

THE COMPLETE MARTIAL ARTIST (MIND, BODY and SPIRIT) By Dr. Sifu Larry Adams

In order to define a characteristic becoming of the Martial Artist, we must first look into the required standard of what is considered to be a well-balanced practitioner. This will lead us to look at these areas as a composition of inseparable qualities, necessary in order to be complete, not only as a martial artist, but as a human being. We may not view man as anything more than what we can see or understand, but from a perspective view, man is a "trichotomous" being; he is composed of three necessary parts: body, mind and spirit. Because this composition is not recognized under ordinary circumstances, it is necessary to qualify our statement.

The body of an individual is nothing more than the physical vessel that receives energy and life from the spirit. When the spirit and the body are united, then and only then, is there life in the body.

As the result of the spirit and the body uniting and producing life, the mind or soul of the individual is then established. Because the body and spirit have produced life, a living being or personality has been created. We should be able to see clearly that none of the three parts can be left out if there is to be a complete individual. Let me, if I may, go one step further by giving a biblical reference that corresponds to this same theory. Genesis 2:7 "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Now that we have a basic understanding of the parts of a man, let us now look into the importance of cultivating these parts. The body needs exercises for good posture and muscle toning, breathing therapy for better circulation and energy preservation and a nutritious diet as

well as proper rest. The mind must learn discipline and control over the body as well as a sound moral attitude that matures through experiences. Development of the mind basically involves learning how to work with the body and mind together for cultivation purposes. Finally, since the spirit is the life-giving source in the body, it is cultivated and preserved by the balance of proper functioning of the body and mind. It is impossible to have a sound mind in an unsound body. We cannot have spiritual attainment if we disregard physical cultivation.

As a martial artist or individual, we must practice the cultivation of all three, individual, yet integrated areas of our being. In doing so, we realize the importance of keeping a balanced life.

PRINCIPLES, THEORIES AND CONCEPTS OF CHINESE MARTIAL ARTS

By Dr. Sifu Larry Adams

Principles, theories and concepts are the most important factors in Chinese martial arts. It is the very foundation by which the arts stand. Even though it may carry different traditions, it is the major doctrine that separates and cultivates what is considered as true Chinese martial arts distinguished from other arts. How we define the principles of the yin and yang in reference to internal and external applications will make all the difference universally in the preservation and cultivation of the arts. For example, if my understanding and perception is not clear about the principles of the yin and yang theory, it will affect the outcome of the technique mainly with the distortion of natural forces.

In focusing on the external principles of the yin and yang we will come to realize the internal values that cooperate with its function. Along with the basic concept of push and pull we can understand a lot about correct application in managing kinetic forces. Rather than offering resistance to kinetic energy we should cooperate by managing without resistance the kinetic force by allowing the natural but continuing force to apply itself to the proper focus. For example, we may perceive a method or technique as “punch” and “block” rather than “push” and “pull”. Externally the idea of “punch” and “block” has already determined its response, which is to resist or offer an equivalent force as a response. Since blocking means to stand in the pass of force, there really is no need to use force towards the “punch.” This is strictly an external view of how to manage kinetic energy or physical force that defeats the natural principles and concepts of the yin and yang theory. Unfortunately, most artists prefer to challenge energy rather than manage it. The result of not cooperating with natural forces and underestimating its ability can be devastating. The most powerful force is that which we cannot see aside from natural movements. So if our understanding is based on what we can see it will result in our response being limited

and useless. Being a universal principle, the yin and yang principle should be applied in every aspect of the martial arts.