



Research of Martial Arts

Jonathan Bluestein

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Jonathan Bluestein's *Research of Martial Arts* is a book about the true essence of martial arts. It includes neither instruction on deadly killing techniques, nor mystical tales of so called super-human masters. Rather, it is a vast compilation of seriously thought-out observations made on the subject by the author, as well as many other martial artists and scientists, with a slight touch of history and humour.

The goal of this project had from the start been to surpass the current standard in the martial arts literary market, and offer readers worldwide something which they have never seen before. In essence, a book in which are found countless answers for martial arts practitioners which cannot be read elsewhere, addressing commonly discussed martially-related topics with breadth and depth unparalleled in other works to this day (in any language). It holds among its pages no less than 220,000 words, containing knowledge which would be coveted by many.

The aim of this book is to present the reader a coherent, clear-cut, and in-depth view of some of the most perplexing and controversial subjects in the world of martial arts, as well as providing a healthy dose of philosophical outlook on these subjects (from various individuals). At its core is the author's aspiration to build a stronger theoretical foundation for the discussion of martial arts, while addressing matters in innovative ways, which he had come to believe, would help people to better grasp the nature of these arts. There are books by authors who will tell you that some aspects of the martial arts are too complex for concrete, coherent and defined explanations. Others have used ambiguous terminology to explain what they could not pronounce otherwise. This is no such book. This book was written to provide you with the solid, applicable answers and ideas that you could actually understand, and take away with you.

This book is chiefly comprised of three parts:

| Part I: From the Inside Out – External and Internal Gong Fu |

This is essentially mostly a very long & thorough discussion of martial arts theory and practice. Traditional and modern concepts and methods are discussed through the mediums of Physiology, Biology, Anatomy, Psychology, Philosophy (Western and Oriental alike), sports science, and the author's personal experiences. The Internal Martial Arts of China receive a special, lengthier treatment in this part of the book.

| Part II: Contemplations on Controlled Violence | This one is of a Philosophical and Psychological nature, and contains the author's thoughts on the martial arts and their manifestation in our daily lives, with guest-articles by various martial arts teachers.

| Part III: The Wisdom of Martial Spirits: Teachers, and the Things They Hold Dear |

This part includes various interesting and comprehensive interviews with distinguished martial arts masters, spanning dozens of pages each. Every one of the interviewees is a person whose views and ideas are thought provoking and well-worth reading. The teachers interviewed in this book are:

Master Chen Zhonghua (Chen Taiji Quan)

Master Yang Hai (Xing Yi Quan, Bagua Zhang and Chen Taiji Quan)

Shifu Strider Clark (Tongbei Quan, Wu style Taiji, Shuai Jiao and more)

Shifu Neil Ripski (Traditional Drunken Fist and many others)

Sifu James Cama (Buddha Hand Wing Chun and Southern Praying Mantis)

Itzik Cohen Sensei (Shito-ryu Karate)

No matter the age, rank, status or experience – this book was written for everyone who see themselves part of the martial arts community. It is my sincere hope that any person who reads this book will benefit from the time he or she had spent doing so. May this work encourage others to continue intelligent writing and research in the field, as I was pushed forth and built upon the knowledge others have shared before me.

May you have a pleasant reading experience! =]

Research of Martial Arts Details

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From Reader Review Research of Martial Arts for online ebook

Michael Philliber says

“Research of Martial Arts” is compiled by Jonathan Bluestein, author, martial arts teacher and founder of the Tianjin Martial Arts Academy where he teaches the traditional Chinese martial arts of Xing Yi Quan and Pigua Zhang. This 418 page monograph is a massive manual clearly composed over several years. It is ideally suited for martial artists looking for detailed and technical background information on external and internal martial arts.

“Research of Martial Arts” has three sections, one that is highly didactic, a second that is reflective and the final which is a record of six in-depth interviews with master martial artists. Bluestein meticulously weighs the pros and cons of the external and internal styles. Though it is clear that the author’s own preference is for the internal arts, yet he gives due consideration to the external and acknowledges “that there is no right or wrong in different approaches to training – there is only what is right for you” (68). The breadth of explanation goes beyond the normal range of martial arts and presents the reader with the unique and significant from a wide range of traditions, many I had never heard of before.

In the end to read “Research of Martial Arts” is to get schooled in martial arts. The student will come to appreciate the numerous approaches, traditions, and focuses whole gaining a wider perspective. Though this self-published manuscript has several editorial glitches, nevertheless the information is invaluable. I recommend the book.

Thanks to the author for providing, upon my request, the free copy of the book used for this review. The assessments are mine given without restrictions or requirements (as per Federal Trade Commission’s 16 CFR, Part 255).

Enos Raharja says

First of all, All i know is that making / writing a book isn't easy. It requires such a devotion and massive inspirations.

Sifu Jonathan Bluestein clearly put so many time, efforts, devotion, deep research, and love in writing this book. i have never been really enlightened in reading Martial Arts book save this book by Sifu Jonathan Bluestein.

This book is great to read to those whom chose The Martial Journey way. It will teaches you a lot what is essential in Martial Arts Journey

Thousands of words will never enough to explain how amazing this book is.

I Hope Sifu Jonathan will keep up his work and i believe second edition is coming up!

I pray for Sifu Jonathan's Success, Prosper, Health, and Wisdoms!

Bao Quan!

Enos Jonathan Raharja
Founder of Semarang Ip Man Ving Tsun Martial Arts Academy

Jesse Bernal says

I recently had the pleasure of reading a book I thought would provide some esoteric insights on Martial Arts as a whole, but turned out to be far more than what it seemed.

Research of Martial Arts by Jonathan Bluestein isn't the type of book you read cover to cover (though you could). It's more akin to a reference manual in my opinion. Something you go back to time and again to refresh your memory on the many basic and advanced concepts he has discovered through his own studies and from other Masters.

Jonathan Bluestein covers a wide variety of subjects from his own perspective, with chapters addressing the fundamental differences and similarities between Internal and External styles, the philosophy behind why Martial Artists move the way they do and a fascinating section discussing psychology and body mechanics.

One section, in particular, cemented my respect for the author, Part III: The Wisdom of Martial Arts , wherein Mr. Bluestein shines the spotlight on the thoughts of other Master practitioners in the form of interviews and anecdotes.

When I decided to get this book, I thought I would be adding "just another" martial arts book to my library that might contain a few nuggets of useful information. What I've since discovered is that this book contains as much depth of knowledge as it is thick (418 pages!).

I recommend the purchase of Jonathan Bluestein's book, Research of the Martial Arts.

Jesse Bernal
Owner/Instructor
Colorado Martial Arts Academy
www.aurorakarate.com

Richard Gibbons says

Well written and presented, Jonathan Bluestein's Research of Martial Arts is a thought provoking in-depth treatise on Chinese martial arts providing a thoroughly comprehensible framework for understanding the subtleties and differences between the internal and external ways.

Its coverage is broad and deep and Shifu Bluestein conveys a profound level of understanding with the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly. It is sure to appeal to novice and expert alike for its value as a source of reference and a tool for understanding and self-reflection.

In my opinion, Jonathan Bluestein's Research of Martial Arts is as fine a work as you will find on the subject anywhere.

Filipe Magalhães says

Great book, great content, great approach and detail!

The moment I started going through the chapters I realized how deep and comprehensive was this piece of work and it has been really difficult to stop devouring it.

This book is a must have for any serious martial artist!

It is not easy to compile such result but it would certainly be another great experience to read other books from Jonathan Bluestein.

As the author emphasizes, there will be a "before" and an "after" in your martial arts experience after you have read this book. Are you prepared for that?

Joe Bender says

Upon reading *research of martial arts* i found it to be not only high quality made but the contents cover a lot of basic theory in the first half. One can learn a myriad of techniques. But really if u just understand the basic theory you can apply it in limitless situations not only in kung fu but everyday life!! Its not the 1000 techniques but understanding basic theory that will make you successful. This book is very informative and the 2nd half contains interviews with several masters that makes for interesting reading. As one who has studied and practiced for over 45 years i am very proud to have RESEARCH OF MARTIAL ARTS in my extensive library!!- SIFU JOE BENDER

Daniel J. says

I was asked to read this book by the author, Jonathan Bluestein, he sent me my copy via mail. It arrived in good condition. Once I read the book I put it down to reflect on what I had just read. I read the book again and discovered some facts I was unaware of and said to my students, please pass this book around and read it, & tell me what you think. Both the students and I agree, the book is well written, well researched and presented professionally. I recommend this book to all martial artists as a must read.

Daniel J. Vena.

Inheritor of Ed McGrath's School of Isshinryu.

Gik64 says

"Research of the Martial Arts" is a very helpful book to understand lots of concepts around Asian arts. The reading is really easy going and the content of the book is nicely designed. Another nice and important part is the separation of the internal and the external styles, which nowadays people are very confused about this concept.

From the surface of the arts to the deeper levels it can give u a lot by reading it.

Thank u Jonathan for all your time and sharing.

Claudia says

An incredibly well thought out look into the backstory and essence that is martial arts. Split into three main sections; this book aims to provide accurate depictions on the physiological and philosophical portraits of the theory and practice behind martial arts. Backed up from other researchers and martial arts experts, it thoroughly provides a detailed look into the martial arts world focusing more on comprehensive explanations than that if pictures to provide thoughts on the theories expressed within.

Recommended for those interested in another perspective and theory behind the moves and psychology that make up martial arts.

I received this book from Goodreads Firstreads

Nadine says

I received a copy from Goodreads First Reads about a month ago. I know nothing about martial arts but wanted to learn more so this copy has been referred to several times and I'd read the appropriate information. I will keep this as a reference book rather than to say I'd honestly read it all. For a practitioner I'd recommend it.

Marty Rickard says

A well written book. My Bluestein has done his research, and done it well.

As a practitioner of Ryukyu Kempo Karate, the contents of the book are not directly related to my studies, but the information contained within allows a reader to make connections between movements, principles and concepts they are familiar with and those described.

I have, and will continue to recommend this book to all my students as both a good source of reference material, and a good introduction to the more complex topics within higher martial study.

My compliments to Mr Bluestien for completing a work to be proud of.

Marc Sabin says

Jonathan, you did a fabulous job describing and articulating many of the subtle and not so subtle aspects and methods of martial arts. The book is filled with many pearls, and your inclusion of several interviews allowed for other voices to be heard expressing their own practices. Describing physical techniques, training methods and philosophies takes a particular ability and a great deal of patience. Bravo and thank you.

Ellis Amdur says

Research of Martial Arts is truly three books in one. I loved Part 1, and enjoyed Parts 2 and 3.

The FIRST PART attempts to initiate a fine-grained analysis of the differences between the hotly debated topic of “internal” and “external” martial arts, a division that is broadly, but incorrectly attributed to certain martial sects (i.e., taiji is internal, shaolin is external). The truth is that the lines are not nearly so clear—whatever the form one is practicing, the real question is what one is doing with one’s body as one practices the form, and there are significant differences in how one cultivates one’s body through training an external art as opposed to an internal one, regardless of what martial sect/form, one is attached to.

Bluestein discusses this subject in step-by-step detail, attempt to inter-relate traditional Asian theories on the subject along with modern Western exercise physiology and sports medicine. His discussions on “pengjin” and “tantien” are, in particular, valuable due to his attempts to integrate various Western theories concerning training and coordination of connective tissue. At this stage, NONE of the theories about how high-level internal strength physiologically works are satisfactory. One ‘test’ will be that the quality of an explanation (metaphoric or scientific) will be determined by the results practitioners get as they use that metaphor for their own development. As many explanations are extremely culture-bound, ‘translating’ concepts in a workable manner into Western languages is truly an important goal, and Bluestein has made some really wonderful strides here for all of us interested in the subject.

THE SECOND PART, a short section of fifty or so pages, focuses on Bluestein’s thoughts on martial arts, taking his own development as an example, as well as integrating several short interviews from other teachers. He takes a very common view of the arts as a kind of character/spiritual development, and does that very well. Because I tend to disagree with this viewpoint, seeing as much possibility of character/spiritual development in MMA or kick boxing, and as much possibility for self-delusion within “higher,” spiritual arts, this section resonated less for me. Some of the best men and women I know are practitioners of modern combatives, their training being how to most effectively kill other human beings, yet they are finer and more trustworthy than many, if not most, who are a product of classical martial arts, with all those philosophical and spiritual underpinnings.

I want to be clear that this is not to denigrate the quality of Bluestein’s discussion—he interweaves his personal odyssey with a meta-perspective of traditional Asian thinking on martial arts, and does it very well. I simply have a somewhat different viewpoint.

THE THIRD PART had a chain of interviews of varying quality—some are treasures, while others are merely quite enjoyable encounters with intriguing personalities. What is most useful within the interviews are the small tidbits of essential knowledge that some of the interviewees offer: training techniques, and ways of using one’s body. These are gems.

I’ve self-published a number of books myself, and this one carries some of the same flaws that are rife in the genre. There are many typographical errors, as well as grammatical mistakes. On the other hand, one of the best qualities of this very long work is that the chapters are short—it is so information rich that it is much easier to take in knowledge in short bites.

Others might disagree, but I almost wish this were divided into three books. The first section is already five stars. The second could use more development and perhaps, some other viewpoints. The third could easily be amplified to include more interviewees who would be exhorted to include more concrete information on training specifics that make their training either unique or exemplary. Even so, this massive book is a very important contribution to the study of martial arts – most specifically those of Chinese derivation, but beyond it, any cultivation of the body through the study of martial techniques.

Jon Haas says

I love reading martial arts books. Over the course of my career, I have probably read hundreds of them.

There are currently a dozen or more on my book shelf. I had to get rid of some that I no longer read to make space for the ones I constantly go back and refer to over and over again. Unfortunately, in recent years martial arts books have become boring and predictable. They have little real content and lots of pictures of techniques that don't really mean anything unless you are taught them in person. I literally cannot remember the last martial arts book I read in the past few years that was worth talking about. Until now...

A few weeks ago, I was fortunate enough to receive a complimentary copy of Jonathan Bluestein's new book, *Research of Martial Arts*. I am very happy to say that this book is outstanding! I have not yet read the book in its entirety, but have perused it several times, each time stopping and reading snippets from each of the 3 main sections. Each time I stop to read just a short piece, I end up reading more!

Part 1: From the Inside Out – External and Internal Gong Fu

This section is the longest in the book. It is also the most detailed and well presented contrast of external vs. internal martial arts that I have seen in print to date. Jonathan has taken an incredibly difficult and highly contested topic and broken it down into a cogent, detailed analysis of both. I was extremely happy to read his thoughts on fascia as well as his treatment of biotensegrity and how it relates to creating an omni-directional structure, or the Chinese concept of Peng. The section on dantian is also extremely well put together and worth reading!

Part II: Contemplations on Controlled Violence

Part 2 is a series of essays by Jonathan and several guest articles by other martial arts teachers. Some of the teachers who contributed articles are, Allen Pittman, Nitzan Oren (Jonathan's teacher), Steve Rowe, and others. These interesting philosophical and psychological looks into the world of martial arts.

Part III: The Wisdom of the Martial Spirits: Teachers, and the Things They Hold Dear

This section contains interviews with contemporary teachers of various martial arts. The interviews are a fascinating look into not only the art(s) represented but also the men, the history, and the culture surrounding them. My 2 favorite interviews were with Chen Zhonghua and Yang Hai.

This book is super easy to recommend – buy it!

I foresee a permanent place on my bookshelf for this particular book on martial arts. I have to thank Jonathan Bluestein for reaching out to me and generously sending over a copy of this wonderful book. And, in case I wasn't clear – if you have any interest in gaining a deeper understanding of the workings of both external and internal martial arts, I highly recommend you pick up *Research of Martial Arts*.

Jon Haas

www.WarriorFitness.org

David Tringali says

“*Research of Martial Arts*” is a much-needed breath of fresh air in the otherwise stale world of martial arts literature. It is a solidly researched work that attempts to take on one of the most hotly debated topics in martial arts – namely, the difference between “Internal” and “External” martial arts – and, in my opinion, provides one of the most reasonable and thought out arguments on the subject I have ever read. The second section of the book is comprised of a number of the author's personal reflections and thoughts on martial arts. After reading his essays, one can see a little more clearly how his theories in the first section of the book developed. The final section of the book is a real gem, however. In it, the author skillfully interviews a number of very respected martial arts teachers, among them people like Chen Zhonghua and the late James Cama, and gets them to reveal a treasure trove of valuable information.

The book's only downside is that it could have used another run through by a skilled editor. There are many typos throughout the book and black and white graphs are referred to as if they were in color. While it does not make the information inaccessible by any means, it does take away from the overall professional image of the work.

All in all, if you were to only read one book on martial arts this year, "Research of Martial Arts" would be an excellent choice. There is something in there for practitioners of all martial arts styles and it will give you a lot to think about as you continue your practice.
