



Orchard Kung Fu

The Martial Way of Vitality



Set to Go Off!

When surprised, many martial artists blindly react with devastating techniques. Occasionally, an innocent friend is injured by the lightning-like reflexes of the martial artist. The friend is most often berated as the martial artist defends the importance of his, or her, decision to live “half-cocked, safeties off!”

I have experienced this reflex action many times in the past. I have, thankfully, never injured anyone, but I recognized the potential to do so when still quite young in training. My initial reaction was to tell myself I was in a safe environment and disconnect the reflexive reactions that would occur. Over time, I realized this was a poor choice because I would be relying on reacting after an incident occurred if I ever had to use my training, and often, that would mean I might not get to react at all.

As I worked with quiet sitting, developed better interpretational skills and awareness of the other person’s intentions, and examined my personal fears about proximity, injury, and confrontation, I found my hyperreflexia (over-reaction, rather than appropriate reflex action) decreased but my awareness and ability to discriminate intention improved. I liken it to the enhanced state of mind one acquires from successfully completing a defensive driving course: You perceive possibilities with a calm awareness long before they become incidents. Without this mind, many martial artists merely wander about in a dangerous state of heightened paranoia with hair-triggers, just “set to go off!”

Reflexive conditioning via martial drills and quiet sitting will get you REACTING faster with more intensity and less mindfulness. Internal contemplation and resolution of your own issues is necessary to ACT freely and appropriately with the right timing and the right action in every situation. Essentially you learn to get out of your own way and process situational information with a higher degree of accuracy because your internal filters are not impeding your perceptions.

Quiet Sitting is fastest way we’ve found to train this mindset. Do not mistake what I’ve said; physical drills must be performed until the body can act quickly, with power, but to neglect Quiet Sitting is to retard your progress in Daoqiquan immeasurably.

Dr. Yancy Orchard