied onto a body tends to deform it." The effect on that body is *strain*. We have no power to control the forces surrounding us, yet we can achieve a certain degree of control on their effect on us. We can manage *strain not stress*. It is interesting to see how the term "stress management" came into widespread use after a researcher who did not know physics used it to describe what happened to laboratory animals he subjected to stressful conditions,

The three elements governing physical coordination are **breathing, balance, and relaxation** and A.S.P. as such, as well as T'ai chi A.S.P., addresses them all. A typical session is conducted as follows:

We start with chi-kung breathing which is used along with the other exercises as needed by the individual to offset strain. Then follow exercises for relaxation in motion, then exercises for all major joints, then exercises for balance in place and in motion. It is at this point that the very short forms are practiced, followed by relaxation-concentration.

While one kind of technique is practiced by

all at any given time, each person is encouraged to practice at his/her own rhythm and to stop for chi-kung breathing when he feels mounting strain.

During the passive relaxation-concentration, participants are encouraged to use **auto suggestion** concerning items of personal interest or problems. The number of T'ai chi exercises is kept small and these are kept very simple, easily performed, and practical.

The participants experience beneficial effects from the first session. Some exercises are particularly good for the eyes, slowing down considerably such intractable conditions as macular degeneration.

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## MORE ON NUTRITION

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\*\*\*There appears to be more to coronary heart disease (CHD) than simply cutting out the fat and cholesterol in the diet

Clarke, R., Frost, C., Colins, R., et al., *BMJ*, 1997;314:112-117.

Editor's note: You bet!

\*\*\*In spite of a high cholesterol content, eggs and shrimps, both of which contain low amounts of saturated fats, can be incorporated into a heart healthy diet, since dietary cholesterol

has essentially less impact on blood cholesterol than saturated fat.

*De Oliveira e Silva, E. R., Seidman, C.E., Tian, J.J., et al. Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 1996; 64:712-717.*

Editor's note: Before WWII a Nobel Prize winner, the German chemist Heinrich Wieland, conclusively proved by using tagged carbon, that acetic acid, the main component of vinegar, is a precursor of cholesterol in the body. The medical profession did not take notice and no doctor I have heard of, advises his patients to cut down on the use of vinegar. Perhaps

because Wieland did not sport an M.D. after his name. Incidentally, the great Pasteur was also a chemist and not an M.D.

\*\*\*The two fatty acids, lauric and palmitic are more hypercholesteremic compared to oleic acid.

*Temme, E.H., et al. Am. J. Clin. Nutr., 1996;63:897-903.*

Editor's note: Use olive oil. However, olive oil is not recommended for frying, because it is less thermally stable than other oils. Of course, it is in general better to avoid fried foods.

It is not necessary to pay a premium to buy "virgin" or "extra virgin" oil. Avoid only the very cheapest brand because

organic solvents are used to extract the last amounts of olive oil. No need to refrigerate it, just keep it in a tightly closed bottle in the dark or in a brown bottle.

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**RECENT PROMOTIONS TO RED BELT III:** Caroline Morgan and Mark Torma.

**TO BROWN BELT III:** Stephanie Wright.

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### TECHNICAL CORNER

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**ON W-5.** A smaller person (D) will experience difficulty using this technique on a larger opponent (A) who has also stiff joints, if he does not apply a twisting motion on A's elbow while pulling on his wrist..

Let us assume that A attacks with his right hand trying to grasp D's lapel. D steps back with the left foot, grasps A's right wrist with his right hand from above and using A's reach pulls his arm up and away, while with his left hand he grasps A's elbow from below and twists it clockwise simultaneously with his pull. D pulls A toward his own right rear, as he slides his left foot and hip toward A's right armpit.

In the final position of a properly executed W-5, A's right shoulder should be lower than his right wrist. There are a

few variations of this basic technique, but for this one it is essential to twist the elbow as one pulls the arm, hips moving in the opposite direction of the arms.

**ON CHOKES.** D is astride A and chokes him with any of the basic A.S.P. chokes. A common mistake for A is to try to counter by attempting to choke D. In such case the latter isolates A's upper arm as follows. Assuming that A's right arm is on top of the right, D puts his right knee on the mat, presses with his left hand on A's right shoulder, grasps A's right wrist with his right hand, and leans toward his own right on his right knee, so as to stretch A's right arm. Falling on his back on the right side of A, D can then apply E-4 or any of its variations. Or pulling with both hands on A's right wrist, D may fall on his own right side and keeping A's arm fully stretched, D applies pressure with his bent left knee on A's right elbow. D can also insert his left instep under A's chin for the same purpose. D must keep close to A to make this technique effective.

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**NEXT ISSUE: ANNUAL A.S.P. SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT.**

April 11, 1997

Ms. Susan Perry, Editor  
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Dear Ms. Perry:

I read with interest the article on the "shihan" problem in the February/ March issue of your magazine, and I believe that certain facts should be brought to the attention of all Aikido practitioners. When only a handful of people had even heard the name "Aikido" in the U.S., I pioneered its introduction and was the highest ranking exponent of this art in the Midwest (see enclosure). During the Chicago Ginza festival of 1964, I was asked to demonstrate it because it was not well known even among the Japanese community. For a time I was the Yoseikan representative in the U.S. In the course of my many trips to Japan as an engineering consultant to the Toshiba Corporation for ten consecutive years, I visited the Hombu and, since I was a dan holder in both the Yoseikan and the Hombu styles, I was offered by Kisshomaru Ueshiba to represent the latter in Cleveland, offer which I declined.

The impression that Aikido split only after Ueshiba's death in 1969 is incorrect, the split occurred well before. Specifically, with strong backing by the military (Yoseikan under Minoru Mochizuki-- Admiral Takasta and General Takeda), financial groups (Yoshinkan under Gozo Shioda-- Shoshiro Kudo), or institutions of higher learning (Waseda University under Kenji Tomiki), some of Ueshiba's students were teaching their own brand of Aikido even in the late forties.

Tomiki's book was published in 1956. Mochizuki was awarding Aikido ranks in France and Switzerland (for which he was later reprimanded by the Hombu) and published in 1955 a book in French under the title "Ma Methode d'Aikido" (MY (sic.) Method of Aikido), with a preface by M. Kurihara, Judo 9th dan. Gozo Shioda inaugurated the Yoshinkan Aikido in 1954. His book "Dynamic Aikido" was published in English in 1968. All this happened well before Ueshiba's death.

The three major schools mentioned above present significant departures from the Hombu style. Not to mention Koichi Tohei's Kido. Tohei, Morihei Ueshiba's protégé, was "eased" out of the Hombu after the latter's death. Today there are a number of Aikido styles and the term has become almost as generic as Jujitsu, although in Japan it is offered special protection.

It is interesting to note a book by Saiko Fujita published by the Japanese Center for Research on Ancestral Martial Arts Techniques under the title "Secret Vital Points of the Human Body", which claims to be a complete study of the physical and physiological aspects of the many vital points used for atemi-waza. In it there is mention of no less than twenty-seven ryus (schools) under a variety of names, starting with the #1 Seishin (Pure Heart) school and ending with the #27 Shorinji (Temple of the Small Forest), the Kodokan being #17. Some of these schools favor hitting and kicking to such degree that one cannot tell them apart from karate (early Judo incorporated atemi te-waza and atemi ashi-waza). Blows are almost totally absent from the Hombu style, yet the Yoshinkan and particularly the Yoseikan styles make extensive use of them.

Having interacted with the Japanese for over fifty years, I respect their many qualities, but I came to the firm conviction that they, who have borrowed so much knowledge from others, will never treat "geijins" as their equals and that they only respect positions of power. Politics, discriminatory practices, hype, and poor didactic organization of the material taught (in spite claims of "research") are the problems plaguing Aikido, as well as other martial arts, in all their various "styles." None offers a truly unified approach to combative knowledge.

*In my opinion, there is one and only one solution to this situation, that is the formation of a completely independent U.S. Aikido Federation, awarding ranks in the U.S. for U.S. citizens.*

*A WWII veteran, so that there is no misunderstanding of my motives in writing this letter, I must say that I have no desire for rank, to be called sensei, shihan or by any other Japanese name.*

Yours truly,

*Evan S. Baltazzi*

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