

# THE SUPREME ULTIMATE?

An Article in 1657 words By Erle Montague

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Should any martial art be so bold as to call itself 'the supreme ultimate'? We all know that this phrase is the translation of the words 'T'ai chi ch'uan' but many martial artists, having studied T'ai chi as an adjunct to their own martial art question this name. Indeed many T'ai chi practitioners now also question this name preferring to say that the name was bestowed upon this martial art because of its great healing benefits etc, leaving aside its martial origins.

Many martial artists tend to respectfully deride T'ai chi because of its delicate nature in performance and slow movements etc. Many T'ai chi people tend to fall back on the classics and quote untranslatable Chinese sayings etc. as being indicative of what this 'supreme ultimate' martial art is all about. Many come well equipped with a bunch of old classical sayings that sound great when rolled off the tongue at parties etc. but when it comes to actual translation into 'use' then all of the classical sayings in the world won't help.

When I give workshops I usually begin with a couple of phrases which, to many of the harder style martial artists who attend, sound quite absurd. Until they see and hear what I have to say and why I have made these statements based around tai chi being the supreme ultimate.

One such statement is that 'T'ai Chi is the most deadly fighting art ever invented'! To this I always receive a few low chuckles and some nervous shuffling of feet etc. After about one hour of workshop, these people are usually converted to the internal and they too believe that T'ai chi is the supreme ultimate. Why? Let me tell you a story.

Once upon a time there was a man called Chang Sang-Feng. Chang was fascinated with the martial arts and was also good at acupuncture. In his quest to find the ultimate fighting art, one that could render a man immobile with only a medium to light strike to certain parts of the human body, Chang, we are told worked upon animals and some even believe that a few people were 'worked upon'.

Chang had a couple of buddies who were the top acupuncturists in China at that time and so the three of them set out to find out what points on the human body could cause the most damage when struck in certain ways. Chang and his buddies discovered that certain points would cause more damage if they were struck in a certain way and direction. They then discovered that energy flows throughout the human body could be either 'touched' in the direction of the Qi for healing or 'touched' in the adverse direction to cause damage. Certain points had to be struck with either a counter clockwise screwing motion or visa-versa to cause the most damage for the least possible usage of energy.

During his research, Chang sang-feng also discovered that different points could be struck so that other points/joints etc. would be made much more vulnerable to a lighter strike, while others could be struck directly and have a dire effect.

After he was finished and Chang and his buddies were certain that they had invented the most devastating fighting art ever, they then set about to invent a form or set of movements so that their kin or preferred students could learn these deadly techniques without having to actually kill people. Then they thought that others, more nefarious than themselves might get a hold of their art and use it for evil or against them! so they set about to invent a form which was only an abstract way of learning the real techniques. This form was of a martial nature, i.e.; block, punch, lock, kick etc. but it was nowhere near as deadly as what the actual internal hidden meanings meant.

Chang's original art of course was called 'Dim-Mak' or death touch and the art that he invented to cover up the hidden meanings was eventually to be called T'ai chi ch'uan.

Over the years however, most people have only ever been taught the physical or false meanings of the T'ai chi form. (T'ai Chi Ch'uan by the way is only a new name for the art which was originally known as 'Hao ch'uan' or loose boxing) so that now we only see quite an inadequate form of fighting art, in the eyes of other martial artists.

Another phrase that I use to cause some concern amongst T'ai chi practitioners who attend my workshops is 'there are no pushes in T'ai chi'. How can this be they ask in horror when the whole of the T'ai chi repertoire is based upon pushing! I ask, why push! What does that do! Nothing, he just gets up and re-attacks unless you have pushed him into the path of an oncoming bus. If T'ai chi is the supreme ultimate, why push! No, there are no pushes in T'ai chi, they are all strikes to certain acupuncture points and the mere execution of the form demonstrates the correct direction and way that we have to strike in order to do this damage. For instance, a man can be rendered unconscious with a screwing strike to the right or left pectoral to points known as 'stomach 15 and 16.' Now, if we are to strike at both pectoral points at the same time, then death is not far away. Isn't that indicative of the posture from the T'ai chi form commonly known as 'push'. Actually the exact translation for this character is actually press and not push and there we have a clue to it's real meaning. At seminars, this strike used only lightly will change any martial artist's ideas about T'ai chi and how effective it is.

The posture known as 'double P'eng', you know, that seemingly useless posture just before the roll back posture and just after P'eng? this posture's true meaning actually is used to strike to a delayed and immediate death point called 'colon 18'. This point is lateral to the thyroid cartilage and just under the sternocleidomastoid muscle running along the outside of the neck. Just inside the internal carotid artery just after it branches out from the common carotid artery there is a baroreceptor called the carotid sinus. This organ is responsible for governing the level of blood pressure in the body. When this organ is struck, (even lightly as in medical practice to lower the blood pressure), it causes the mind to think that extreme high blood pressure is present and so lowers the blood pressure immediately. Now, if high blood pressure is not happening then not enough blood gets to the brain and so the body just blacks out so that it will become lateral and allow more blood to travel to the brain.

This is the first area of this posture. The second involves even more sinister practice. You know when you roll your palms over to begin the pull down? Even this has an inner application. We are told by medical science that there are also three other organs in the body that when attacked or in great pain will also cause this lowering of blood pressure and cause knock out. The gall bladder, the intestines and the ureter. As any acupuncturist knows, the gall bladder meridian and the intestines virtually run all over the human body from toe to head. So we now have hundreds of striking points which in effect cause the brain to think that either the gall bladder or the intestines have been struck.

Getting back to 'double P'eng'. As the palms are turned over, the left fingers again squeeze the C.18 point to cause further lowering of the pressure while the right palm attacks to the gall bladder point known as G.B. 14. just above the eye brows.

Every tiny movement in T'ai chi means something. For instance, I mentioned earlier that some points can be attacked directly while others need to be set up with other strikes. This is the case for the 'play guitar' posture. In this case you will notice any old master or person who is adept at the internal meaning of T'ai chi actually push and pull his right and left palms respectively. Why? This is so that the whole energy system of the body will be upset by rubbing the flows back the opposite way on both sides of the forearm. This in turn will leave the knee joint vulnerable, more so than usual, to the more potent kick inherent in this posture.

What about that seemingly silly posture called 'punch to knee'? Have you ever tried to punch someone's knee! No, this posture actually takes the attacker's wrist, squeezing it to cause the whole bodily energy to go to that point and then the right fist attacks to a point on the upper arm called Triple warmer 12.

I had a karate teacher attend one of my seminars and he was accidentally punched on a point called Nei Gwan just on the inside of the inner wrist which is a pericardium point. It was not a heavy blow but also not a light one but the chap turned slightly green and had to sit down for a few minutes.

To go into every minute movement in the whole T'ai chi form would take up a whole book so it is sufficient to say that, no matter how insignificant the movement in your T'ai chi form, there is a reason for it. And that reason was worked out by men of genius many hundreds of years ago. Now we are spreading the good word that tells us that T'ai chi ch'uan does deserve its name of distinction and we all of us can be proud that we are indeed studying the supreme ultimate fighting art.