TALAHIB-MARGA:
A Contemporary, Cross-Cultural Martial-Meditative Practice

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Summary

With the rise of YouTube, Amazon, and social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, more information is available than ever before. Contact with prominent figures in all areas is as simple as "friending" them on social media and "liking" their posts. Photographs and videos of everything from martial arts and meditation to the moon landing and deep dive marine excavations can be viewed 24/7, for free. There is no need for referrals, introductions, travel, meetings, inter library loans, or fieldwork to gather information. Because of this nearly unlimited access to heretofore inaccessible content and subject matter experts is an easy get.

This has led thousands of people in all fields to gather information, integrate it into their general practice or discipline, and proclaim they are doing "something new". The problem is, they are not. An easy example is psychologists adding simple mindfulness exercises into their clinical practice, or a karateka adding qigong to their curriculum. The over accessibility to information, much of which is not primary sources, and the lack of fieldwork and apprenticeship, has led the average practitioner of martial arts and psychology to believe they have "discovered" something new and groundbreaking, and thus to be one of the few in the world to develop something utterly new, special, and on the cutting edge. The general situation is quite disheartening. This is especially so, given that many early primary sources, field research, and interviews were conducted before the advent of the internet 2.0, and thus are not found within its web.

In this paper, the authors present a contemporary, cross-cultural martial-meditative practice that they developed together 25 years ago, stemming from in-depth research involving field studies, extensive library searches, interviews, and training with many of the foremost experts in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Far East in meditative, healing, and martial arts traditions.

Zusammenfassung

Mit dem Aufkommen von YouTube, Amazon und Social-Media-Plattformen wie Facebook und Instagram sind mehr Informationen als je zuvor verfügbar. Der Kontakt zu prominenten Persönlichkeiten in allen Bereichen ist so einfach wie das „Freundschaften schließen"mit ihnen in den sozialen Medien und das „Liken"ihrer Beiträge. Fotos und Videos von Kampfsportarten und Meditation bis hin zur Mondlandung und Tiefseeausgrabungen können rund um die Uhr kostenlos angesehen werden. Es scheint nicht mehr nötig, Empfehlungen, Einführungen, Reisen, Treffen, Ausleihen zwischen Bibliotheken oder Feldarbeit durchzuführen, um Informationen zu sammeln. Auf diese Weise wird der nahezu unbegrenzte Zugang zu bisher unzugänglichen Inhalten und Fachleuten gewissermaßen zum Kinderspiel.

Dies hat Tausende von Menschen in allen Bereichen dazu verleitet, Informationen zu sammeln, sie in ihre allgemeine Praxis oder Disziplin zu integrieren und zu verkünden, dass sie „etwas Neues"tun. Das Problem ist nur, dass sie es nicht tun. Ein einfaches

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Beispiel sind Psychologen, die einfache Achtsamkeitsübungen in ihre klinische Praxis integrieren, oder ein Karateka, der Qi Gong in seinen Lehrplan aufnimmt. Der übermäßige Zugang zu Informationen, von denen viele nicht aus Primärquellen stammen, und das Fehlen von Feldforschung und Ausbildung haben dazu geführt, dass der durchschnittliche Praktiker der Kampfkünste und der Psychologie glaubt, etwas Neues und Bahnbrechendes „entdeckt"zu haben und damit einer der wenigen in der Welt zu sein, die etwas völlig Neues, Besonderes und Bahnbrechendes entwickeln. Die allgemeine Situation ist ziemlich entmutigend. Dies gilt insbesondere, wenn man bedenkt, dass viele frühe Primärquellen, Feldforschungen und Interviews vor dem Aufkommen des Internet 2.0 durchgeführt wurden und daher nicht in dessen Netz zu finden sind.
In diesem Beitrag stellen die Autoren eine zeitgenössische, kulturübergreifende kämpferisch-meditative Praxis vor, die sie vor 25 Jahren gemeinsam entwickelt haben. Sie ist das Ergebnis eingehender Recherchen, die Feldstudien, umfangreiche Bibliotheksrecherchen, Interviews und Schulungen mit vielen der führenden Experten für meditative, heilende und kämpferische Traditionen in Südasien, Südostasien und dem Fernen Osten umfassen.

Talahib-Marga: A Contemporary, Cross-Cultural Martial-Meditative Practice

Many traditional martial arts describe a history associated with religious and/or philosophical beliefs seldom addressed seriously in contemporary martial arts despite their elevation to the purported highest level of practice. The topic of spiritual practices and meditative traditions within martial arts is a complex topic. These beliefs and practice in countries such as India, China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Brazil, and the United States, have been extensively investigated with in-depth fieldwork by the authors over several decades, and has been published in several places (Maliszewski 1992b; Wiley 1994b; Maliszewski 1996; Wiley 1997). Unknown to a vast number of martial arts practitioners is the extent to which many of the martial arts at various periods in time drew upon meditative and religious principles (derived from written sources, oral transmissions, and/or in-body transmission through movement) to authenticate or transform the practitioner's view of himself in the cultural-social-cosmological context in which he was rooted. Exposure to these teachings tempered — and sometimes radically altered — the earlier attitudes held by the practitioner, often dissolving fears, and aggressive reactions to problems.

Several classical meditative systems, such as Hindu Tantrism and religious Daoism, have addressed the psychological transformation of the individual and have subsumed within their repertoire of exercises and training methods many of the same basic principles used in the so-called "internal" systems of martial arts to develop high levels of mastery in martial technique.

Many martial arts practitioners draw a distinction between martial arts as being more internal or external in form. At the present time, in Chinese martial arts, the major styles of kung fu are generally divided into two groups – External (wai jia) or hard (gung) and internal (nei jia) or soft (ro). The external systems stresses power strikes, use of kicks, hand conditioning, and physical strikes. While the external systems advocate regulation of breath, the emphasis lies more on generating quick movements, utilizing force in straight lines, and responding with force with force (Wong 1978; Draeger and Smith 1981). The internal school stresses not only the importance of Daoist and Buddhist philosophical-experiential principles, but also emphasizes the importance of vital energy (qi), intention, (yi), spirit (shen), and internal strength through Daoist deep breathing qigong exercises. Internal school practitioners seek to collect, cultivate and store qi in the dantian (field of

elixir), a region located below the navel and inside the lower torso.

While simple redirection of attention by a highly advanced meditator within such systems could easily lead to a rapid development of "internal" martial capability (e.g., within Chinese systems, deployment of qi in an offensive martial capacity), primary attention to the development and refinement of such skills would be viewed by the serious meditator as a deviation from the primary (experiential) goal of meditation. In contrast, the typical martial arts practitioner would view this level of attainment (e.g., the cultivation and manipulation of qi) as an end in and of itself, and as falling within the category of "mastery". A discussion of qi appears in Major (1987). There has been no detailed or exhaustive comparative analysis of how this internal energy is used in the martial arts across different systems and countries. An introductory cross-cultural review of internal energy in the martial arts can be found in Maliszewski (1992a, 1992b), as it is applied in both combative and healing aspects. See also Engelhardt (1987). In practical usage, all Chinese systems incorporate "hard" and "soft" elements in their self-defense strategies and techniques. The categorization of internal vs external; is relatively recent, dating from the beginning of the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1911 AD) (Henning 1981). An early Western perspective on Chinese martial arts appears in Amiot (1779).

Just as stylization and commercialization have in many ways separated the martial arts from their original martial context, they have nearly completely divorced the martial arts from their spiritual components. To this end, the attention of individual practitioners generally focuses on the superiority of their style over others' (especially in combat sport settings) or the skills and reputation of their teacher(s), tracing or "correcting" historical lineages, and contemporary researchers providing authentic information on the nature of their (and others) martial art(s). Many practitioners who profess to have the necessary expertise to address these issues often base their own opinions on poorly documented writing (if any exist) and limited cross-cultural study of or exposure to different martial arts. For the "spiritual flavor" component of much martial arts training consists of little more than several minutes of sitting meditation (zazen) before and after a training session. This is true even in more traditional martial systems (see Draeger 1974). During that time, there is generally little or no commentary as to what sitting meditation is supposed to accomplish, and a lack of knowledge or application of research methodology in any academic field (e.g., Asian studies, anthropology, psychology, sociology, medicine) — noting both strengths and limitations inherent in these research investigations. There has been little interest in a passionate pursuit of a deeper understanding of their avowed martial disciplines by either firsthand field research or in-depth analysis of legitimate source material available to them.

By and large this is a limitation found in Eastern, Western, and other cultures today. The personal image of public relations-based visibility (i.e., branding) in the media has more effect on swaying opinion than the more sophisticated, difficult, laborious, time-consuming efforts which may appear in isolated academic or specialized settings.

Nonetheless, while we do not have any definitive answers to fully rectify this dilemma ourselves, our frustration with this situation led us to contemplate and investigate this holistically. Over a period of 10 years (1994-2004) we compared our findings, shared original research, interviews, training, and video demonstrations from masters in a dozen countries (i.e., India, China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Brazil, and the United States). We spent the years working out principles and concepts for a combined martial/meditative practice that had a focus and a trajectory. We then developed a contemporary, cross-cultural, martial-meditative

practice we termed Talahib-Marga (T-M). It embraces an intensive weapons training as well as the entire range of phenomenological possibilities inherent in the different meditative and energy-based traditions. The objective of T-M is to increase the speed at which one can master essential martial arts defensive skills while concurrently developing various psychological, meditative, and energetic attributes within themselves. The result being diminishment of fear, enhancement of confidence, a shortening of the reflexive arc, a sense of spatial awareness, spontaneous action/reaction without thoughts, a state of detached focus, concentration, centeredness, and "no mind" (chin., wuxin; jap., mushin). The experience of "no mind" in Asian philosophies, meditative traditions and martial arts have been a central concept. The interpretation and efforts to articulate the nature of this experience through various terms, languages and practices is quite complex (see Maliszewski 1992b). The authors' interpretation of "no mind" are discussed later in this article; other definitions appear in the writings of Suzuki (1935; 1959), Wong (1978), Hashi (2016), Sakura (2018), among others.

At this point it is appropriate to provide some general concepts and definitions as to what spiritual and meditative practices and goals are associated with the martial arts.

Spiritual / Meditative Practices in Martial Arts

For purposes of this writing, the descriptive words *meditative, religious, spiritual*, and related terminology, are used in a psychological and phenomenological fashion to refer to those experiences that *alter the individual's customary experience and awareness of himself in the world.* Varying among the major religious traditions (which often serve as reference for their descriptive characteristics), such experiences can be theistic or non-theistic, individual or group, passive or active, transitory or enduring, intense or mild, expected or spontaneous, novel or recurring, and tradition-centered or not. They may also be viewed as revelational, insightful, confirming, responsive, mystical, ecstatic, and transformative, though other descriptions also exist. Reference to religion and religious traditions have been applied to those systems of belief of worship that incorporate such phenomena, historically or in a more contemporary fashion, within their teachings or philosophical premises.

"Meditation" has generally referred to those practices that involve the focusing of attention non-analytically in either a concentrated or expansive fashion, the outcome of which can lead to an alteration in consciousness, an increase in awareness and insight, or a combination of such psychological factors. Many classical meditative systems have an experiential goal associated with the completion of the spiritual path, commonly describes as "enlightenment". In contrast to the above-mentioned psychological factors which can relatively easily emerge from the practice of meditation, the experiential facets of enlightenment are viewed as effecting a radical, oftentimes enduring, psychological authentication (i.e., realizing that which one really is, completely, at all times), or transformation (i.e., developing latent capabilities) dramatically affecting the nature of consciousness and changing an individual's behavior in the world as well.

The term "enlightenment" generally refers to the complete realization of the true nature of reality, freed from ignorance, illusion, misinformation, cultural biases, and conditioned beliefs.

The use of the term "spiritual" has been used to connote the nature of spirit, the sacred, or supernatural. The goals associated with practice of classical meditative systems, however, may or may not be described as "religious", "spiritual", or "meditative" in nature and must be assessed individually within a respective school, tradition, or religion.

The Seeds of *Talahib-Marga*

The conceptual and physical components of *Talahib-Marga* were initially developed by Mark Wiley with roots leading back to 1986. A focal point of martial arts practice for him was the belief that advanced psychological and energy-based skills could be developed in less time if the "secrets" of an art were transmitted sooner from master to disciple. To put this theory to the test Wiley began traveling the United States and then throughout the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan to train with and interview master martial artists, qigong, meditation, traditional medicine, and faith healing. These travels and research spanning 25 years, coupled with his academic studies in anthropology and traditional Chinese medicine, and his apprenticing under a numbers of master practitioners led him to begin seeing how this could happen. Working as editor and publisher with the martial arts book and magazine companies for 15 years also helped open doors to more teachers, their methods, and admissions of truths from exaggerations.

From his research, personal practice and intense observation of masters, Wiley came to see that the so-called "advanced" techniques were only possible when the practitioner no longer had to 'think' or to 'remember' what "to do" against this or that attack or technique. However, because the ordinary manner of teaching was for students to emulate teachers and memorize self-defense techniques (commonly called "one steps") and spent so much time memorizing forms and in some styles two-person forms, there was little hope of reaching those "advanced" stages in the art—that is, the ability to apply the basics effectively and efficiently without thought or delay. The most basic techniques are the most advanced because they generally are the most direct, the easiest to perform, and have been trained over the longest period. However, the training methods usually lack the clear goal of attaining the "no-mind" state of consciousness necessary to spontaneously and proficiently execute techniques that are not pre-arranged, expected, and against a partner (opponent) who is uncooperative. Alas, Wiley found that the fastest way to develop the so-called advanced skill was to accelerate the attainment of spontaneous defensive execution during the "no-mind" state coupled with mastery of "flow" between movements. This, he found, comes fastest and most directly through unrehearsed partner weapons training. Not wanting to identify this method as a "Filipino martial art", but wanting to give respect to its origins, Wiley termed it "talahib".

In a philosophical-martial context, the Tagalog word talahib (a tall, wild grass) represents any given relationship. For example, you may walk through the talahiban (field of grass) without injury but if you walk against the natural bend of the grass, you will be cut by its coarse edges. In other words, "go with the flow" and keep moving until you are out of the field, and all will be well.

The meditative and energetic seeds of *Talahib*, known as *Marga*, were developed by Mike Maliszewski, who began his training and practice of martial arts in college. He is a certified instructor in kobojutsu, eskrima and modified wing chun. Mike undertook his own search for a composite of different techniques that derived from a variety of meditative and spiritual traditions over many years throughout the world which also included traveling throughout some 15 different Asian countries and meeting/training and studying with masters of martial arts, healing and meditation with the goal of outlining a set of practices which could authentically lead to a transformation of the individual's characterological makeup and be integrated into a sophisticated and adaptable martial art. He has been involved in the practice of advanced meditation for some 50 years.

The Sanskrit word, *Marga* (from verbal root *mrji*, to pursue, to search for), refers to the path (unfolding associated with the martial art, talahib). Marga has its roots in Buddhism but can be

applied to any other spiritual-religious traditions. It implies that certain methods of practice and religious behaviors have transformative power leading to "enlightenment". This unfolding integrates physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of existence (see Buswell & Gimello, 1992). Unique to this system, marga is an active component designed to transmit internal energy into a practitioner's body. A parallel phenomenon is found in some schools of Hindu tantra in the form of shaktipat initiation. Phenomenological reports associated with this practice of consciousness/energy transference have appeared in White (1974) and Maliszewski (1993). Historically, internal martial arts involved the practice of meditation, breathing and performance exercises to develop and cultivate the energy which could then be used to enhance mind-body coordination, execution of techniques, attention, healing, and meditative capabilities. This is a relatively slow process which generally took years to develop. It has been pointed out elsewhere that advanced meditative experiences can unfold in several ways with varying degrees of "speed" (Blofeld, 1962; Cook, 1983; Demieville, 1952; Gomez, 1983; Gregory, 1987; Maliszewski, 1992a, 1992b, 1993, 1996).

Unique to the T-M method, an advanced practitioner of the art will transmit his own internal energy directly into a practitioner's body. Some of these practices and concepts are derived from Hindu tantric practices, although the integration of physical-martial principles with cognitive elements are not observed in formal classical meditative disciplines. The initial transfer involves sitting meditation where the recipient engages in slow breathing and experiencing a state of "no-mind" (*mushin*) devoid of any thoughts and allowing the recipient's body to simply be open to any experiences or sensations which arise. This initial process can take anywhere from 5-to-20 minutes. After this introduction, execution of movements associated with *T-M* will follow. Repetition of this process can follow where the practitioner's body slowly begins to accommodate internal changes which unfold independent of conscious thought.

Integration of energetic/spiritual components with Talahib practices occurs on a subliminal level. Over time, the practitioner becomes aware of the enhanced mental acuity and physical performance that emerges. As multifaceted as the path can be, one can focus on whatever direction you would like the path to follow, e.g., enhancement of physical techniques and their execution, healing capabilities or seeking a classical meditative path with the goal of enlightenment.

Conceptual and Physical Components of Talahib-Marga

The physical components of *Talahib* are steeped in anatomically rooted dynamic movement mechanics. In self-defense, sparring or fighting nothing happens in a vacuum. Reaction and action, proper movement and effective mechanics must occur at the same time. As such, every physical skill within this art is practiced in tandem with its corresponding skills. For example, a parry is trained to occur at the same times as a step off the line of attack and with a hand, arm, leg, or foot strike. This three-in-one simultaneous combination becomes the initial reaction, to then be followed by finishing movements to end the encounter. There is no time for fear-causing delay, thought-causing delay, uncertainty, or disbelief in technique causing delay; all of which add to the detriment of and inability of the practitioner being able to apply his defensive techniques, while also increasing the attacker's chances of success. The training method (discussed in more detail below) develops both automatic physical skills with no-mind awareness at the same time.

One of the primary foundations of Talahib is that the individual movements (shifting, stepping, lifting, pressing, pulling, pushing) and the individual techniques (parry, pass, grab, lock, strike, kick, stomp) are limited to those of greatest combined assets for quick reflexive defensive movement. There

is no single repetition of kicks, blocks, punches, etc. counted off in sets of ten or twenty, switch sides and repeat. While this method does lead to proper form over time, it leaves too much to chance and happenstance when it comes to function and application in the moment of those very skills. In other words, the repetitive individual skill development method does not translate to spontaneous and correct skill application in an unchoreographed setting.

In sparring, this is acceptable as the rules of play are to be safe for the opponents. Kicks generally are kept above the waist, punches to the face generally are not allowed, and one landed strike constitutes a point. However, the rules of engagement in a serious altercation (which is where one most need, depends on one's skills) are quite different. There is no striking, grappling, or hidden weapon restriction, there is no point awarded for a clean landed reverse punch that does not take-out or slow the enemy, there is no time for extending the altercation as one never knows if a knife or gun or another opponent will enter the fray. Reactions must be fast, correct, skillful, and their only purpose must be to end the encounter, immediately.

With this focus in mind, it is essential that no time in training is wasted on repetition of individual movements, more than necessary to execute them within a combination and then against a training partner. All techniques are learned in combined modular sets that include footwork for changing range (distance) and gate (lateral position) coupled with some combination of hand movement (parry, check, strike, etc.) and leg technique (kick, knee, trip, etc.). Skills development comes through repetition of the combination sets, which are utilized against attacks from different angles, rather than types (no reflexive difference between a front push, punch, grab or strike), and then includes a "spontaneous no-mind flow" of parry and passes until a superior range/gate position is achieved then completed with finishing techniques.

In the usual method of martial arts training, there is so much content to learn, as well as culture, time in the art, philosophy, etc. that it can take decades (or a lifetime) to master the skills and have them be transferrable in the moment of real engagement. Indeed, many practitioners of traditional martial arts generally tend to believe that techniques of self-defense are enough unto themselves. First the individual kick or punch or block is learned through repetition of that movement. Next, a form is taught that combines the individual movements with some changes in height, speed, and direction. The practitioner then memorizes basic combinations against a straight punch, and later grabs, a practice often referred to as "one-step". This is followed often with sparring. Where the 'one-step' techniques come right from the forms and basic curriculum, the training method falls short because the opponent is not 'coming at' the defender, not 'following through' not 'holding on to', but rather is cooperative. And the sparring falls short because it lacks realism and does not contain (or is unable to apply) most of the techniques found in the forms and one-steps. Here we have a classic problem of the means not justifying the ends. In other words, the training methods themselves prevent the sought-after result of efficient and effective application of defensive movements.

Mind-Body Foundations of *Talahib-Marga*

After some basic physical movements are learned, and very soon into the training, practitioners are introduced to the mind-body foundation, which consists of three types of sitting meditation: concentration, mindfulness, and "no-mind". This format/paradigm has been used in medical settings also to reduce pain and was first used at the world's largest headache treatment center over 30 years ago (see Maliszewski, 2019).

Concentration meditation involves focusing attention on one point to the exclusion of any other thought. One sits in a comfortable position with slow breathing and focuses the attention on a selected object, such as a candle flame, a statue, or a similar small object.
Mindfulness meditation involves observing one's thoughts as they arise and pass on in a detached fashion, not responding to them as good or bad, pleasant, or unpleasant, only observing them without reaction. As an orienting technique, one can focus on the breath going in and out of the nostrils, observing thoughts and sensations as they arise and fall (not responding to them).

"No mind" meditation is derived from dance and martial arts practice. During physical performance, one engages in physical movement with the goal of eventually not consciously thinking of what movements to perform, but rather over time, not thinking, and performing on a non-reflective, subconscious level. A preliminary exercise involves sitting in a comfortable position, and, contrary to both concentration and mindfulness, you empty the mind of all thoughts. During this time, there are no objects of attention, no self-reflection or introspection, just simply trying to achieve an absence of all thoughts ("no mind"). Discussions of mushin have appeared in writings by Suzuki (1935; 1959), Wong (1978), Hashi (2016), Sakura (2018), and Yuasa (1993).

Because *Talahib-Marga* is not professing to be martial art per se, but a martial-meditative practice its content is tightly restricted, the external trappings are discarded, and the needless repetition of individual techniques and hours of sitting meditation and energy work, are replaced with in the moment and against a partner and in combination against angles not techniques. The result is a fast, often immediate transformation in the practitioner to going into the 'zone' and then further flashing into a state of "no mind" while the body takes over, as if on its own accord. The practitioner further seemingly watches or observes the event in slow motion (mindfulness) while again seemingly having no control of the body reaction where subliminal mental processes take over ("no mind").

Weapons defense training is the core of *Talahib-Marga*. Training with weapons has considerable value even for combat that does not involve the use of weapons. A strike involving the use of a stick or a slash of a knife, for example, comes in considerably faster than a punch. placing attribute development and technique training in their proper combative context, the learning curve is reduced with practice. Discussion of techniques associated with traditional weapons practice and training methods in the Filipino martial arts appears in works by Wiley (1994a, 2000, 2020), Diego & Ricketts (2002), and Lledo & Sanano (2019).

The far end of a stick can travels as much as five times the speed of a punch. Thus, by learning to defend against a stick attack—either with a stick or empty hands—the practitioner of Talahib-Marga develops much quicker reflexes which are further refined through knife-fighting training. Unlike stick training, training with the knife "condenses" defensive responses, speeds one's sense of spatial awareness, and reduces the reflex arc. After one has trained with weapons, empty-handed combat appears almost to be in slow motion.

The practice that almost instantly creates an "a-ha" or "in the moment" experience is the nucleus drill wherein the "feeder" (drill 'attacker') moves an aluminum blade in fast motions at the practitioner, in range and with strength, and facial and auditory expression, and the defender must utilize the skills in range/gate control and combined skills in hand and leg movements to effectively defend and then end the encounter. The facial expression, audible grunts from the attacker/coach,

the use of force and assumed intention, and the use of metal training blades, and starting during a conversation (not 'are you ready'), together act as a threshold that instantly shifts the practitioner's focus, energy, intention and changes his state of consciousness. Once that change in consciousness is experienced once, it is never forgotten. And later, as the drills become 'second hand' and the mind can be detached from the process and free of thought (no mind), the practitioner can again elevate himself into a more expansive state of consciousness, this time by applying skills learned in the meditative lessons. This is all then leveled up again through the direct energy transfer from another teacher to the defender in the drill. Thus, because the drill functions to instill the no-fear, "no-mind", state and elevates consciousness and awareness, the usual psycho-physical blocks generally present during normal meditation or energy work, such as qigong or yoga or mindfulness, are not present. Thus, a direct energy transfer can take place, and take hold, as the blocks are not there preventing it.

These meditations are then introduced into formal martial arts practice where they can be used during or emerge spontaneously out of physical practice. Once brought into the physical (corporeal) domain, their form and function will change. However, prior to martial arts application, these meditative approaches are useful in acquainting the practitioner with some core type of experience which can lead to a shift in character structure or development (along some continuum or degree of transformation, psychological change, or "enlightenment", etc.), based upon whatever the goal of the practitioner might be. Depending upon the psychological makeup of the practitioner, different potential states of mind will emerge. The practitioner is also introduced to sophisticated, scholarly writings on meditation, religious traditions, mysticism, and spiritual topics while also being sensitized to methods of identifying quality literature review as well as having an introduction to internal mystical physiological systems of the body derived from Indian, Tibetan, and Taoist yoga writings.

In 2003, Wiley further developed the transmission of content within *Talahib-Marga* by creating an Integrated Modular Training method. The premise of this approach is to use a module-based approach to training with linking drills to accelerate practical and applicable experience to become twice as good in one-third the time.

Training all techniques learned in a four-drill nucleus. Each technique is first learned mechanically by itself (known as individual skills development). This skill is then applied dialectically with a partner. Once Module two content is learned it is integrated (enmeshed with) the material in Module 1. The techniques of Module 3 are then learned first as individual skills which are then fully integrated into Modules 1 and 2. And so on, until the 4 modules are fully learned, then integrated within the Nucleus Drills and enmeshed with every other technique and movement. With this unique training method new skills become immediately applicable for self-defense.

Conclusion

To reconnect the martial arts with their original combative and spiritual and meditative contexts, *Talahib-Marga* de-emphasizes forms and step-sparing and makes use of meditative techniques to enhance movement performance in both offensive and defensive applications and expanding consciousness beyond customary ranges in a more progressive and contemporary format reflecting trends in society today. A central goal was to devise a set of practices with Eastern roots/philosophical perspectives and accommodate them to the needs of Western society to more quickly accelerate the progression with which a practitioner could actualize both physical prowess and spiritual accomplishment within a martial-meditative context or path. This brief essay serves to introduce

the reader to the basic structure of this new discipline.

There remains a need for continuation of actual field work; a discerning mind in vetting contemporary practitioners, sources, and references; and in-person training over time with a true master to receive full transmission.

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