

YIQUAN

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CUI FUSHAN
I LEARNED FROM YAO ZONGXUN
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

At begining of 1980s, thanks to Bu Enfu's (famous master of shuai-jiao wrestling, winner of wrestling and boxing trounaments, student of Wang Xiangzhai) introduction, I had luck to learn yiquan from Yao Zongxun. Yao was over 60 y.o. at that time. He wore very simple clothes. He walked keeping his body straight, talked calmly, had looks of an well educated gentleman. His eyes were like two sharp swords. He had great knowlegde, but at the same time he was very open and friendly to everybody. I experienced his gentleness, but also some strictness. And if we talk about his abilities of using body, it would be difficult for anyone to compare with him.

It was at beginning of 1982. I just finished doing zhan zhuang exercise. It happened that Bu Enfu and Ao Shipeng (who also was Wang Xiangzhai's student) were present there. I said: "I just keep doing yiquan's zhan zhuang, maybe I could try some tui shou too?" Yao Zongxun just finished instructing some other students and came to us. Bu Enfu said: "Zongxun, show some tui shou to Fushan, let him get the feeling". Yao agreed. He was over 60, was tall and thin, he didn't look strong. I was in my twenties. I was doing weight lifting, practiced baguazhang, taijiquan and other kinds of wushu. I won Chaoyang district taiji pushing hands championship. I also got medals at Chaoyang district and Beijing championships in wushu forms. And moreover I learned from Bu Enfu, and I had developed some skill in shuai-jiao wrestling. I thought that Yao was a great fighter when he was young, but he wouldn't be so good at his present age. When we touched arms, I got impression that he was quite weak. I thought that if I used all my power, the old man wouldn't be able to oppose me. And I even started to fear that I could harm him, if I used too much power. But before I did anything, Yao, feeling my hesitance, said: "Use your whole power, your all abilities". Bu and Ao added: "Use your whole power, don't hesitate". I pushed Yao suddenly with my whole power, but my hand "landed in emptiness". I immediately did a series of pushes, but none of them met any resistance, and I couldn't control my body, feeling like a kite after the string breaks. Then I tried once more. I noticed that there is a tree behind Yao's body. I thought, that when I push suddenly with big power, Yao will not be able to escape, and he will hit the tree. I pushed. Before I was able to notice that Yao dodged to the side, my body was lifted upward and almost hit the tree. In panic I closed my eyes, and expected hitting the tree with my face. But then I felt that some power changed the direction in which my body was moving. I opened my eyes, and noticed that I just flied by the side of the tree, only touching it slightly with my clothes. I was sweating all over and feeling freeze. I could only say: "It was horror". Yao said: "Just calm down, it was nothing". Both Yao's skill and his wude (warrior's morality) impressed me. I said: "That's incredible, I wouldn't expect something like this from a man

over 60 years old. Your movements are so free and natural, and so coordinated, just as if you were just dancing. You posses the highest level of neutralizing skill. Now I was able to feel what is real tui shou". Than I said: "When I did competition pushing hands before, when opponent grabbed my neck, it was difficult to do anything". Yao said: "So grab me that way". When I did it, Yao just slapped my arm, and my body lifted, uprooted, and turned half circle before I landed on my feet again". I asked; "Where does your power come from?" Yao answered smiling: "Of course, I'm not as strong as you younger people. I just used my whole body in a coordinated way, and I borrowed your force too". I said: "I don't understand how you borrowed my force". Yao asked: "Did you ever bounce a ball". I replied that I did. Then he asked what were 3 attributes of force. I said: "amount, direction, point of impact". Yao said: "When you learn a martial art, you must think a lot". I will never forget his words. I really got benefit from them.

Yao Zongxun not only had great skill in martial art, but he also had great knowledge of health aspect of yiquan. When some bump appeared at my belly, and I couln't do any more intense exercises because of pain, I visited many doctors, spent a lot of money, used a lot of medicine, but without result. I told Yao about this. He adviced that his friend doctor should see me. That doctor said, that surgery would be the best way. I told Yao what the doctor said, but I wouldn't got surgery. Yao said then: "If you really won't get surgery, the only way is trying using zhan zhuang". Yao arranged a posture for me, explained demands of exercise, and said: "You shouldn't worry, just eat normally, keep positive attitude. When you practice, don't think about your problem, use positive imaginations, so you feel happy, being in pleasant mood, then blood circulation will improve, metabolism will improve, immunity will be reinforced". According to what Yao said, I practiced zhan zhuang everyday. After zhan zhuang I did shi li. I used those kinds of mind activity which Yao suggested. I practiced everyday, no matter if it rained or if wind was blowing. When I only had time, I was going to the small park close to Nan Li Shi street, were Yao Zongxun used to teach. Sometimes, when I wasn't feeling comfortably during standing, Yao helped me to relax, by massaging slightly my body, when I kept standing. When I was able to relax, I was feeling as if my body was very light and floating in air. I also felt some warmth in my whole body. The longer I practiced, the more i liked it. One day it rained a bit. Not many people practice during such weather. But I went to the park by bus. Yao was already there. But there were not many other people. Yao asked: "Lately, while practicing, what you feel?" I said; "I feel great comfort, the bump became smaller, I don't feel any problem when doing more intense training". Yao said: "Good, you must still be careful with the more intense training, and when you practice, don't think that you practice, but make your practice a fun, but at the same time you must be concentrated, the more pleasant is your practice, the better". And I said: "It's raining, maybe you just shouldn't come during such weather?" Yao replied: "Other may not come, but I must come; if there is not any urgent matter, I will come for sure". I really admired his attitude.

After about half a year, the bump disappeared, and it never appeared again. Also stomach aches which I used to have regularly dissapeared completely.

I will always be grateful to master Yao and will always admire his skill and character. When I learned from Yao Zongxun, it was turning point in my life. Learning martial art, I realized what's important in life, I became more open and active. I developed habit of thinking about problem, before making decision. It was very important for my life and my job. I'm more persevering, I don't give up before achieving intended goal. This is all related to my learning from Yao Zongxun. He was one of the greatest wushu masters, but he also had profound knowledge in fields of pedagogics, literature, psychology, medicine and many others. He was not only successor of Wang Xiangzhai, but he developed yiquan further, making a big contribution to the theory of martial art. Thanks to Yao Zongxun yiquan is blooming today. I hope that we all will work together for further development of this martial science.

HAN LUQUAN
ZHAN ZHUANG AND SHI LI
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

Many articles have been published lately in which the aspects of health and combat in yiquan (dachengquan) are discussed. In 1/2000 edition of "Wuhun" magazine I already wrote about health value of yiquan and about my personal experience in this field. This time I would like to talk about health and combat aspects of yiquan (dachengquan) from various points of view.

I first went to Beijing to learn from master Yao Chengguang, because I had health problems. I wrote about it already in edition 1/2000. Some people think that health and combat aspect of yiquan are something different, and that you should choose one of them. This kind of attitude has not much to do with actual yiquan. Even less is there any division between "*earlier practice of tendons and bones*" and "*later mental work*". It's just people who didn't really learn yiquan as a complete system keep repeating statements which make no sense, because they see only one side of the whole. Learning yiquan from master Yao Chengguang, and practicing under his supervision, I was able to improve my health. I had opportunity to learn yiquan a bit deeper. I don't agree with what some say, that: "*like Wang Xiangzhai, we should first train tendons and bones*". Body is tendons, bones, blood, skin, hair etc. Practitioners of martial arts, regardless if it's "*internal*" or "*external*" are always training whole body. Of course "*training of tendons and bones*" is part of it. Without tendons and bones, how could we talk about human body? How could we walk, stand, stay alive? Talking about "*training tendons and bones*" is nothing more than just repeating wrong opinions, and eventually leading to creating wrong methods. This is not knowledge coming from serious study of yiquan. The training of chinese gymnastics athletes is also being described as "*training of tendons and bones*". And training of chinese acrobates too. Who can compare with them? And what they do is a scientific training system, based on research of specialists in fields of biomechanics and sports. Their understanding of "*training of tendons and bones*" is more profound and scientific.

When master Yao Chengguang is teaching zhan zhuang, he stresses, that the main thing in yiquan practice is unifying of posture and mental work. This has nothing to do with notions of those who say: "*mental work is leading to mental disorder*", "*it causes a battle in mind*". This has also nothing to do with standing for many hours and thinking only about feelings of warm, numbness, itching in some parts of body and in specific points. Wouldn't that be that mental disorder to which "*mental work is leading*"? Did those people learn yiquan as a complete system at all? Who they learned from? If you study something, a lot of time and patience is needed. The same is true about yiquan - the science which is linking together theory and practice. If someone is not serious about learning and his own practice, he won't be

able to understand the essence. Even Wang Xiangzhai and Yao Zongxun, who studied and practiced all their lives, didn't dare to say, that they got great achievement - dacheng, and they stressed, that "*there is no limit in the study of martial science, so how could anybody talk about dacheng?*" But now there are some, who just started studying yiquan, and never learned it in deep, but they maintain that they will "*reveal secrets*". They are irresponsible, misleading beginners. They went astray, and are leading others astray.

Master Yao Chengguang is very rigorous while teaching. There are strict demands regarding body and mental work, no matter if it's zhan zhuang, shi li, steps, fa li, punching methods, tui shou or san shou. All his students have chance to experience this. Those demands regarding body and mind have absolutely nothing to do with wrong opinions about yiquan which are propagated by some people. Let's take as an example hunyuan zhuang - the first of combat postures. In so called health postures, the position of body is accompanied by some very gentle forms of mind activity, what makes body relaxed and mind becoming tranquil. They are used mostly by beginners and by those who practice to improve their health. From the point of view of yiquan as a martial art, so called health postures are just exercises which give you basis for more advanced practice. And hunyuan zhuang is an exercise which serves for seeking "*holistic strength*" - hunyuan li, and which gives you basis for combat oriented practice. As Yao Zongxun used to say; "*If you want to learn the essence of martial art, you should start from zhan zhuang*". In hunyuan zhuang you put your whole body into action - all muscles, joints, whole nervous system, and even the hair on your whole body. Using appropriate mental work has effect on biology, increasing activity of nervous system, stimulating muscles and joints of all parts of body ("*tendons and bones*") - all simultaneously. In this kind of exercise, when you keep certain posture, and your whole body is doing subtle movement, small movement or big movement, slow movement or fast movement, you seek and develop the hunyuan li. Isn't it the "*training of tendons and bones*" about which some "*great experts*" keep talking? Or maybe it's something without relation to "*tendons and bones*"? Actually "*training of tendons and bones*", which according to them is some "*secret transmission*", actually is nothing more than just very early, not mature teachings of Wang Xiangzhai, which are opposite to the essence of martial art as Wang understood it later. Wang himself criticized those views in later period and rejected them. It's just outdated and rejected methods, but now some start to advertise them as "*secret transmission*". Does it make any sense? It just makes people laugh! It's way of frauds trying to make money. When we talk about those wrong ideas about yiquan, the reason for their coming out is because some people don't know the contents of yiquan training well enough. They didn't learn it in deep, but they resolutely state that yiquan is just some "*rough principle*", while some other system is "*subtle principle*". When someone is not serious in study, he will not be able to learn anything deeper, not saying learning the essence.

Yiquan is a system of theory and practice. Practice is directed by principles and serves to check the principles. You never should do it by halves, watching only from one point of view. Development and training of hunyuan li needs patience, perseverance and great attention. You are experiencing simultaneous subtle movements of all parts of body. Starting from lack of the feeling of strength, gradually to getting the feeling. Everyday, every month, every year, there are more and more parts of body in which you get the feeling - the hunyuan li is developing. Beginners start from comparatively long, slow movement. When they have some basis, they start seeking hunyuan li in small movement, in subtle movement and also in fast movement. Huanyuan li is also called liumian li (force related to six surfaces). At first you are seeking it in basic directions: forward-backward, upward-downward, opening-closing. Then you do changes of directions in one exercise. Next step is simultaneous seeking force in relation to six surfaces. So the process of developing hunyuan li is divided into simpler stages. This is not something which you can achieve in one day, but effect of systematic practice.

Let's talk about shi li too. Shi li is "*enlargement*", "*expansion*" of zhan zhuang. As Yao Zongxun used to say: "*You get to know the force by testing it*". When you practice zhan zhuang, seeking hunyuan li, there are still many places in body, where you haven't got the feeling, so called "*weak parts*". In shi li there is "*expanding*" - whole body coordinated participates in movement. The force of resistance is expanded in space. The imagined objects are enlarged and expanded. This helps developing hunyuan li, enabling getting rid of some insufficiencies (lack of proper feeling in some parts of body) - whole body is becoming more agile, moving more naturally, achieving the state when "*the force is natural, form as if was there and wasn't there at the same time, mind contains universe*". When in shi li "*Intention is not broken, force is not lost*". "*Intention is born - force is born; intention is broken - force is stopped*". You should ponder it, and experience it, practicing according to the principles. Let's take the quite basic dingbabu kaihe shi li as an example. Your arms are making movement of stretching to the sides and then pressing inward. Imagine as if there were many springs between your both arms (palms, fingers of both palms, elbows etc.) which you are slowly stretching and then pressing. There are also imagined springs between your fingers and a tree or wall far in front of you. When doing opening movement (stretching the springs between your arms), you are stretching those springs (fingers pulling backward), and when doing closing movement, at the same time your fingers are pushing forward, pressing on those springs. While doing opening, your body is slowly pushing backward and sitting down on back leg. You move from position where your weight is distributed 50% on your front and 50% on your back leg, to position where 30% of weight is on your front and 70% on your back leg. You are feeling resistance of a spring between your front knee and back hip, which is as if being stretched. Toes of your front foot are as if catching ground. You feel that your body is overcoming some resistance, as if moving in water or pushing a tree. When arms do closing movement, body is pushing forward, overcoming resistance (of water, tree, etc.). Weight is

moved from position 30/70 to 50/50. Front foot is slightly pressing ground. Back leg is pressing ground and straightening. There is feeling of springs between your both legs being pressed. Head is leading upward - you have feeling of stretching springs between your head and your feet. Everything is happening simultaneously. You should have the feeling of resistance everywhere, carefully searching for it, "*using mind and not force*". Like masters of old used to say: "*intention and force are as if floating in water*", "*when upper moves, lower is naturally following, when lower moves, upper is naturally leading*". There is no place which would not participate in movement. When movement appears, there is no place where there wouldn't be some kind of movement. When movement stops, whole body stops. Opening and closing of arms is big movement, change of position of center of weight is small movement. If we talk about subtle movement, it's as if even hair on your body was linked to some springs and was doing slight movement. This is "*intention always being born and never stopping, movement always being born and never stopping, force always being born, and never stopping*". Gradually with time of practice you will achieve state when "*intention is force, force is intention, intention and force are one*". All movements are free and natural. "*No matter if wind blows and waves hit, the victory comes as easily as a nice chat and a pleasant stroll*". "*Body and arms are embracing the wind and waves, and creating great storm, as easily as froze is crushing grass*". Someone said: "*But this way of practice would limit your natural freedom*". As I know from my experience, if you practice according to the principles and demands of shi li, the feeling of resistance is gradually expanding for the whole body, hunyuan li is developing naturally. In each movement there is feeling of natural force. That man probably didn't learn yiquan as a system, but blindly followed some part of it, and he didn't achieve the results of seeking strength with the principle of "*using mind and not force*". What he got was result of practicing shi li in an improper way, and not result of proper practice of yiquan.

In study materials and videos produced by master Yao Chengguang you will find explanation of deeper principles of yiquan. In this article I just mention them without going in depth.

HE JINGPING
WANG XIANGZhai - "CONTRADICTIONS OLD MAN"
TALKING ABOUT BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ZHAN ZHUANG QIGONG
Translation from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

*"Emission of qi - preposterously called real tradition"
"Breaking old, establishing new, reaching higher levels"
"Constantly seeking ballance in all kinds of contradicitons"*

Wang Xiangzhai was our country great expert of wushu and qigong, with lots of students. His qigong concepts received recognition during conference on health practices which was conducted in Baoding in Hebei province in November 1961. With time his zhan zhuang method has become very popular. But because some instructors were not able to understand properly theoretical principles of zhan zhuang method, they mixed zhan zhuang with so called "emission of qi", calling it real tradition of zhan zhuang, while it is a big mistake and is opposing basic principles of the zhan zhuang method. This created a lot of misunderstandings. Actually Wang Xiangzhai's zhan zhuang, which is kind of medical qigong, has its own specific theoretical principles and practice methods, with strong basis in science. To help practitioners properly understand and master zhan zhuang methods and principles I'm offering this article. Hope it will help to avoid situation when wrong concepts are further transmitted.

1. ZHAN ZHUANG AND CONTROLLING BALANCE

Zhan zhuang is a method in which practitioner is constantly solving situation when various kinds of unbalance are appearing at various time in body, improving the ability of immediate adjusting and controlling ballance.

Wang Xiangzhai was saying: "There is no absolute balance, when we talk about balance, we talk about ability of controlling balance at this point of time". He said: "The illnesses are caused by loosing balance in organs and their functions; it is like in martial art - it is possible to make opponent fly back, when his ballance is broken. Zhan zhuang is a method to adjust and control balance". So regulating and controlling balance is the main question during all stages of zhan zhuang practice. Wang Xiangzhai also talked about "three round" training method. The "three round" are "spirit round", "intention round", "force round", demanding: "spirit not flowing outside, intention not being revealed, force not going over tip". The core of this theory is keeping balance of "centered, round harmony".

Controlling balance is not something stable and not changing. But it means that practitioner, during the practice progress, is constantly breaking the old balance and establishing a new balance. In this proces of "breaking old, establishing new" the practitioner's abilities are constantly growing and developing, so he moves from low level to

high level, establishing better control of balance, achieving result of "getting rid of illness, when there is any, or of strengthening health, when there is no illness".

2. CONTRADICTIONS AND THEIR UNITY DURING PRACTICE

There are a lot of complex contradictions appearing during the practice process, like: relax and tension, movement and non-movement, hard and soft, empty and solid, up and down, front and back, left and right etc. Wang Xiangzhai used two kinds of practice: non-moving and moving. In non-movement practice, practitioner basically works on solving the contradictions of relax and tension, up and down, at the same time not neglecting movement and non-movement, hard and soft, empty and solid, front and back, left and right. And in moving practice he is working on solving the contradictions of movement and non-movement, front and back, but at the same time not neglecting relax and tension, hard and soft, empty and solid, up and down, left and right.

Zhan zhuang qigong in the theory of solving the contradiction of relax and tension postulates: "Relaxed but not loose, tense but not stiff, relax and tension interrelated", and "relax is tension, tension is relax, relax and tension, tension and relax balanced". This is seeking the balance in contradiction of relax and tension.

When we are talking about the relation between movement and non-movement, it is stressed that "movement and non-movement are rooted in each other". Wang Xiangzhai said: "There is no absolute non-movement, but movement is absolute". So, according to him: "In non-movement non non-movement, in non-movement there is movement, in movement not movement, in movement there is non-movement, movement in non-movement is real movement, non-movement in movement is real non-movement, movement and non-movement are rooted in each other, used together". So the zhan zhuang practice is not "standing without movement, like a wooden pole", but it is "In non-movement seek feeling, in slight movement seek knowledge, want to move, want to stop, want to stop, want to move, there is feeling and intention as if you move, but you cannot not to stop, and as if you stop, but you cannot not to move". When "spirit is moving, intention is moving, force is moving" there is seeking the balance in contradiction of movement and non-movement.

On the contradiction of hard and soft he said: "hard is soft, soft is hard, hard soft, soft hard help each other". He maintained that it is not real hard, if there is no soft in it - it is only stiff. Only when there is soft in hard, it is real hard, invincible.

On the contradictions of empty and solid he said: "Empty is solid, solid is empty, empty and solid, solid and empty, with balance". There is meaning of unpredictable changes between empty and solid in this saying.

Also about the contradiction of up and down, front and back, left and right, he maintained that there is nothing absolute, but it should be analyzed and learned as relation

between contradictions. Like: "if you want to move upward, there must be downward, if you want to move downward, there must be upward", "In strong and upright there must be relaxed and dropping down, in relaxed and dropping down, there must be strong and upright", and "when upper wants to move, the lower must follow, when lower wants to move, the upper must naturally lead it, when upper and lower move, the middle must attack, when middle attacks, upper and lower must join, internal and external must be linked, front and back, left and right must correspond together". This is explanation of relation of up and down, front and back, left and right.

It is not possible to work on solving all of those contradictory relations which are appearing during zhan zhuang qigong practice at the same time. At different times you concentrate on different contradictions. For the beginner most important are the contradictions of relax and tension and up and down. Because "when a beginner starts standing, he tenses, when he tenses, he becomes stiff".

So the practitioner, in the situation of effort caused by posture, should seek comfort of spirit and muscles, in strong and upright seek relaxed and dropping down. But he shouldn't neglect movement and non-movement, front and back. Then, with some progress, the movement and non-movement and front and back should become the main contradictions. This way the practitioner gradually moves from static to moving practice. In process of practice of "seeking movement in non-movement, seeking non-movement in movement, co-existence of non-movement and movement" he achieves balance and unity of contradictions. When talking about front and back, it is not only matter of posture, but also of mind activity. He should think of his body as "banner moved by wind, as fish in water, flowing against wave". So he must put attention to the resistance from front and at the same time the pulling from back, this way controlling front-back balance. But at the same time he should also put some attention to relax and tension, up and down and other aspects.

Beginner usually don't understand the relation of relax and tension, and how to control balance between them. So of course they are not able to understand the concepts of "relaxed but not loose, tense but not stiff, relax and tension interrelated" and "there is relax in tension, there is tension in relax". The way to make them understand the relation between relax and tension is to make them first understand what tense means, and then what relaxed means.

The practitioner can just tense muscles in some part of body, to know what tense means. Then he can relax the tensed muscles as much as possible, to get the feeling of relaxed. And then during zhan zhuang practice he will experience that when some part of body gets sore, it is tense, and when thanks to adjustment he gets rid of soreness, it is relaxed. This way he is seeking comfort of spirit, muscles and breath. And this is "relaxed but not loose, tense but not stiff". Usually when practitioner is feeling that he is relaxed, it means

appearing of tension. When he finds that he is tense, it is beginning of relax. But while practitioner is solving the contradiction of relax and tension, when he gets rid of original tension, there will appear new tension, which he must get rid of. So during practice, the progress is not steady, but sometimes it's better and sometimes it's worse. It's like waves. There are contradictions of relax and tension in spirit, breathing, awareness, body. While working on solving the contradictions of relax and tension, some attention must be put to the contradiction of movement and non-movement in order to make faster progress regarding the contradiction of relax and tension.

Wang Xiangzhai used to call himself "Contradictions Old Man". This is illustration of the basis of the scientific thought of zhan zhuang qigong. It is a method in which you work all the time on creating and solving all kinds of contradictions: relax and tension, movement and non-movement, hard and soft, empty and solid, up and down, front and back, left and right etc, adjusting and controlling balance between them.

3. POSTURES AND MIND ACTIVITY OF ZHAN ZHUANG

Wang Xiangzhai's zhan zhuang qigong is by no means just a form of exercise stressing posture. His saying "create posture according to health conditions, different for different people" is explaining the use of postures according to situation. He maintained that zhan zhuang shouldn't be "standing without moving, like wooden pole", which would be "dead standing". In the basic theoretical principles of zhan zhuang qigong he stressed: "seek fullness of spirit and mind, and not resemblance of form", "posture is changing with mind movement, form is simple and intention rich", "form as basis, mind for using" etc. The key point is in mind leading, and in the principle of proper adjustment of the balance of movement and non-movement, empty and solid, hard and soft, relaxed and tense, up and down, front and back, left and right.

Wang Xiangzhai said about the relation of form and mind: "use form to get intention, use intention to make the form appear, intention is born from form, form is following intention, force is issued from mind, form is obeying mind". We can see that in the relation of mind and form, the mind leading is very important.

Wang Xiangzhai opposed giving specific names to postures, because it would lead the practitioner astray. After years of summing up his experience, Wang Xiangzhai stopped using the names which he created earlier for specific postures, calling zhan zhuang: hunyuan zhuang, and all kinds of forces calling hunyuan li (holistic forces) or hunyuan zheng li (holistic contradictory forces). He strongly opposed the conception of specific value and effects of specific postures. He maintained that without mind, zhan zhuang qigong would lose its life spirit. Because even if using the same posture, but with different mind activity, the results are different.

Wang Xiangzhai stressed the equal importance of using mind both in zhan zhuang and in shi li. He kept saying: "if moving or not moving, the practitioner should ask why so". And he clearly pointed out: "Zhan zhuang and shi li are exactly the same thing, zhan zhuang is shortened shi li, and shi li is zhan zhuang extended in space". He criticized the false concepts and training methods of those treating zhan zhuang and shi li as something different. He maintained that "it is caused because they don't understand the mind activity of zhan zhuang, if they continue like this, they will move further away from the proper way".

Leos Horky (Czech Republic)

TUI SHOU

Introduction

In this brief article, I would like to introduce to you the tui shou exercise of yiquan.

Yiquan is modern style of Chinese internal martial art. It was created during the last century by the legendary master Wang Xiangzhai. It consists of several main training methods - zhan zhuang (pole standing), shi li (testing of strength), fa li (release of power), mo ca bu (friction steps), shi sheng (testing of voice) , tui shou (pushing hands) and san shou (free fighting).

Tui shou also appears in many different forms in other internal styles. Here, I would like to concentrate on the basic ideas of tui shou and on finding the answers to the questions such as why to practice it and how. Several common misunderstandings and mistakes during practice will be enlightened by the three experienced teachers of internal martial arts.

At first I would like to look in on the name. Tui means "to push" and shou means "hands". So, tui shou means "pushing hands". But this term is not very exact. In the internal martial arts we are not pushing with our hands - each movement is produced by the whole body. We are using coordinated whole body power which is known as hun yuan li (or nei jin). And much more, tui shou in yiquan is not only about pushing. We also strike with different parts of the body. Basically you can issue the force with hand, elbow, shoulder, foot, knee, hip or head. Because of this, I rather use original term "tui shou" instead of "pushing hands" or "push hands".

Tui shou in yiquan

In yiquan, there are two types of tui shou. Single hand tui shou (dan tui shou) and double hands tui shou (shuang tui shou). Both types of tui shou have several levels of practice from the basic one to the free style practice. You can practise it stationary or using various steps in every direction.

Tui shou is an exercise, in which both partners connect their forearms (or eventually, during free style practice, any other part of the body) and try to feel, control and manipulate the other one.

On the following pictures, you can see one of the stages of tui shou practice - fa li during tui shou.

Picture 1. Two students of Andrzej Kalisz during standard single hand tui shou.

Picture 2. Radek, on the right, neutralizes his opponent's forward pushing hand.

Picture 3. Radek slaps his opponent's hand and clears the way to execute the strike. Note, that he is aiming at the elbow of his opponent.

Picture 4. As Radek moves his opponent's hand down, he prepares his second hand for chop.

Picture 5. Radek chops his opponent's neck and still maintains the control of the opponent's hand near elbow. The whole pi fa - "the method of chopping" - (Pic.3 - Pic.5) is done during fraction of the second in explosive way.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5

The following is the interview with Mr. Andrzej Kalisz, chief instructor and director of the Academy of Yiquan (Poland) and disciple of Master Yao Chengguang.

What is the purpose of tui shou practice?

Thanks to tui shou you can check the results of practice of the basic training methods, and eventually correct and improve your basic practice.

The most basic tui shou is just one of the basic training methods, but with partner. And when we are talking about so called free tui shou, it's part of free fighting. In any fight there are often situations when there is contact between arms of both opponents. Thanks to tui shou practice, you are able to react properly in such situations. You learn to feel your opponent, to affect his balance, to use holes in his defense and to create them too.

At higher level you should be able to use any part of your body in this way,

not just hands. But of course tui shou is only a part of free fighting. It is said that tui shou supplements san shou and san shou supplements tui shou. Tui shou, even if you practice it free style, is not free fighting yet. On the other hand, without tui shou, your free fighting skill wouldn't be complete.

How it is connected with other yiquan exercises?

When we are talking about most basic tui shou, it can be said that it is shi li with partner. Shi li - testing strength - are slow movement exercises in which you are checking the feeling of strength, imagining that while moving you are overcoming some resistance, but at the same time trying to stay relaxed. Feeling the force of resistance actually means feeling the force with which you are overcoming this resistance. This is so called *yi zhong zhi li* - force inside mind, which is what was traditionally known as *nei jin* - internal force.

Basic tui shou is often called shi li with partner, as you practice in the same way as in shi li, but here there is some real opponent. Then a bit higher stage of tui shou is practicing bianhua - changes. Here you are using some fa li - methods of issuing force, which in other internal arts are known as fa jin.

But in yiquan most important is free tui shou practice, which is kind of limited sparring. There can be different variants - sometimes you can concentrate on just pushing - unbalancing opponent and throwing him off, sometimes you can concentrate more on searching holes in his defense and hitting - actually some slight patting with palm is used, and of course you can practice both methods together. Thanks to this practice, when you do san shou - free fighting practice, you should be able not only to hit your opponent, but also use the skills developed in tui shou - unbalancing, throwing off and throwing down, changing direction of opponent's attack, searching and creating holes in his defense. Sometimes the contact between your and your opponent's arms is quite long, and then it's obvious that it's very much like the situation during tui shou practice, but sometimes it's just split of a second, and in such short time you should also be able to react the same way as in tui shou.

What is usually overlooked or misunderstood by students during tui shou practice?

Many students often forget about the relation between tui shou and san shou.

Tui shou is not pushing hands for sake of pushing hands. Tui shou practice should serve the demands of san shou practice. So when you practice tui shou, although it is limited comparing to san shou, you should remember that it is part of san shou and not something independent. But quite many students tend to seek some "tricks" or "methods" which work in tui shou only because of its limitations, but wouldn't make any sense in free fighting.

For example when we practice free pushing hands, some students tend to take very low and extended stances, so that opponent cannot push them. In this limited situation it often works - opponent is not able to push. But if someone would do it in free fighting, it would immobilize him for a second, and he would be easy prey for fast moving opponent with good footwork. So it is important to remember: "don't do in tui shou anything that you wouldn't do

in san shou". In tui shou we practice just some aspect of san shou, and not something without relation to san shou.

Can you tell us something more about hunyuan li and its role during tui shou?

In most internal arts the term nei jin - internal force is used. When in yiquan we say about hunyuan li it's actually the same thing. Of course there are many aspects to it.

I already mentioned the feeling of "force inside mind", but there is of course the body mechanics aspect involved, and also ling - swiftness, fluidity and agility which come from the mind and coordination of mind and body. Hunyuan li means a holistic force.

Hunyuan means one, unified, primeval. Sometimes it is written with different character for yuan, and then there is additional meaning of 'round'. To put it in simple words, hunyuan li means that there is specific coordination of mind and body, and also ability of using of specific body mechanics, and what is most important you are able to use it any time, in any direction and with any part of body, and change it freely. To give some more idea about it, imagine an athlete, for example a runner. He is ready to run, and when there is a signal he starts running. Now he is still waiting for signal, but his intention is already directed forward. He is not completely static, he is as if starting to run already, but stopping immediately, and yet like starting to run again. Hunyuan li is something similar, but instead of readiness of moving in one direction, there is readiness of moving or using force with any part of body in any direction at the same time. In tui shou you have situations changing all the time, but at each point of movement you should maintain alignment of body proper for this situation, and you should be able to change, to adjust yourself to changing situation. This is not about some sets of movement, but about readiness to react properly in changing conditions. Of course in tui shou, there is also aspect of fa li -issuing force, and it is also based on concept of hunyuan li and on working with it using all kinds of basic training methods.

How differ tui shou in yiquan from taiji tui shou (and other styles tui shou practice)?

Yiquan comes from xingyiquan, so it puts stress on developing this kind of strong but at the same time elastic power. Although there is softness in it, we don't stress it so much as most taijiquan people seem to do. There is more of powerful issuing force than of "inducing opponent into emptiness". Of course with time the skill of yiquan practitioner becomes very refined and subtle, but for beginner what is simple and direct works better than something very sophisticated. So in yiquan beginners can develop some useful skills in quite short time, and then gradually refine them and make them more subtle. You can see it in our tui shou practice when comparing it to most schools of taijiquan. Another thing is that in many schools of taijiquan - of course this is not case of all schools - they concentrate only on tui shou, neglecting san shou, so their tui shou becomes just pushing for sake of pushing instead of

serving san shou. And in yiquan we always stress the relation between tui shou and san shou. We see tui shou as a part of san shou, not replacing san shou with tui shou.

Can you say a few words about mindset during tui shou and san shou?

San shou can mean real combat, but it can also mean some various kinds of practice preparing for combat. It makes some difference. Because in real combat, I mean when there is real threat, you must do everything to win. You are focused and determined. In zhan zhuang we gradually develop this kind of mindset. But in san shou as a training, you must take care of not only your own safety, but also your partner's. So it's impossible to keep the mindset proper for real combat. Sometimes, you can do some limited sparring, when you can come close to this mindset, but only because what you and your partner do is somewhat limited, because of reason of safety. When the sparring becomes more free, with less limitations, you must have some more control. So this makes difference between san shou as a sparring and san shou as real fighting. Of course you wouldn't spar with your partner as if it was real fight. When talking about tui shou, here there also could be different mindsets. Basic tui shou is like shi li, where you concentrate on feeling the "strength" in changing situations. Then there is some free tui shou, but it's still far from sparring - you are focused, but not so determined, rather concentrating on observing what's happening. And there is free sparring, when you are focused and much more determined. In some versions, like in competition tui shou, where the usage of different methods is limited to issuing force for unbalancing opponent and throwing him off, it's possible to come close to the mindset similar in some aspect (the determination) to that in real combat, although used methods are so limited.

TUI SHOU FROM POINT OF VIEW OF THE OTHER TEACHERS

I also asked Mr. Tim Cartmell and Mr. Karel Koskuba about their opinions and ideas about tui shou practice.

The first is short interview with **Tim Cartmell**, well known martial arts writer and teacher of taijiquan, xingyiquan and baguazhang. He studied yiquan with Gao Liu De.

Why to practice tui shou?

Tui Shou is a drill that aims to develop tactile sensitivity in the hands and arms ("Listening Skill") and the awareness of your center of gravity in relation to your partner's center of gravity. The basic practice involves cycles of pressure applied by both partners with the intent of controlling your partner's center of gravity while simultaneously keeping your partner from controlling your center of gravity. Tui Shou is the more advanced practice of defending oneself while finding an opening in the opponent's defense. The ability to

immediately and effectively apply an appropriate offensive technique at the slightest opportunity is the goal of training ("Understanding Skill").

What is the most misunderstanding or mistake during tui shou practice?

There are two mistakes I commonly encounter. The first is beginning the practice of Tui Shou too early in the training. Practitioners need to have good anatomical alignment, power, and a thorough understanding of technique or the practice of Tui Shou is 'empty.' The goal of Tui Shou practice is the cultivation of sensitivity so that you create the opportunity to apply your technique while preventing the opponent from applying his technique. This is only a meaningful practice if the practitioners have already developed power and the ability to apply practical techniques. The second problem is the use of inappropriate force. Many practitioners struggle against force with brute force while many others are like rag dolls. Tui Shou is all about the appropriate use of force.

What is the main area on which one should concentrate during tui shou?

In general, students should concentrate on adhering to their partner's center of gravity (and not a particular place on the partner's arm per se) and, most importantly, students should understand that the proper practice of Tui Shou is based on simultaneous offense and defense, not one then the other.

Here are some of the ideas of **Karel Koskuba**, UK based martial arts teacher. He teaches taijiquan, baguazhang, xingyiquan and yiquan. In yiquan, he is a student of Master Yao Chengguang.

What is the most important thing during tui shou practice?

There are many important things and it is impossible to arrange them in order of importance. It depends on what our aim is and on our level.

For example, for the absolute beginner relaxation (both physical and mental) is one of the most important parts. Then you should practice movement patterns of tui shou with light contact and relaxed concentration for quite a long period of time.

This stage requires concentration on self and on the way the movements affect us.

Later sticking, following, leading, neutralizing etc. is practised. At this stage, we should focus on our opponent's centre.

During the next stage it is important to create unity of movement between both partners. So it is not clear who leads and who follows. From the technical point of view, you should practice techniques of peng, lu, ji, an (this holds for Taiji) etc.

Which mistake appears most often and what one should pay attention to?

Considering that the order of importance changes, it is the same with mistakes - a small mistake in the beginning could be a big mistake later on!

One of the main mistakes, which can be found in 99 % of practitioners, is the lack of patience.

We must pay attention to our own mistakes. Usually, we are aware of our partner's mistakes. For example, one often occurring problem is that our partner is stiff and we are unable to practice lightly and softly as we would wish. But we are not aware of the fact that our partner has just the same problem. And both of us are right. To solve this situation is not easy until one of the practitioners is on a level where he is able to neutralize the stiff partner. Or we should go back to the beginning level, where we practice "patterns". So it is better to practice with someone who is much better or much worse. In such situation both of the practitioners are able to make better progress rather than when practising with someone who is on the same level.

Why is tui shou so important?

We must understand the purposes of the practice. In the internal martial arts we are developing certain type of movement and power generation. One of the main purposes of tui shou is to practice the continuous application of 'jin' (internal strength). During practice of stances we relax and unite the whole body, then we train to move (e. g. during forms) using whole body and generate whole body power. Tui shou is the level where we learn how to work with 'jin' and manipulate our partner. At first very slowly and carefully, later we can add throws, joint locking and leverages, etc.

In your opinion - what is the main difference between tui shou in yiquan and tui shou in other styles?

Differences are determined by applications. If a style contains many complex elements (e. g. joint locks, etc.), this will be reflected in tui shou.

All of the internal styles try to control the centre of the opponent.

The most important manifestation of the power in Taijiquan is 'peng jin'. During a contact with an expert we have a sensation that there is nothing to push and if we are lucky to find some solid point and push, we find, that this point is not solid after all and our power is going to the side. On the other hand, we are not able to prevent him to do with us what he wants even if he is moving seemingly slowly.

The main concept of Baguazhang is evasion, and is also reflected in tui shou. In contact with an expert, we also have the feeling that there is nothing to push. But it isn't

because of the fact that his body has no solidity, but because his body is not there. We are pushing empty space and his arms are controlling our centre from the other side.

Xingyiquan tui shou is a sort of controlled fight and the main idea is to control opponent's centre as quickly as possible. The best is not to touch him in the first place!

Yiquan is quite a simple style and this is also shown during tui shou. The main idea is to manifest 'hun yuan li' in every direction and to conquer the opponent's centre. During tui shou with an expert we will find that immediately after contact, we lose our balance and it may be very difficult to avoid being thrown in one direction or another!

But this is just a simplified view, of course.

CONCLUSION

In my opinion, tui shou is one of the best ways to free fighting. I learned from this method so much! Through tui shou, I deepened my understanding of body mechanics, proper alignment, balance, timing, force issuing and much more.

In their book "Secret techniques of yiquan", Yao Chengguang and Kubo Isato say: "In a real fight the ultimate goal is to control an opponent naturally." Tui shou with other training methods handed down by Wang Xiangzhai is quite a simple and direct way toward this goal.

Links

For more information about yiquan, visit Andrzej Kalisz's site:

www.yiquan.pl

Tim Cartmell's website is.

www.shenwu.com

Karel Koskuba's websites are:

www.golem.demon.co.uk and www.yiquan.org.uk

Leosh Horky
UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN BODY

The main principles of function of a man from the point of view of Yiquan and other methods of bodywork

INTRODUCTION

The martial arts came into being from a need to increase chances of a victory in a fight or chances of survival in self-defense. With time it turned up, that most of the fighting styles have also other effects, for example health cultivation, condition-improvement, self-cognition, character building or fun-filling-up of the leisure time.

Each student should perceive, why he pays attention to martial arts and what he is expecting from that. Accordingly he should compose his own training. For example, if he really wants to be really good at fighting, half an hour of solo training a day and two-persons training once a week will not be enough. On the other hand a student, who looks at training as a way to get rid of stress and some method of mental hygiene, will absolutely manage with this amount of training.

It is clear, that if we want to do martial arts, it is necessary to take knowledge of practical aspects of combat. Otherwise we wouldn't be able to title our practice as martial arts. In fact, it depends on our motivation, how deeply we would concentrate on fighting. We will also have to keep on our mind our abilities - individual (health, emotional state) and also financial and social circumstances. Most of us simply cannot afford to come to work or to a business meeting with bruises from the sparring.

We should keep on our mind one very important aspect of martial arts, no matter, which style we are practicing and how much we are concentrating on combat training. This is health and personal development. To practice martial arts in a way which damages our health would be very short-sighted. We also feel the need of self-development (or at least to keep status quo or not to degenerate), so we wouldn't be very pleased with a practice, which wouldn't bring us any effect.

If we look at the martial arts in a slightly schematic way, we could see, that it is a process of cultivating skills in the field of self-use, using apparatus, and interaction with other human beings.

By self-use we understand the improvement of body-use, improvement of key-skills (for example coordination, strength etc.) and improvement of psychological qualities. We take human being in his wholeness - not just the physical part.

By using apparatus we understand work with weapons.

Interaction with other human beings means usage of effective combat methods (including principles and techniques) or healing methods (which is an integral part of many martial art traditions).

In our article we concentrate on the first part which is self-use. This theme is important and useful for everyone, because everyone needs to do various activities in the most efficient way. We look at this subject from the yiquan point of view - which is a Chinese martial art. We will also mention similar experiences of practitioners ofrolfing, Feldenkrais method or Alexander technique. This is the reason why you shall find relatively a big amount of quotation in this text.

SYSTEMS AND THEIR AUTHORS

Wang Xiangzhai and Yiquan

Wang Xiangzhai (1885 - 1963) was a well-known Chinese master and a teacher of martial arts. Because of his poor health he started training in xingyiquan with famous master Guo Yunshen. Thanks to practice he not only became much more fit, but also got a lot of practical martial experience. He traveled all over China to practice with the best masters, e.g. in Shaolin temple he studied xinyiba. He was also practicing with the masters of white crane, other masters of xingyiquan and many others. Basing on these experiences he founded yiquan, also known as dachengquan.

"Yiquan" - "Yi" means mind or intent and "quan" means boxing. Focus is put on developing one's natural movement and fighting abilities through a system of training methods which are stressing work on improving perception of one's body, its movement and force. The main point is work of one's mind and its harmonious unity with body.

Moshe Feldenkrais and his method

Moshe Feldenkrais was born in 1904 in Ukraine and died in 1984. At age of fourteen he left for Palestine and lived for 10 years in Tel Aviv working and studying at the same time.

During a football match he injured his knee so badly it was swollen for a few months.

In 1928 he moved to Paris where he studied physics, mathematics and engineering, and then became a research assistant to the nuclear chemist Frédéric Joliot-Curie. Here he met Jigoro Kano (the judo founder) and became one of the first Europeans who got the black belt.

During the 2nd war he fled to Britain. As Steve Shafarman writes: "At that time he got interested in human evolution and started to explore the ways of children movement. He was inspired by the observations of children who were in his wife's Yony Rubenstein surgery. After a bus-crash he re-aggravated an old knee injury and the doctors told him that he had to have an operation otherwise he would never be able to walk. There were no modern arthroscopy techniques and the best doctors in England could promise only 50 percent of guarantee that the operation would be successful. Feldenkrais regarded operation with a such prognosis irresponsible. In an effort to find a better solution he started to study everything what he could get about health and curing - anatomy, physiology, movement-therapy,

psychotherapy and spiritual practicing, yoga, acupuncture and hypnotism. Feldenkrais started walking again, he refused the operation and even started to practice judo." (Vědomí léčí, page 9)

Feldenkrais method also known as Awareness through movement is based on improving of self-image, which leads up to better body-work and the quality of movement, but also personal development.

Steven Shafarman, Feldenkraiser's student, in his book „Consciousness is healing“ adds to this topic: "Each of us behaves in conformity with our own imagination about us. This self-image rises and changes according to our learning. The complete self-image should consist of awareness of each joint and all surfaces of a body. Most people consider their body as separates parts, which are moving independently of each other: feet, legs, arms, hands, head and in the middle of all is back which keeps all sections together."

Dr. Ida Rolf and her method

Dr. Ida P. Rolf was born in 1896 in New York and died in 1979. She graduated during the 1st war, which gave her a great opportunity. As her secretary writes in her book „Rolfing a realita těla“ (page 6) : "At that time lots of men were fighting and there was a big lack of qualified workers in many fields, so lots of women got the unique opportunity. She got a job in the Rockefeller's institute (today Rockefeller's university) in New York City and she could continue her studies while she was working. She got doctor's degree in biochemistry in the faculty of medicine and surgery of Colombian University and continued working in Rockefeller's institute, where she finally got the honor of remarkable member." Dr. Rolf studied yoga, osteopathy and homeopathy.

Rolfing (Structural integration) systematizes and balances the body in terms of the field of attraction. This is achieved by the systematical manipulation (realized during 10 lessons, one hour which), which lightens and shakes up fascias. According to Ida Rolf - "fascia is the organ of body-control". („Rolfing a realita těla“, page 98).

F. M. Alexander and his technique

Frederic Matthias Alexander was born in 1869 in Tasmania and died in 1955 in London. During his late teens he became an actor, but unfortunately he often lost his voice during performance.

Robert Macdonald and Caro Ness describe the circumstances of creation of Alexander technique: "When Alexander started to hoarse and loose his voice, he was visiting well-known doctors, but without any effect. Before a very important performance his doctor recommended him voice-rest for 2 weeks before the performance. Alexander followed this advise, his voice was in a normal state at the beginning, but during the performance he started to hoarse and finally he completely lost his voice. Alexander speculated that he must have

been doing something on stage in act of reciting which caused his vocal problems. Using mirrors, he began to study the way he was using muscles while speaking, observing muscular tension. He found that he habitually pulled his head back and down and shortened neck before speaking, moreover he was breathing through his mouth. It took several years before he got rid of that habit and learned how to speak more freely. Not only did his vocal problems disappear, but his overall health improved as well. („Tajemství Alexanderovy techniky“, page 14).

Alexander method is based on right alignment of body, which leads to natural posture, open breathing and linked movements. During its implementation simple movements are used, usually with the helping touch of a certificated practitioner.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

In this part of our article we are going to pay attention to some of basic principles relevant to body-work, which we could very easily observe and use in practice.

Classical Yiquan has several basic training methods. They are:

- Static postures (zhan zhuang),
- Stepping (moca bu),
- Slow movement (shi li),
- Fast movement (fa li),
- Two-persons exercise (tui shou a san shou).

With those methods yiquan leads its practitioner through the main possibilities of human movement and position.

Among the static positions there are lying, sitting and standing postures. Static positions in standing we further divide into positions, where weight is evenly distributed on both feet and positions, where weight is more on one leg.

The Stepping we start from forward and backward, and later different variations and directions are practiced.

Slow movements contain coordinated movements in the basic directions, eg. forward, backward, left, right, up, down and following trajectory of circle or curve.

By fast movements we mean explosive release of power.

Two-persons exercises are based on solo exercises and they are concentrating on the development of combat skills. Some of the movements and postures, like crawling, swimming, kneeling etc. are not commonly used in yiquan, but it is possible to apply the principles of yiquan on them.

For Yiquan-practitioners the static positions are not anything separated from stepping or movement. We can consider the static position as a movement stopped at one point. We

can also take the movement as a series of infinite amount of static positions, which are following each other. If we are able to perceive each of the training methods of yiquan in this way, it is easier to understand, that there are certain basic principles, which are common.

If yiquan shall be an effective martial art and also health-bringing exercise, it is necessary that the principles will fully respect the human physiology and the principles shall not be separated from the daily life.

According to us there is a basic trinity of those principles. They are: the body structure, relaxation-tension and unity of mind and body. In the next lines we are going to explore each principle on its own. By this - we of course are not saying, that next to those three basic principles there are not any other principles, or that they are less important.

1. The body-structure

We all exist and move on the Earth within the field of attraction. Our body is under the permanent force which pulls us down. If our body has the right structure, which is appropriate to our position, we don't perceive the field of attraction as a competitor. On the contrary - it is our helper. As the purpose of this article is not to give the detailed analysis of all various postures of a body, we would like to concentrate only on the standing posture.

One of the first method yiquan students learn is zhan zhuang or static position in standing. The basic instruction says, it is necessary to stand with the feeling the top of the head is lifting upwards, with the pelvis as we would like to sit down, the knees slightly bend. Notice now the posture of head, spine and pelvis. The founder of yiquan, Wang Xiangzhai wrote: "Be naturally relaxed, with head straight, eyes watching straight, body in proper position, as if it is lighting something in top of your head." („Central pivot of the way of fist“, page 20).

As we can see, the feeling that the top of the head is lifting upwards is emphasized. This point is important not just for yiquan, but also for other Chinese martial arts. Wolfe Lowenthal writes in his book about Cheng Man Ching, the master of taijiquan: "The basic principle of taiji is relaxation. The next most important principles are three treasures. If you follow those three treasures, there is no need to worry whether you are practicing in the right way. The first treasure directs us to the point of top of head, the place, where little children have their soft spot. Imagine, my professor (it means Cheng Man Ching) kept saying, that you are suspended on a spring which goes to a center of your head. He was also using other imagination - the head is stressed against the roof. He even once said, you can be practicing 30 years, but if you won't be paying your attention to „hanging-up-your-head“, your effort will give no effect." (Nic vám netajím, page 62)

There is direct relation between whole body and the position of head. If this position is wrong, the body becomes imbalanced and loses its right structure. A very interesting point of

view is given by Ida P. Rolf: "A man, who keeps leaning his head to the side, has problems with blood circulation in half of his head. What is caused by that? If he keeps head in this position because of for example an accident in his childhood, it has a certain influence on his consciousness. One half of his head is better nourished than the other." (Rolfing and realita těla, page 106).

Alexander technique also pays a lot of attention to head posture. As Macdonald and Ness write: "Alexander found a very important regularity of human physiology. He learned, that to keep the right tension of nape muscles and the head-position in the relation to the rest of body is the very first presumption to purposeful body-use in movement." (Tajemství Alexanderovy techniky, page 16). And they continue: "Your head is a very sensitive organ and your body-balance shall protect you from hitting your head. The fear of fall is a part of basic survival mechanism, which protects a man from the fall. If your head is not in the right position, your senses are alerted and your muscles get stressed to protect you. And this repeats again and again....in mutual circle. You are in a great danger of falling down, if you put lots of energy to keep from that, as you stress much more your muscles." (Tajemství Alexanderovy techniky, page 41).

If we keep the feeling, that we are hanged out on the top of our head, or we can also imagine we are holding something up on top of head, our chin automatically tucks slightly in, and we can breathe more freely.

Kim Davies mentions in his book "Příručka – záda, klouby a vše ostatní, co vás bolí" some of the basic points of body-posture. He writes about "head-posture": "Keep your head straight and in one line with a spinal column. Your chin has to be as if on the same level as a floor and neck should be relaxed." (page 18).

We've just described the basic requirements of the head-posture. But in which position shall be your backbone? Let's imagine for a while, that we really are hanged up on the top of head. The spine is hanging from that and is weighted by pelvis. So we perceive our spine as slightly stretched and extended. Please notice now, that the extension of spine gives us the effect of upward pulling and at the same time the effect of dropping the weight down.

So now, we've described the feeling which appears with the right alignment of body. It is not a description of the real state, as our spine cannot be absolutely straight in reality. If you want to use some of those experience in practice, we recommend not to try any experiments on your own, but practice under a qualified supervision. The spine is very sensitive and easy to harm.

Mentioning the standing posture we also have to deal with the feet-position. Basically we can say, that the feet-weight is evenly distributed on the sole of foot, the toes shall be like they were catching the ground and the knees are slightly bent (they are never fully straightened), knees and feet are facing the same direction and the weight of the whole body

goes down to the soles and continues toward the ground. Practicing these instructions also needs a qualified supervision.

The rules of the right posture are summed up by Moshe Feldenkrais: ".....Each posture is right if it follows the rule - the bones antagonize the gravity, so it relaxes the muscles, which could be used for a movement. The body and its nervous system are developing together under the influence of gravity. The bone, without any expenditure of energy, protects body against the gravity. If the muscles should do this instead of the bone, they would be wasting the energy and moreover they couldn't work fully on movement." (,Feldenkraisova metoda“, page 81)

Obviously the muscles should work on the right posture of the body. As we know, in this process of standing there are phasic muscles and tonic muscles (see „Gymnastika pro kondiční a zdravotní účely“, page 15). It is important to keep the body posture by not using superfluous tension of muscles, or not using the muscles, which shouldn't be involved in this process.

2. Relaxation and tension

First of all we would like to define "relaxation". There is a common sentence in Yiquan: "relaxed but not loose, tense but not stiff." By the word "relaxation" we mean live, flexible and springy relaxation, and not slackness without any power. Actually, this process is about getting rid of over-tension. An absolute relaxation would cause our falling on the floor. As Hans-Dieter Kempf very pertinently notes: "The muscles, ligaments and tendons activity allows the straight standing. The most important muscle groups (extensors) are: stretchers - gastrocnemius for stabilizing ankle joint, front femoral ankle joint, nates muscles for stabilizing hip joint and back and abdominal musculature for stabilizing spine." („Záda – zbavte se bolestí navždy“, page 36)

It is clear, that if our body-structure is in a bad condition, we must compensate it by higher usage of muscular work, or involving muscles, which could be normally relaxed. We would put uselessly a lot of effort to that. According to us we cannot simply divide the body-structure and the right relaxation. Moshe Feldenkrais once wrote: "We are not aware of the muscle-work, which antagonizes the gravity. We are aware of that just if we interrupt its work or if we higher its activity on purpose." (Feldenkraisova metoda, page 83). It means, that if we have the right body-structure and at the same time are right-relaxed, we don't feel any tense or struggle. It means, we don't feel any pain.

Over tension always brings problems with itself. The authors Finando and Finando in their book "Fundované doteky" point out: "A chronic contraction of muscles has a certain influence on other aspects - for example circulation of blood, lymph drain or innervations. We could say, that the muscle-condition is related to our health condition." (page 15). And

"Healthy musculature is soft, supple, and elastic when you press, you can easily find its structures. The healthy muscles are painless after a touch." (page 32).

Relaxing of an excessive muscle tense and putting them back to a natural position together with the right body posture is one of the reasons why the practice of yiquan in the right way is very beneficial to your health. Wang Xiangzhai summarized some of his experience in these words: "Natural means beneficial for body, improving its functioning. In case of anemia level of hemoglobin will increase. In case of hypertension blood pressure will decrease." ("Central pivot of the way of fist", page 20).

The practice of Yiquan teaches us how to cultivate the right relaxation (and of course the right tension at the same time) together with an adequate body structure in the static positions and movement. It also pays attention to changes between tension and relaxation. But this would be topic for another article. As some of us have difficulties in achieving the right relaxation, there are different types of supplementary exercises, some basing more on awareness and visualization, some other using swinging movements etc.

3. The unity of mind and body

As we could see, in reality - we cannot separate the body structure from the right relaxation. As well - we cannot set apart the unity of mind and body. This is the essence not only for Yiquan but also for many other methods. For most people it is obvious that our mind-state and our emotions have influence on the body posture. That is why we can guess in what mood the other person is just from the sight - how he is standing, sitting, moving. Less evident is a fact, that body posture has influence on how we feel - on our psyche.

The more we succeed in keeping the unity of mind and body, the more we feel our life is full. We think, that this is the main reason why many sports and martial arts are so popular, as the practice brings this feeling.

Each good school of Yiquan accentuates the mind activity and wants the student to know what exactly he is supposed to do. Very important is also to cultivate our ability of awareness, some people call it vigilance. The same principle is also used in other effective methods: "A mindless training has often a negative consequence as it strengthens bad habits and strains the muscles. Mindless repetition of anything - playing on the playground or the piano, lowers our awareness." (Steven Shafarman: „Vědomí léčí, page 27).

The relation of mind and body, its unity or duality has an effect on relaxation and tension.

As a matter of interest we are entering the Hans-Dieter Kempf's view: "The tension and relaxation - they are 2 life-poles. The human-organism viability is underlined by equable changing the balance of both poles. The disorder of highly differentiable balance has a bad

influence on the organism. This can often cause the disorder and detriments of the health condition - for example headache, convolutionary tense, disposition to other infection, the heart-throbbing and tachycardia, disposition to spasm, stomach ache, the pain in nape, shoulders, back etc.

During relaxation we find the connection between spirit and body. Our body and muscles relaxation is not possible if we are at the same time under a high mental pressure. On the contrary, stiff and convolutionary tensioned musculature doesn't let the mental relaxation. This connection between mental and physical relaxation gives us the chance to influence one of the poles, if we on purpose affect the other pole by the relaxation procedures." („Zádazbavte se bolestí navždy“, page 36).

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE MAIN PRINCIPLES

Though we have already mentioned we cannot look at the body structure, relaxation and unity of body and mind separately, we would like to demure to some cases, when one of those basic principles is missing.

Tim Cartmell describes very well the state, if one of the first principles is missing: "Good skeletal alignment held with tension may be stable in static poses but will lack mobility, flexibility, sensitivity and any force generated will be seriously inhibited. Relaxation without proper alignment may allow for some degree of sensitivity and the ability to change, but the posture will be weak and little power can be generated (one cannot take full advantage of gravity and the Earth)." ("Effortless combat throws", page 26)

If there is lack of unity of mind and body, it means, we are not aware, we are vacant, we aren't able to react promptly, we lack the ability to adapt according to a situation, so we take a risk of injury or an accident. We can overlook some very important signals, which our body is sending out (for example pain, hunger, the feeling of discomfort). Moreover we can loose our touch with our emotions and get into many troubles.

It is very important not to forget, that the three basic principles mentioned here are not describing the optimal function of a human organism in its every detail. We also shouldn't forget, that we are the parts of many various relations - space, time, social. Peter Schwind in his book about rolfing marks very precisely: "Our structure and our postural habits are never neutral, we are not existing outside of the world and its objects and subjects. We cannot separate our postural habits and the ways we interact with the others." („Zdravá záda“, page 157).

CONCLUSION

Eric Franklin writes: "Even though human organism is much more complicated than any machine, most of us better understand our car than our body." („Jak se zbavit napětí“, page 51).

Unfortunately, I cannot oppose, but only say that he is right. We hope, that by this article we help to awake your inquiring spirit and you might set out on the trip to explore yourself and your organism.

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Author of this article is representative of Yiquan Academy in Czech Republic.

ANDRZEJ KALISZ

ALIVE FORCE IN YIQUAN

This is one of two articles written as supplement to yiquan workshop at **Kung Fu Festival** in Warsaw, Poland, October 2006. During this short - 2 hours workshop the basic double pushing hands exercise was used as a pretext to explain some aspects of the concept of force, as it is used in yiquan.



Here I will start from very simple example of using so called **supporting force** - **zhicheng li**. Let's think about situation in which your goal is kind of static opposing opponent's pushing force, while at the same time trying to minimize your own effort (muscles tension).

Most people would tense maximally, when feeling oncoming force. But the reaction of yiquan practitioner should be trying to achieve the result with minimum effort, avoiding stiffness. Classical theories say about "*not using force against force*". It doesn't need to mean literally forbidding using force against force. You should realize that even masters of taijiquan, which is famous for its softness, demonstrated not only softness, but also ability of being unmovable - when opponent tried pushing, he was feeling like "*trying to push a wall*". So the right meaning is rather not opposing opponent's force with force used in wrong way - so called **clumsy force** - **zhuo li**.

When in such situation, thanks to the right positioning of various parts of body in relation to each other, in relation to opponent's force and in relation to the points of support, force is efficiently transferred through the complex structure consisting of bones, muscles, tendons and fascia, the strength of muscles doesn't need to be applied to maximum. Thanks to this you will still keep some reserve which can be used, when there is need.

Imagine that in relatively static situation (something like clinch) you are opposing opponent's pushing force and from such condition, you want to break his balance with short, sharp movement. With typical use of force it would be difficult to achieve the intended effect of explosiveness, because all muscle fibers shrank already. You would have to relax first, and only after this you could issue force. But it is completely different situation if the supporting force is based on the right structure (frame) of body, with less tension. When at least part of muscles stay relaxed, the sudden, powerful contraction will become possible - the bigger

change between relax and tension, the more distinct this effect of explosiveness. This is the skill of sudden bouncing opponent back from situation of relatively static pressure. Sometimes this is called "*issuing force without stage of accumulating force.*"

This ability is developed by transferring very natural working of body, which everybody knows, to a new situations. Everybody can stand or walk in relaxed manner, "*without using force*", . You don't think about tensing in order to oppose gravitation. If you tried to oppose the force of gravitation in the same way as most people oppose opponent pushing them, it would make you stiff, and you would hardly be able to move. When keeping the relaxed standing posture, it's mostly slow-twitch fibers which are engaged into generating necessary strength, while most fast-twitch fibers can remain more relaxed and ready for explosive action.

So called **zhicheng li - supporting force** means using body in various situations and in relation to various directions of force in such a way, as you naturally and "*without using force*" do this while keeping body position against gravitation. This way you can avoid stiffness and maintain some freedom of movement, even when at the same time there is need to oppose in relatively static way to some outside force.

The relation to the force of gravitation is important aspect of **zhan zhuang** exercises. Although keeping natural posture with arms hanging loosely is quite easy, when you need to keep your arms at shoulder level for some time, not many people are able to combine this with relax. Usually there appears too much tensions, stiffness, pain. The problem is in big part result of too much engagement of muscles, especially fast-twitch fibers. Thanks to systematic **zhan zhuang** practice, you can change the mode of using muscles in static or relatively static situation, which will be favorable for developing movement skills - especially ability of explosive issue of power from situation when you are maintaining the **supporting force**. This basic experience related to gravitation is then transferred to practice with partner and with various directions of forces.

During this workshop I pointed out, that in basic double pushing hands exercise we are using principle of constant control over opponents arms. To achieve this, so called **zhi li - pointing force** (force from point of contact toward opponent's center line) is used. This is some pressure kept constantly during circular movements of arms, while direction and path of movement are changing, so also direction of **zhi li** must change accordingly at each point of movement. To diminish tension and effort, you need to keep adjusting body structure (frame) to new situation and apply principles of mechanics like wedging and drilling. If opponent doesn't have this skill, he will often perceive this force as incredibly hard, while we can still keep feeling of relax and comfort, being able to react fast and adapt to changing situations. This is of course only some aspect of what we call **alive force - huo li**.

ANDRZEJ KALISZ
BEIJING YIQUAN RESEARCH ASSOCIATION



Meeting of Beijing Yiquan Research Association, 11 June 2000.

Sitting in the first row from the left are: second - **Yao Chengguang** (president of association), fourth - **Huo Zhenhuan** (honorary president of association, president of Yiquan in Hong Kong, vice-president of Asian Wushu Federation), sixth - **Wang Yufang** (honorary president of association, yiquan founder's daughter). In second row from the left: **Liu Pulei, Feng Zhiqiang** (invited guest, president of Beijing Chen Style Taijiquan Association), **Cui Ruibin, Yao Chengrong**.

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ANDRZEJ KALISZ
HISTORY OF YIQUAN

Wang Xiangzhai (1886-1963), also known as Nibao, **Zhenghe** or Yuseng (*Monk of Universe*) was one of the best students of Guo Yunshen (Kuo Yun Shen), famous master of *xingyiquan* (*hsing-i ch'uan*). Probably only Wang Xiangzhai learned all the secrets of Guo Yunshen's *zhan zhuang* exercises, which exercises became later the most characteristic element of yiquan.



Wang Xiangzhai
founder of yiquan (dachengquan)

In 1907 Wang left home, and looking after job, finally joined army. At the beginning he was just a helper in kitchen. But when one of officers discovered how skilled he was in combat, he was appointed as martial art instructor. In 1913 he became famous for defeating **Li Ruidong**, founder of *Li* style *taijiquan*, who was instructor of president's guards. In the same year Wang became chief of **Department of Unarmed Combat of Land Forces**. He appointed as other instructors such famous masters from *xingyi/bagua* circle as: **Sun Lutang** (master of *xingyiquan* and *baguazhang*, founder of *Sun* style *taijiquan*), **Shang Yunxiang** (founder of *Shang* style *xingyiquan*), **Liu Wenhua** (son of **Liu Qilan**, who together with **Guo Yunshen** was student of **Li Luoneng**).

In 1915 Wang defeated **Zhou Ziyian**, master of *praying mantis* style, who then became Wang's student.

In 1918, because of political changes, Department of Unarmed Combat of Land Army suspended working. Wang went to the South to search after greatest masters of martial arts. First he went to Shaolin Temple, where he learned *xinyiba* (a system related to *xingyiquan*) from monk Henglin (also known as Changlin or Xianglin - later Doshin So, founder of *Shorinji Kempo*, learned from the same monk). In Hubei province Wang learned from excentric master Jie Tiefu. In Fujian province he was again appointed as martial art instructor in this province's army. At that time he met masters of southern *white crane* style - Fang Qiaozhuang and Jin Shaofeng. Coming back north he met famous master of *xinyi* - Huang Muqiao, from whom he learned "*health dance*". In Xi'an he met famous for his quick kicks master Liu Peixian. He learned also *baguazhang* from Liu Fengchun and met *taijiquan* masters Yang Shaohou and Yang Chengfu. Those are only some of the masters from whom Wang learned or with whom he exchanged experiences.

About 1925, while teaching xingyiquan, Wang noticed that his students were putting too much attention to outer form, determined set of techniques, and too little to mental aspect. So he started using more widely zhan zhuang exercises and other training methods similar to those presently used in yiquan/dachengquan, and less stress putting on practice of forms. He changed name of the system to *yiquan*, discarding the element *xing* (form). History of the new system started from this point. First student of yiquan in **Beijing** was **Qi Zhidu**. In Tianjin joined: **Zhao Enqing (Zhao Daoxin)** - winner of free fighting tournament at **Third All China Sports Competition**; also famous for defeating Norway boxer **Andersen**, having uncomfortable slippers on his feet; founder of *xinhuizhang* version, based greatly on *baguazhang*), **Gu Xiaochi**, **Ma Qichang**, **Deng Zhisong**, **Miao Chunyu**, **Zhang Zonghui**, **Zhang Entong** (later, in 1950s he defeated Chinese heavy weight wrestling champion **Zhang Kuiyuan**, who after this started studying yiquan), **Qiu Zhihe**, **Zhao Fengyao**, **Zhao Zuoyao**.



Xingyiquan masters - sitting from the left:
Zhang Zhanhua, Shang Yunxiang,
Zhang Zhankui, Wang Xiangzhai.

In 1928, together with his student **Zhao Enqing** and *xingyiquan* master from **Tianjin** - **Zhang Zhankui** Wang went to **Hangzhou**, where he was referee at free fighting tournament at **Third All China Sports Competition** and also demonstrated training methods of *yiquan*. His student Zhao Enqing (later known as **Zhao Daoxin**) won the tournament. Then Wang was invited to Shanghai, where he founded **Yiquan Society**. After Wang's fight with boxing world champion, Hungarian Inge (later relation of this fight was published in London "Times") yiquan became quite well known. Those who became Wang's students in this period were: **You Pengxi** (founder of *kong jin* version; at older age emigrated to **USA**, where he taught in **California** and died in 1983), **Gao Zhendong**, **Zhu Guolu**, **Zhu Guozhen**, **Bu Enfu** (Chinese champion of boxing and *shuai-jiao* wrestling), **Zhang Changxin** (winner of boxing tournament in Shanghai), **Zhang Changyi**, brothers **Han Xingqiao** and **Han Xingyuan**, **Wang Shuhe**, **Ma Jianzhao**, **Ning Dachun**.



Zhao Daoxin

Han Xingqiao, Zhao Daoxin, Zhang Changxin and Gao Zhendong became famous in Shanghai as "*four diamond warriors*". Wang wrote first yiquan treatise: "*Correct path of yiquan*". At that time Wang Xiangzhai's *yiquan* was already quite different from what was taught by other *xingyiquan* masters. Wang in his work criticizes some concepts popular in *xingyiquan* circles, but many of his ideas were still based on traditional concepts, which he gave up in later years. In some *xingyiquan* sources term "*natural school*" of *xingyiquan* is used regarding Wang's teachings of Shanghai period.

One of Shanghai bankers proposed that Wang organized a team which would go for a world tournee to demonstrate power of chinese martial art. But soon political perturbances caused some problems and the banker gave up this idea. During stay in Shanghai Wang met **Wu Yihui** - master of *liuhebafa*, whom he described as one of the three greatest masters he met during his travels all over China (two other were **Jie Tiefu** and **Fang Qiaozhuang**, mentioned already above).

In 1935 **Wang Xiangzhai**, together with his students **Bu Enfu, Zhang Entong, Zhang Changxin** and **Han Xingqiao** moved to Wang's home prefecture **Shen**. There they concentrated on training and studies on martial art theory. Most training methods used presently in yiquan were developed and perfected at that time. It was proved that with these methods students were making much faster progress.

In 1937 Wang moved to **Beijing**. He taught yiquan and worked further on theory of the system. **Hong Lianshun**, master of *xingyiquan* and *tantui* was quite famous in Beijing at that time. When Hong heard about Wang's incredible skill he came to challenge him. After being defeated Hong became Wang's student and also his students he passed to Wang. Among them was **Yao Zongxun** (1917-1985), who later became Wang's successor. Other Wang's students from Beijing period were: **Dou Shiming** (who once with one punch defeated Gao Yanwang, general Fu Shuangying's bodyguard), **Dou Shicheng, Li Yongzong, Yang Demao, Zhang Zhong, Zhang Fu, Wang Binkui, Yang Shaoqing, Li Wentao, Li Jianyu, Wang Shichuan, Jiao Jingang, Ao Shuopeng, Ao Shuhong, Tong Guocao**.

In 1939 Wang published in "*Shibao*" paper a text in which he invited all masters of martial arts to exchange experiences and ideas. The comers usually wanted to compare their skills with Wang. Wang had chosen four students who fought instead of him: **Han Xingqiao, 38**

Hong Lianshun, Yao Zongxun and Zhou Ziyuan. Only after defeating one of them the comer would fight with Wang, but no-one succeeded.

In 1940 in Tokio took place a big festival of martial arts in which also Chinese team participated. Some Chinese masters collaborating with Japanese went there. The chief of the team tried to persuade Wang Xiangzhai, whom he regarded as greatest master, to participate. Wang refused. But because during the festival, the Chinese talked a lot about Wang Xiangzhai, soon many Japanese started coming to Beijing to visit Wang. Many of them challenged Wang, and all were defeated. Many of them wanted become Wang's students, but only one was accepted - it was **Kenichi Sawai**, who later created his version of yiquan, known in Japan as *taiki-ken* (Sawai was one of most famous masters of martial arts in Japan, he was consultant of **Masutatsu Oyama**, founder of *kyokushin karate*). Though Sawai was Wang's student, usually he learned from **Yao Zongxun**.

In 1941 Wang presented his six best students with honorary names, in this way expressing his high opinion about their skills and abilities. **Zhao Enqing** received name **Daoxin**, **Han Xingqiao - Daokuan**, **Bu Enfu - Daokui**, **Zhang Entong - Daode**, **Zhao Fengyao - Daohong**. **Yao Zongxun**, though younger and learning yiquan for shorter time than other, showed incredible learning abilities and received name **Jixiang**, meaning that he was Wang Xiangzhai's successor (*ji* - to continue, *xiang* - part of Wang Xiangzhai's name). Wang also presented Yao a fan with calligraphy which is clear evidence that Yao was designed as Wang's main successor.



The fan presented by Wang Xiangzhai to Yao Zongxun

"I'm ashamed that my efforts are so clumsy and I'm not able to achieve acme. So I hope that next generations will succeed.

I present my student Yao with name Jixiang (succesor of Xiang), meaning that the seed of martial science will not be lost.

He was poor and without support from childhood, so I'm taking right of his parents.

His nature is being a scholar, but he is not like typical bookworm.

His mind is bold and open. Not many people could compete with him.

Having such a student as Zongxun, I know that my way will not be lost.

He will give all efforts, so our nation spirit will not decline.

I want him to do all he can, so people can benefit from martial art.

I wish that no hardships break his will, so his attitude and aspirations will reach rainbow on the sky.

I don't speak much, keeping silence, but secretly feeling proud of him. And I dislike those ox-ghosts which pretend to be dragons.

Someone of such strong heart can subdue a tiger, but for reason of modesty and peace he will yield even to a cat."

Yao Zongxun proved his skill in many fights, often fighting instead of Wang Xiangzhai when someone challenged him. In 1940s he also many times fought with street gangs, numerous at that time in Beijing. In this way he got much experience in real combat.

Yiquan was already a system completely separate from *xingyiquan*. Wang's students suggested a new name: *dachengquan* (boxing of great fullness). Wang opposed, because the name suggested that it was perfect system, and he maintained that there was no limit for perfecting martial art. But because his resistance wasn't strong enough, the name was used for a few years and by some is used till now. But most of Wang's students after some time started using the name of *yiquan* again.

Wang wrote second work about his system's theory: "*Central axis of the way of fist*", which is also known as "*Theory of dachengquan*". It was to some extent based on first book: "*Correct path of yiquan*". But Wang gave up completely many traditional ideas. Training methods were based on different concepts. New methods enabled achieving the same or better results easier and in shorter time.

Wang at that time taught personally only his old students, directing all newcomers to **Yao Zongxun**. In middle 1940s Wang started putting more attention to health aspect of *yiquan* exercises. He taught personally the "*health*" group. Some of students of this group were: **Chen Haiting, Qin Zhongsan, Yu Yongnian, Bu Yukun, Mi Jingke, Sun Wenqing, Zhang Yuheng, Qi Zhenglin** and Wang Xiangzhai's daughter - **Wang Yufang**. In 1947 this group, which practiced in **Ancestors Temple** (which presently is **Working People's Palace of Culture**) had about 100 members. Many of them were able to cure some illnesses that couldn't be cured in other way. Therapeutical efficiency and lack of side-effects of these exercises was later proved scientifically.

After 1949 the situation was not favourable for practicing *yiquan* as a combat art. Though in 1950 Wang was appointed as vice-president of *wushu* section of **All-China Physical Culture Committee**, he soon gave it up. In next years he taught almost entirely the "health" version. The "health" group moved to **Sun Yatsen's Park** and could practice freely. **Yu Yongnian** presented to authorities a report about therapeutical values of *zhan zhuang* exercises, which resulted in introducing this method in many hospitals all over China. Also Wang Xiangzhai was asked to teach in hospitals. In 1958 he was appointed in **Beijing Chinese Medicine Research Institute**. In 1961 he moved to **Chinese Medicine Hospital** in **Baoding, Hebei** province. Wang turned the "health" group to Yao Zongxun, who also taught "combat" version to some chosen students. In 1962 Wang participated in *qigong* conference, where he performed some exercises, which were met with great interest. He died on 12th July 1963 in Tianjin.



Wang Xiangzhai (in long coat) with students

While the "health" version could be practiced freely, development of the "combat" system met many obstacles. It was practiced only in very small circles. The period of **Cultural Revolution** (1966-1976) was particularly difficult. **Yao Zongxun** with family was sent to work in the country. Even in this extremely unfavorable period he continued practicing and teaching his sons - twin brothers **Yao Chengguang** and **Yao Chengrong**. In late 1970s Yao came back to Beijing and in more favourable atmosphere started to propagate yiquan extensively. He also worked with scientists on adapting yiquan training methods for various sport disciplines. In 1984 he created **Beijing Yiquan Research Association**, and became its first president.



Yao Chengguang and Yao Chengrong brothers with father

Presently yiquan can freely develop in China and is gradually becoming one of most popular of Chinese martial arts. **Yao Zongxun's** sons - **Yao Chengguang** (president of **Yiquan Association**, taught in **Hong Kong** and **Japan**, has students in Poland) and **Yao Chengrong** (vice-president and vice-secretary of Yiquan Association, together with brother taught in Hong Kong and Japan) are continuing work of developing and popularizing yiquan. In Beijing also other **Yao Zongxun's** students are active: **Bo Jiacong** (head of board of control of Yiquan Association, has students in **Japan**), **Cui Ruibin** (vice-president of **Yiquan Association**, taught in **England** and **Sweden**), **Liu Pulei** (member of board of **Chinese Wushu Association**, vice-president of **Yiquan Association**, has students in **Malaysia**).



Yao Chengguang and Zhao Daoxin

Yiquan is taught as an art of real combat, but competitions in *tui shou* (pushing hands) and *san shou* (free fighting) are being organized too. Apart from full system of yiquan, the "health" version is also very popular. Some of most famous experts of this version are: Yu Yongnian, Wang Yufang (Wang Xiangzhai's daughter) and Sun Changyou (Yao Zongxun's student).

Presently Yiquan is becoming more and more popular all over world.



**Some participants of conference on yiquan in Beijing in 1997.
From left: Han Jingchen, Han Jingyu, Bo Jiacong,
Yao Chengrong, Cui Ruibin, Yao Chengguang.**

ANDRZEJ KALISZ KUNG-FU/WUSHU



Yiquan is a system (branch) of kung-fu (wushu). What is kung-fu or wushu then?

In the west the term kung-fu (gongfu) is usually used for chinese martial arts. The word kung-fu (gongfu) does not mean a martial art actually, but high level of skill, achieved through long time hard practice. It can mean skill in anything, not just fighting. In China another term is used: wushu - which translates 'martial arts'. Japanese bu-jitsu is written with exactly the same characters.

There is xiandai wushu (modern wushu) or jingsai wushu (competition wushu) and chuantong wushu (traditional wushu), also known as minjian wushu (folk wushu). The term kung-fu, as used in the west relates more to chuantong wushu/minjian wushu than xiandai wushu/jingsai wushu.

Xiandai wushu/jingsai wushu is a competition event, which will be part of Olympics (wushu forms competition in 2008 in Beijing). The forms - taolu are divided into: changquan ('long fist' - quite acrobatic, with fluid, dynamic, powerful movements), nanquan ('southern fist' - more stable positions, less acrobatic, a lot of physical power) and taijiquan (soft, graceful movements, most of which are done slowly). There is also sanda/sanshou (this will not be part of 2008 Olympics yet) - fighting competition with use of gloves and protective equipment (including body protector), similiar to kick-boxing but with use of a lot of throws and pushing opponent out of the platform on which the competition is done. In professional version there is less of protective equipment and hitting with knees is allowed.

Chuantong wushu/minjian wushu, or using the term popular in the west - kung-fu is not one kind of martial art, but it is a big number of various systems, which are based on different principles and concepts. The systems are classified in various ways. Although there may be a lot of arguing over validity of some of those classifications, they are quite popular, so we will mention them here too.

Chinese martial arts are usually classified as northern and southern. It is said that northern styles use a lot of kicking and southern styles concentrate more on hands techniques. But actually there are many styles in southern China which are using a lot of high kicking, and there are many styles in the north which don't put too much stress on kicking methods.

In another classification systems are related to some of the main centers which according to facts or legends influenced development of Chinese martial arts, like Shaolin (there is division for northern and southern Shaolin), Wudang or Emei. Many systems don't fit too well into this classification.

The division for external family - waijia and internal family - neijia is quite popular. Most martial arts are classified as external, and only very few as internal. It can be said (simplifying the issue a bit) that external styles concentrate more on typical physical training and typical use of force, while internal styles concentrate rather on working with co-ordination between mind and body and a kind of rather uncommon generating of power with use of whole, quite relaxed body. Some traditional theories talk about this as "using power of bones and tendons and not muscles". There is a lot of discussion regarding the difference between external/typical and internal use of force, as some representatives of styles generally classified as external claim that they are using similar kind of generating force.

At beginning of 20th century a group of experts of xingyiquan, baguazhang and taijiquan in Beijing found that there are common core principles in these arts, so they decided to classify them as neijia (internal family). So when we are talking about internal styles, it usually relates to these 3 arts. Also liu he ba fa is regarded as internal style. Very often yiquan, which comes from xingyiquan is classified as internal, although from the point of view of its founder, it should be something beyond traditional classifications.

In last years the term internal became quite in vogue. In result many styles and schools are claiming that what they do is internal. It is done mainly for advertising reasons.

The waijia and neijia division should not be confused with division of training methods into waigong ('external exercises' - physical training) and neigong ('internal exercises' - mental training, qi training etc), because actually all (or almost all) chinese martial arts classified as external are using some neigong exercises.

A system/style/school of kung-fu is not just a collection of techniques or forms. It is always a system of mutually related training methods - gongfa and theoretical concepts - quanli. All training methods, including forms used by most schools, are illustration of this school theory, serving the purpose of learning and mastering its principles and developing skills which are specific for this style.

There are competitions in which representatives of traditional kung-fu/wushu are participating. Some difference comparing to jingsai wushu is that in chuantong wushu competition is not the main goal of practice (while in jingsai wushu the training process is determined by this goal), but is only one element of the whole. So because kung-fu (chuantong wushu) is not a sports discipline in which the most important are results achieved in competition, it can be practiced by everybody. A system/school can be chosen, depending on individual preferences, level of fitness etc.

Kung-fu is not just about developing fighting skills, but about personal development. Ideal of kung-fu warrior is someone who not only can fight, but has vast knowledge. For non-chinese practitioners learning kung-fu usually means also learning about the rich culture of China. In many schools not only fighting skills are taught, but also methods of traditional medicine (acupressure, acupuncture, herbs) or health cultivation exercises - neigong, qigong. Some systems are famous for their health preservation values - like taijiquan and yiquan, in which the same training methods serve both to develop fighting skills and to improve health. Practitioner's ethic values - wude are very important. It is said: "Learning martial art, first you should learn how to be a good man".

ANDRZEJ KALISZ MASTER YAO CHENGGUANG

Yao Zongxun (1917-1985) became the successor of yiquan's founder. Among the most prominent of Yao Zongxun's students are his twin sons Yao Chengguang and Yao Chengrong, often called yiquan's double star.

Yao Chengguang and Yao Chengrong were born in 1953. At age of 8 they started learning yiquan from their father, and continued it even in the hard time of Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), when whole family had to leave Beijing and work in the country. Most of Yao Zongxun's students lost opportunity of learning from him for some years. Fortunately his sons could learn from him even then. They worked together as horseherd in the grassland close to mountains. They continued training although they suffered from hunger and cold.



Yao Zongxun was very able, well educated man, and at the same time he was a great warrior, who had chance to fight in many challenges, with many masters of various styles and in fights with street gangs (in the time of chaos in late 1940s). Although in 1950s and 1960s among his students there were many with great talent, the situation didn't allow frequent combat-oriented training. His sons had more chance for this kind of practice though. When in 1979 Yao family came back to Beijing, teaching yiquan as a martial art openly became possible. But those students who learned before Cultural Revolution were too old for this kind of intensive combat oriented training. So Yao Zongxun had chosen his sons and a few other young students to participate in this combat training. From those few, Yao Chengguang, Yao Chengrong and Cui Ruibin are most famous for their combative skills. Master Yao Chengguang, as elder of the twin brothers, is regarded as successor of his father.

Yao Chengguang started teaching yiquan about 1980, propagating it in various parts of China. In Beijing he taught at Beijing University of Chinese Medicine and Farmacology, Beijing University, Beijing Industrial University. He conducted many fights, proving his skill.

In 1982 he took part in one of the first of *san da* tournaments. But after the first fight, when he knocked his opponent out unconscious in first round, he was forbidden participating in san da tournaments, because his explosive power was too dangerous. Later he had been teaching in Hong Kong and Japan, in all places conducting many victorious fights. In 1994 the school Zongxun Wuguan (Zongxun is Yao Chengguang's father's name, wuguan means martial arts school) was founded. Yao Chengguang became it's director and chief instructor. Presently master Yao Chengguang is also president of Beijing Yiquan Research Association. In 2001 he was giving seminars in Italy.



Master Yao Chengguagn in "Boji" martial arts magazine

Master Yao Chengguang is director and chief instructor of the school "Zongxun Wuguan" in Beijing, honorary director of "Zhongyi Wuguan", president of Beijing Yiquan Research Association, technical advisor of Hong Kong Yiquan Association, honorary president and chief instructor of Hong Kong Yao Family Yiquan Association, honorary president of Taiki-ken Association in Tokio, honorary president of Taiki-ken Association in Yokohama, member of Board of Beijing Wushu Association, honorary president and chief instructor of Guizhou Yiquan Association, honorary president of Changzhi Yiquan Association, honorary president of Kaifeng Yiquan Association, honorary president of Xinye Yiquan Association, honorary president of Shandong Province Farmers Physical Culture Association, honorary president of Jinan Yiquan Association, honorary director and technical advisor of Academy of Yiquan in Poland.

Master Yao Chengguang is author of a set of studying materials, which are available also in English, as an electronic publication (PDF format). A set of 4 videotapes (Yao Chengguang and Yao Chengrong demonstrating basic training methods) was published in Hong Kong. New set of videos (VCD) was made by Yao Chengguang together with Kubo Isato (taiki-ken master from Japan). Yao Chengguang's essays (or about him) were published in: "China Youth Daily", "Science and Technique Daily", "Beijing Daily", "Beijing Evening", "China Daily" (in English), "Changzhi Daily", "Great Common Daily" (Hong Kong), "Commercial Daily" (Hong Kong), and in Japanese, French, Polish and of course Chinese martial arts magazines. Together with brother he published their father's books: "Yiquan -

science of Chinese practical fighting", and "Yiquan - health cultivation" and also a collection of texts written by Wang Xiangzhai. New book by master Yao Chengguang will be published soon.



Master Yao Chengguang in "China of 21st century" magazine

Yao Chengguang is respected as a teacher with great skill and knowledge. His way of teaching is very clear and systematic, which helps his students to make fast progress and get a lot of satisfaction from study of yiquan.

ANDRZEJ KALISZ QI - MAGIC POWER?

This is excerpt from Andrzej Kalisz's e-book "Zhan Zhuang Qigong"

The concept of qi (ch'i, ki), as the primeval subtle matter being basis of everything, was developed during Springs and Autumns period (722-481 BC). It had became one of the main ideas used in all branches of traditional Chinese science.

Seeing it from one side, philosophically, mystically, you can see qi as a basis of everything. From the other side, in practical use in various fields, in various branches of traditional science, the concept can have various meanings. We should not approach this issue with too naive attitude, without seeing it in various contexts.

Some people see qi as a kind of magic power. They think that this is some specific kind of energy or subtle, ethereal matter with unusual properties, and if they will be able to master controlling it (thanks to learning qigong), many miraculous abilities and skills will become available for them. This is quite naive view. Actually the concept of qi is not very precise, and it has very wide range of use, like modern concept of energy. We should not see it too simply. As we can say about various kinds of energy, the classical Chinese theories say about various kind of qi. The concept of qi is used not only by doctors of Traditional Chinese Medicine, qigong masters and martial arts experts, but it is also used in traditional arts theory and actually in any branch of classical Chinese science and culture. Of course it assumes a bit different meaning in each of those contexts.

Let's have a look at one example. We often speak about power or energy of expression of a poem. But nobody thinks about using this energy to propel a car with combustion engine. However people who don't know about Chinese culture and science, whenever they see the word qi used, they immediately jump to conclusions similar to this propelling a car with energy of artistic expression. This is because they don't realize how the meaning of the concept of qi changes with change of context.

For example there is the concept of qi developed in the context of traditional Chinese medicine. This is a whole complex of medical theories, where this idea is used. There is some common field between those theories and the use of the qi concept in medicine and in qigong. However in qigong there are some more subjective elements, related to feeling, to perception, which are also described with the word qi.

Qigong exercises are widely used in Chinese martial arts. In internal systems training methods similar to qigong had became the basis of practice. So we can find there some elements directly related to the basics of Chinese medicine, and also some subjective elements which are specific for qigong. But in martial arts we have next specific elements - expression

of fighting spirit, expression of movement related to characteristics of animals and phenomena of nature, perception and expression of power. The concept of qi is used also when we are talking about these aspects. And of course there is also issue of body mechanics, body physics. Centuries of experience accumulated and enabled developing principles and training methods which enable very efficient use of body.

But in old times the Chinese could not use such kind of theoretical apparatus, which would enable simple relating some theoretical concepts to various practical issues in the way, as we can use for example the principle of leverage, when explaining working of a heavy industry crane and working of human body. The only possibility was to transmit some achievements through direct teaching and correcting during the training process. Many things were described by using the concept of qi. However those specific descriptions very often couldn't help much with relating some principles to other fields. In various schools similar phenomena could be described in various ways, although many people would think that it shouldn't be so, if they used common concepts. So we should be aware that it just wasn't exactly the same kind of concepts as we use in modern science. Realizing this is very important, in order to avoid too many misinterpretations. We should know, that one of many aspects of the concept of qi is what we call mechanics, and when using old theories, this aspect couldn't be explained in such a way, that it would be easy to use the same theory for something else than what was described. It just wasn't this kind of scientific theory.

Now some people tend to just put concepts of modern science and those of traditional Chinese science together, not realizing that they are not consistent with each other. In many cases, when the traditional theory aims at explaining something related to what we call mechanics, these people will not be able to understand and appreciate the transmission of neijia masters, thinking that if word qi was used, it for sure must be something outside mechanics.

Some reason for misunderstandings being so common is that actually in traditional Chinese internal arts all those aspects are in some way interrelated. In the same exercise and its description, when the concept of qi is used, we can often find elements which are related to traditional Chinese medicine, to mind intention and to mechanics at the same time. It makes people think of qi as one homogenous thing, not seeing various aspects of it. In result learning what masters of internal arts actually transmitted becomes very difficult for them.

The issue of developing supernatural abilities is also related to qigong. Some people believe in those abilities, and others do not. But this is not important. First of all we should realize, that there is not very direct relation like qigong = supernatural abilities. Various kinds of qigong have various goals, theories and characteristics. The concept of qi in theories of various qigong schools is not used in exactly the same way. Those who know more on this subject will not say that qi = magic powers.

And still much bigger misunderstanding is thinking about direct link between internal martial arts and supernatural powers. This is not the actual transmission of skills characteristic for neijia. Those who are looking for this in neijia are on quite wrong path. They are trying to find something else than those systems actually offer, and they neglect what is really there, what is the core of neijia. In result they are not able to make much progress. Their knowledge of neijia is limited to fantastic speculations. And the view tha qi = magic powers is really at basis of those misunderstandings..

So we should realize, that the concept of qi has aspect of mystical unity. This is something like unified theory of everything. But in fact there is nothing practical in it. This is nothing more than just assuming that some unity is at basis of everything. But this is not the actual Chinese medical science, qigong or neijia.

Science means differentiating. This is not only about western science, modern science, but also about classical Chinese science. We should realize this to avoid approaching the offer of traditional Chinese science and philosophy with too much naivety.

Western science and traditional Chinese science are two different systems, two paradigms. We should not take out some element of one and try to fit it mechanically into the other. Most of the educated people realize what differences there are between various languages, that meaning of similar concepts in various languages is not exactly the same. That sometimes long description in one language is necessary, while in some other language only one word is needed to express the same. When we know this, avoiding too many misunderstanding, when talking about classical Chinese science, will be easier. New valuable things are often created thanks to contact between various traditions. But deep understanding of both sides is important. Only then avoiding the kind of misunderstandings which are now often related to neijia will be possible.

Yiquan was created by a Chinese, in China, on basis of classical internal art of xingyiquan. But impact of the culture and science of the West was important impulse for its development. This western influence resulted in some critical attitude toward the tradition. Yiquan appeared when the East and the West met. The concepts and methods were verified and improved. And this is being continued, because the basic idea of quanxue (science of fist, as Wang Xiangzhai used to call it) is that there is no limit for the development of the science, of course also the science of martial art.

Wang Xiangzhai was using the concept of qi in early period, when he wrote "The right path of Yiquan". But in later book "Central pivot of the way of fist" (also known as "Theory of dachengquan"), representative for more mature version of yiquan, he did not use this and many other traditional concepts anymore. Gradually a new system of concepts and methods, which is more approachable by modern people and which can be easier interpreted from the point of view of modern science, was developed. The basic idea was, that while concepts and

methods were changed, the actual values of traditional systems should not be lost, but preserved and taken to a new, higher plane. Although the concept of qi was removed, but what was important behind it, in the context specific for martial arts, including internal arts, was preserved. We are just trying to express the theory in a way which doesn't lead to so many misunderstandings.

ANDRZEJ KALISZ
RULES OF YIQUAN PUSHING HANDS COMPETITIONS

During first big meeting of people from different schools of yiquan, which was organized in Beijing in 1997, decisions were made about introducing yiquan tui shou and san shou competitions. First san shou competition was organized in 1998. Before next will be organized, it was decided that at beginning more stress will be put rather to yiquan tui shou competitions. First experimental competition of yiquan tui shou was conducted in Beijing on 26 November 2000. After it, it was decided that the rules should be modified. Second competition, with new, improved rules was conducted on 30 March 2002. There is still a lot of discussion and the rules need some adjustment. But anyway for all people interested in yiquan we present here the rules which were used during this 30 March 2002 competition.

MAIN RULES

1. The place of competition is a circle, 6 meters in diameter. In the center there is another circle, 1,5 meters in diameter.
2. The ground must be padded with elastic material, which will enable effective competition and safety at the same time.
3. 3 bouts system is used.
4. Each bout lasts 70 seconds. Break between bouts lasts 60 seconds.
5. The competitors after entering the place of bout make the gesture of "covering fist" towards the officials and the public.
6. Before the bout starts, the competitors must stand inside the smaller circle. When the referee issues command 'da lun' (make circles), the competitors start circles with their arms, keeping their forearms connected. At the starting point each of the competitors has one of his hands above opponent's hand, and the other below. They do not leave the smaller circle yet.
7. When the referee issues command "kaishi" (begin), both competitors start their actions.
8. The competitor who first will push his opponent outside the big circle or will make him fall down, receives points. Stepping on the line of circle is regarded as leaving the circle.
9. The competitor who receives more points during a bout is a winner of this bout.

FORBIDDEN ACTIONS AND RULES OF JUDGING

1. Intentional breaking of the contact of arms is forbidden. Breaking of the contact of arms in order to hit opponent is forbidden. When there comes situation of breaking contact, the referee immediately issues command 'ting' (stop). The competitors should make connection between their arms again and only then the bout will be continued. If a competitor breaks contact 3 times during a bout, he will be given 3 punishment points.

2. Hitting with fist, head, elbow and kicking are forbidden. Attacks directed towards face, eyes, nose, back of head, groin and other comparatively dangerous actions are forbidden. If competitor uses some of those dangerous actions, but without injuring his opponent, the referee raises arm and issues command 'ting' (stop). The competitor will receive 2 punishment points. If opponent is injured, the competitor will be punished with disqualification, the competitor and his club will be criticized and they will have to pay compensation to the injured competitor. Information about it will be announced publicly.

3. Grabbing throat and pushing chin of opponent are forbidden. The competitor will receive 2 punishment points.

4. If during 2 seconds after embracing/grabbing neck or arm of opponent the competitor will not execute a successful action, he will not receive points (even though he will execute a successful action after 2 seconds).

5. The competitor which grabs arms or clothes of opponent and keeps the hold for more than 2 seconds will receive 2 punishment points. If it happens 3 times during one bout, he will lose the bout.

6. If both opponents leave the circle at the same time, none of them receives points. Stepping with one foot on the line - losing 1 point. Stepping with both feet on the line - losing 2 points. One foot inside the circle, and the other outside - losing 1 point.

7. If not obeying the referees command, and still continuing action - losing 1 point. If it causes opponent's injury - disqualification.

8. Falling down - losing 2 points. Touching ground with knee or hand - losing 1 point. When both competitors fall down - no points.

9. Passive attitude is forbidden. When it occurs for the first time - warning, second time - losing 1 point, third time - losing 2 points. If it happens 4 times during one round, the competitor loses this round.

10. Additional points granted for actions characteristic for yiquan:

- The competitor who was attacking actively receives 2 additional points.
- The competitor who was using "clear" actions receives 2 additional points.
- The competitor who was using "clear, beautiful and efficient actions" receives 3 additional points.
- Among the actions which can be rewarded with additional points are all kinds of fa li (issuing force) actions and stepping actions characteristic for yiquan (illustrating the principles of yiquan). Sweeping techniques and throws executed by grabbing opponent will not be rewarded with additional points.

ANDRZEJ KALISZ
SENSATIONS AND BODY REACTIONS

This is excerpt from Andrzej Kalisz's e-book "Zhan Zhuang Qigong".

Yiquan is about working simultaneously with mind and body. The coordination of mind and body is developed and improved through focus on perceiving body, perceiving strength and energy of movement. Apart from feelings important for the training process, while doing the exercises, other sensations and body reactions can appear too. They are not a goal or even a tool, they are only natural side effects, which appear usually at beginning of practice.

In zhan zhuang exercises stress is put on relaxation. But tiredness and some pain are something natural, especially at the beginning stage, when you are not accustomed with this kind of practice, and you are still not able to do the exercises properly. Gradually body work will change. You will learn using body structure in such a way, that strength (mainly related to opposing gravitation) is transferred through body in relatively comfortable way. You are eliminating unnecessary effort. This way you will avoid pain and too much tiredness.

Some typical phenomena (traditionally they were explained as changes in the flow of qi), which appear at first stage of practice are:

Tingling, itching, numbing or swelling sensations in some parts of body,

Feeling warm or cold,

Rumbling in stomach, gases,

Trembling or swaying of body (at beginning often related to excessive tension, then to the change of way of using muscles; at higher stage it changes in kind of subtle oscillation in all parts of body, when muscles system keeps some dynamic balance without effort),

Difference in sensations of left and right side of body (eg. pain, swelling, warmth only in one side of body, feeling that one hand is higher and the other lower, while they are at the same level or feeling that they are at the same level, while actually they are not; these are mainly result of asymmetry of body, being used to use left and right side in different ways),

Pain and other sensations in place of old injuries, operation scars, illness focus or organs chronically ill.

Most of the unpleasant sensations will disappear after some time of practice, and main sensation will be relax and comfort. But these unpleasant sensations will continue longer if you don't practice regularly. They might also appear again, when you move to next, more demanding exercises. You should not be afraid about them too much. They should not

discourage you, they should not irritate you. You should treat them with calm, trying to keep relax, focus and pleasant mood. But if you have some doubts, it is advised to consult a doctor.

If you don't do anything opposing the principles of exercises, there shouldn't be risk of negative side effects. In zhan zhuang method you avoid trying too hard, forcing anything. Relax, calm, softness and subtlety are the basis. These exercises need patience. Progress will come gradually.

But there are some people, who are very tense, very anxious. Often they are too impatient. They are trying hard to make fast progress, to achieve highest levels of mastery immediately. This causes even bigger tension and anxiety. Such people need some more "careless". They should progress not faster than other students, but slower. In many cases more conventional forms of recreational activity (like playing ball, ping-pong, swimming, dancing, playing music etc.) will be more advisable for them and will help them to get rid of too much tension and anxiety.

Some people are too much fascinated by some of naturally appearing sensations and body reactions, and give them too much attention. This way they forget about the essence and principles of exercises, and think about evoking and keeping such sensations, while the right attitude is not to care too much about them, not trying to evoke them, not trying to keep them.

Zhan zhuang is known as one of the safe methods of qigong (qigong in broad meaning), convenient for wide popularization. But you should realize that even the most safe exercises will not be such, if you do them in a way which goes against the principles and basic demands of the method and against common reason. Experienced instructor will easily notice when student's attitude makes his practice risky, and will react according to situation to correct him/her.

ANDRZEJ KALISZ
UNDERSTANDING YIQUAN – LEARNING THE WHOLE

A few years ago not many people even heard about yiquan. Now there are still not so many qualified yiquan instructors, but there are more and more people interested in learning it. This is great that they are eager to learn, but I hope that they will put enough attention to the quality. Because yiquan is getting popularity quite fast, it happens that some people who used to teach other arts before, now just mimic a few basic zhan zhuang postures and start pretending to be "yiquan masters". They don't understand yiquan, but they propagate it. They don't even understand zhan zhuang, because they cannot see it in the proper perspective of the whole system. If it will continue, we will see great popularity of junk-yiquan soon.

Without learning the complete yiquan, practicing all training methods, understanding them and understanding relation between them, and also relation between methods and actual results of training, this is not possible to fully understand even a part of it. Those people who learn only a few basic training methods, and start teaching them as yiquan, are misleading their students. They don't understand yiquan, so they are passing false knowledge and deviations to their students. They should awake immediately and start learning seriously as soon as possible.

If instructor hasn't got reasonable understanding of the whole, how will he be able to help student understand it? People ask me what is the proper understanding of yiquan. They quote some basic theoretical principles and ask if maybe I would tell them about other important principle or principles, which would make them finally understand yiquan properly. But this is asking wrong questions. Following this path of thinking will not lead to understanding but only to repeating some slogans.

Of course while teaching we are talking about some principles, some of them being regarded as very basic and very important. But just knowing about those concepts means nothing. People can talk about those principles and will still not understand them, will not understand what is behind them. What we call understanding is in very big part based on personal experience and perceiving. Talking about hot and cold, if you have not experienced it, cannot be seen as understanding. This is why Wang Xiangzhai often described things by using paradox statements, which was inspired by chan (zen) buddhism. The aim was to make people realize, that the real thing is not just words, that understanding is not coming from analysis of words, but that words are pointing to something beyond it, which must be personally experienced, if you want to perceive it and understand it.

Training is not just following some patterns with hope that you will automatically achieve understanding and skill. Exercises are just examples of some situations. But you should not just repeat them blindly. Tui shou and san shou are kind of testing area for the

states, principles and skills. This is where you can better understand what you want to achieve, and then you will be able to use basic methods as a way to work on the same in simpler situation. Without this you could stand in zhan zhuang postures and do slow shi li movements for years without much result.

Our method is about real, practical things, testing them in order to know what to improve, and using simple methods to help with this improvement. When you better understand what you want to achieve, when you have some experience related to it, you will better understand how to practice basic methods. This is why our method is not linear (this would be: first zhan zhuang for long time, then shi li, moca bu, only after some longer time there would be fa li and then tui shou and san shou). We are introducing exercises from various groups almost from the very beginning. Of course some of them are more basic, some more advanced, and beginner should concentrate on the basic methods, not advanced ones, but introducing some of them at early stage gives much better idea of the whole, about what is really important in basic exercises, how do they prepare you for more advanced practice, how they are related to combative training.

This is quite obvious that in any profound science or art understanding is developing gradually. Any learning is a process. But when it comes to martial arts, many people seem to be blind to this simple fact. You must start from something basic and understand this first. But it still doesn't mean understanding of the whole. It is just first step. If you don't learn deeper, instead developing your practice basing on this shallow understanding, it will lead you astray. You may learn very good method which teaches you some basic principles. You may feel really impressed by the method. But don't forget that it is just first step on longer way. Or you may learn method which from the very beginning gives you some view on the whole system. But don't forget that it's just first glimpse, getting only rough idea, and deeper, longer study is necessary. If you will be too satisfied with what you learned at the beginning, thinking that you are understanding the whole, you will not progress. If you are an instructor and you behave like this, you will aid to the propagation of deviations.

In any science or art, you learn basic concepts and demands, and in some way you are able to use them, you have some understanding. But from point of view of some expert in this science or art, it will not be real understanding. Reasoning coming from such shallow understanding will often lead into wrong directions, if you look at this from position of an expert. So this is important to remember to learn the whole of what good yiquan teacher can transmit, and this is important not to stop there but to try to reach further. But going further will not be possible if someone didn't achieve anything more than shallow understanding of basics.

Even if talking not about the whole, but about basic principles, your understanding of them is developing during study/training process, because gradually you will be able to see

their use in more and more contexts. If someone knows about some "crucial concepts", but has not enough experience in all aspects of yiquan, he will just repeat slogans, will only present some shallow knowledge, but he will not be able to develop the actual skills, and will not be able to explain things in a way, which helps student make real progress, will not be able to answer a specific question in a way which makes sense, which shows relation between various concepts, methods and practical aspects of yiquan, will not be able to demonstrate this. If you don't learn yiquan with a good teacher who is willing to teach you real thing, if you will not learn all aspects, if you will not get a lot of experience accompanied by teacher's consultation, you will stay at the level of appearances, level of very shallow understanding of some concepts.

So this is why it is very important to learn whole yiquan, and not just some methods, to practice a lot of pushing hands and san shou, to get experience, understanding of it, having teacher's consultancy, who will help you to understand better and better how to use this experience, how to draw conclusions from it, so your understanding becomes deeper and deeper, you can see more and more relations between training methods, between concepts, training and practice. The personal understanding will lead to creativity and possibility of further developing yiquan.

ANDRZEJ KALISZ

WANG XIANGZhai'S DISCIPLES

Wang Xiangzhai honored six best of his students, presenting them with honorary names, all but one containing element dao (tao):

- **Zhao Enqing** received name **Daoxin**
- **Han Xingqiao** received name **Daokuan**
- **Bu Enfu** received name **Daokui**
- **Zhang Entong** received name **Daode**
- **Zhao Fengyao** received name **Daohong**
- **Yao Zongxun** received name **Jixiang**, indicating that he was designed as Wang Xiangzhai's successor (ji - to continue, xiang - element of Xiangzhai)

Here are listed recognized students of Wang Xiangzhai of various periods, both those who learned combat and those who practiced mainly for health (alphabetical order)

Ao Shipeng	Bu Enfu (Daokui)	Bu Yukun	Chang Zhilang	Chen Bi
Chen Haiting	Cheng Zhihao	Dou Boxiang	Dou Shicheng	Dou Shiming
Dou Zhirong	Gao Zhendong	Gou An	Guo Lianyin	Guan Xiaowen
Han Sihuang	Han Xingqiao (Daokuan)	Han Xingyuan	He Jingping	Hong Lianshun
Hu Yaozhen	Huang Shuhe	Huang Shouting	Jiao Jingang	Kong Qinghai
Li Bokui	Li Jianyu	Li Li	Li Wentao	Li Xing
Li Xinkun	Li Yongzong	Liu Huichen	Liu Jieping	Liu Zigeng
Ma Chengxin	Ma Jiliang	Mi Jingke	Ning Dazhuang	Pang Guilin
Qi Dacheng	Qi Danian	Qi Zhidu	Qin Zhongsan	Sawai Kenichi
Shen Delian	Si Tuzhuang	Sun Wenqing	Tang Rukun	Tong Guozao
Wang Binkui	Wang Daonan (son)	Wang Daozhuang (son)	Wang Fulai	Wang Shaolan
Wang Shengzhi	Wang Shichuan	Wang Shuhe	Wang Yubai (daughter)	Wang Yufang (daughter)
Wang Yuxiang	Wang Zemin	Wu Shuban	Wu Zhenfa	Yang Demao
Yang Shakun	Yang Shaogeng	Yang Yanjun	Yang Ziming	Yao Zongxun (Jixiang)
You Pengxi	Yu Yongnian	Yuan Jingqing	Zhang Changxin	Zhang Entong (Daode)
Zhang Fu	Zhang Guilin	Zhang Ke	Zhang Zhong	Zhao Cuoyao
Zhao Enqing (Daoxin)	Zhao Fengyao (Daohong)	Zhao Huafang	Zheng Wen	Zheng Zhisong
Zhou Bingqian	Zhou Shunhua	Zhou Xinghua	Zhou Ziyan	Zhu Yaoting

ANDRZEJ KALISZ
YIQUAN ANECDOTES

In childhood Wang Xiangzhai was weak and of poor health. That's why his parents decided that he should practice martial art to strengthen his body and improve health. Because Wang and Guo families were related, Wang Xiangzhai's father asked Guo Yunshen, a famous master of xingyiquan (hsing-i ch'uan), if he could teach the boy. But Guo refused, saying that he was too old to teach a new student. But later a friend of both families persuaded Guo to teach little Wang. One of many accounts says that once when Guo got cold and despite of this went out without putting on his coat, Wang concerned about his master's health, took the coat and also went out to look for Guo. At last found him in a quiet place, doing some strange exercises, very different from those that Guo usually taught. Wang, astounded, stared at Guo, while Guo stood motionless in a strange posture, which Wang never saw before. At some moment Guo heard something and looked around. He saw his little pupil, who brought his coat. Guo was very moved and since that time on treated the boy quite differently, teaching him stuff which was usually kept secret.

In 1898, one of Guo's students, who was head of a guild of merchant convoys guards in Baoding asked Guo to take part in one of convoys. Because lately one of convoys was attacked and all the merchandise robbed, the reputation of this guild declined. Guo Yunshen's presence would keep potential robbers away, and would help to persuade merchants to use service of this guild. But because Guo was very old, he sent little Wang with a letter, in which he explained his refusal, and suggested that the boy could take part in convoy. When head of guild read the letter, Wang waited in hall, looking at weapons placed on racks. Then he took a wooden staff from one of the racks. One of guild's members, who saw this, immediately went to the head to tell him about it. Usually when someone who was not member of guild touched one of guild's weapons, it was understood as a challenge. The head ran out of his room, and being aware that it was not boy's intention, grabbed his wrist, shouting: "What are you doing, boy!" Wang did just a little jerking movement, and the man was thrown down. When he stood up, he praised the boy: "Excellent! I see that our master passed true kung-fu to you. You should stay with us and teach us this technique". When Wang returned to Guo, he made detailed account of what happened. Guo, smiling, said: "They didn't practice zhan zhuang, how could they be able to develop this kind of force?"

In 1907 Wang under influence of one of relatives became gambling addict. After one of quarrels with parents, who were very disturbed by son's fondness of gambling, Wang left home and together with the mentioned relative headed for Beijing. On the way, hungry and thirsty, they begged for food. A man selling baozi (steamed dumplings) helped them, and also gave them a letter of introduction to a friend who was a soldier in Beijing. Such started Wang Xiangzhai's military career. At beginning Wang was just a helper in kitchen, fetching water,

chopping woods etc. Once, when he was carrying buckets with water, some soldier tried to trip him up. Wang just made a quicker step and went on, without spilling water. And the soldier fell over, not meeting the resistance he expected. One of officers saw it and suspecting that Wang had some combat skill, asked Wang about it. Wang told him about his study under Guo Yunshen. Some time later Wang married Wu Suzhen - that officer's daughter. It was Wang's wife who taught him reading and writing. Wang in turn taught his wife xingyiquan. Wang's first daughter Yuzhen, second daughter Yufang and son Daozhuang were all born in this marriage.

In 1913 Wang was already quite famous in Beijing martial arts circles. A high leve officer Xu Shuzheng, asked by Yuan Shikai, who became China Republic's president after Sun Yatsen (Sun Zhongshan), organized a banquet during which there was planned a fight between Wang Xiangzhai and Li Ruidong for the title of greatest martial arts master in Beijing. Li Ruidong was instructor of combat of presidents guards, a founder of Li style taijiquan, who learned taijiquan from Wang Lanting (Yang Luchan's student), wuxingchui (five star blows) from a monk Longchan. He also learned some styles of Wudang group, shuai-jiao wrestling and other systems. Both Wang and Li didn't really want to fight, but because they were dependend from higher officers, they were afraid to refuse. Wang came first and waited for Li at entrance. When Li came, Wang welcomed them him and asked him to go first. Li made a gesture, letting Wang go first. At some moment they touched each others arms. Li's knees bended and he was about to fall down, but Wang supported him. Nobody, but Wang and Li were aware that it was just a tui shou contest. Result of it was obvious for both of them. They both went inside, but Li said that he wasn't well and had to went out for a moment. But he didn't come back. Soon afterwards he left Beijing. Wang all his life regreted that it happened. He was always saying that Li Ruidong and his students were very good.

In 1918 Wang left Beijing and went southwards to search for the greatest masters of martial arts. First he went to Shaolin temple where he learned xinyiba (a system related to xingyiquan) from monk Henglin (also known as Changlin or Xianglin - later Doshin So, founder of Shorinji Kempo learned from the same monk). Then in Hunan province he met excentric master Jie Tiefu, known as Jie the Madman. They fought ten times and Wang was defeated each time. Then Wang suggested using weapons. Jie said: "Weapon is only extention of body. You couldn't defeat me without weapon, with weapon result will be the same." They used wooden staffs and Wang was defeated again. Wang, ashamed, intended to go off, but Jie said: "And what? You will practice three years, and then come back to fight with me again? Better stay with me. We can teach each other. I met many good fighters, but you are best of them." Wang learned form Jie for over a year, and it was very important for further development of Wang's martial art. When Wang was leaving, Jie said that he was not sure about south, but in north of Yangtzi there was nobody who could equal Wang. Later, in 1940s a middle aged man came to Beijing, saying that he was Jie Tiefu's nephew. He said that in his

testimony Jie let him check if Jie's teachings were continued. Wang Xiangzhai asked one of his students - Yao Zongxun (later Wang's successor) to demonstrate some skills. Jie Tiefu's nephew said then that his uncle would be proud.

In 1923 Wang Xiangzhai together with Xu Shuzheng went to Fujian province and became instructor of martial art in this province's army. He met there Fang Qiaozhuang, a master of southern white crane style. Of ten fights Wang lost six. But Fang said that he doesn't regard himself as winner, because there is very little difference between their skill level. In the same year Wang met another master of white crane style - Jin Shaofeng, with whom he practiced and disputed a lot.

In 1928 Wang, together with Zhang Zhankui (a xingyiquan master from Tianjin) went to Hangzhou, where he acted as arbiter at wushu (guoshu) competition. Then, being invited by Qian Yantang (Guo Yunshen's student), Wang went to Shanghai. Qian organized a banquet to receive Wang, and during it asked Wang to have a friendly sparring. Wang tried to refuse, because he didn't want to make Qian ashamed, when other people were present. But Qian insisted, so Wang agreed, saying: "If elder brother (it means eldership inside Guo Yunshen's lineage) wants to see my skill, I will ask him to sit on this sofa." It meant that Wang would be able to throw Qian on that sofa, no matter what Qian would do. Qian attacked Wang with beng quan. Wang made quick, short movement, putting palm of his hand above Qian's fist, and Qian was immediately thrown over, landing on the sofa. After a while Qian stood up, very moved, with tears in his eyes, and said: "After so many years I feel as if I met our teacher again. I'm really glad that he has a true successor." Wang lived at Qian's home. Soon Qian organized another banquet and invited many famous masters. One of them was Wu Yihui, a master of liuhebafa (liu ho pa fa), whom Wang described later as one of the greatest martial arts masters in China.

Light weight boxing world champion, Hungarian Yingge (name in Chinese pinyin transcription) was teaching boxing in Shanghai Youth Union. He kept telling his students that Chinese martial arts had no practical use. Wang challenged him. When their arms met, Yingge was thrown away and fell down. Later Yingge's account of this fight was published in London "Times".

Wang Xiangzhai liked kunqu opera very much. Other lover of kunqu opera was Jin Qiliang, master of tan tui (spring legs style). Wang and Jin often went together to theatre and discussed plays. But Jin didn't know that Wang was a master of martial art. Once Jin visited Wang. They talked about painting, poetry and kunqu opera. Then Jin said that Wang looked very weak, so maybe he would begin to learn martial art in order to strengthen body and improve health. Wang said that he would like to learn, but so far he couldn't find a teacher. Jin said that he could teach him. Wang said that he would like to learn combat, not forms, and asked if Jin can fight. Jin laughed and said that he would make a demonstration. He

fetched a brick, and holding it in left palm, splitted it with edge of right hand. Then Jin asked Wang's opinion. Wang said that such a hit, although splitting brick, wouldn't make much harm to human body. He said that once he learned a technique of receiving blows and suggested that Jin hit him. Remaining seated, Wang turned around, exposing his back to Jin. Jin said that he was afraid that he could harm Wang, but Wang insisted that Jin hit his back. Jin made a punch, but not using his full force. Of course it couldn't affect Wang. So Jin asked if he could try once again. Wang agreed. This time Jin used all his power. Wang's back moved a little and Jin was thrown away as if by a spring. Now Jin realized that Wang was greater master than himself. Then came Wang's friend, famous painter Li Kuchan. Jin also knew Li, so very excited he told him what just happened. Li of course knew how great master Wang was. He said to Jin: "I heard that you are famous for your kicking techniques. Maybe you'll try once again, but now using your legs?" Wang, who was drinking tea, just looked at smiling Li. Jin made a powerfull kick and again was thrown away as by a spring. But the tea from a cup which Wang kept in hand wasn't spilt.

Shang Yunxiang, student of Li Cunyi and founder of Shang style xingyiquan was one of Wang's closest friends. When Shang lived on premises of Fire God temple, Wang often visited him, and they practiced together. Once, during tui shou, Shang was lifted high above ground, almost hitting ceiling with his head. When he felt down, astounded, he looked at Wang, who was astounded himself too. Shang asked Wang to repeat it. Wang said: "If I try it with intention, I won't be able to do it. As Guo used to say, when there is form and intention it's still not true skill. When the technique achieves the level of no-intention, miracles happen." Wang respected Shang Yunxiang's skill. He used to say to his students that Shang's strength was ten thousand times bigger than theirs. "When he uses big strength, it is like a big barrel, when he uses little strength, it is like small finger. Our strength can only be compared to rice bowl."

Hong Lianshun, a master of xingyiquan and tantui was quite famous in Beijing. When Hong heard about Wang's incredible skill he came to challenge him. But when he saw this slim, seemingly weak man, he decided that there was no use to fight with him, cause he could kill him with one punch. But when he was going to leave, Wang said that maybe they would after all compare their skill. Hong decided then that he would make some demonstration. He beautifully demonstrated a form and than pushed wall with his palm, lightly as it seemed, but making whole house shaking, subsequently kicking wall with toes and making a little cavity in it. Very self-contended Hong asked Wang what he thought about his skill. He didn't expect reply which followed. Wang said that Hong's skill is only for demonstration and not for combat. In this situation there was not other possibility but fight. Hong attacked, but Wang intercepted attack and threw Hong, "seating" him on a sofa like Qian Guantang in Shanghai. Wang suggested another try, saying that he would make Hong seat on the sofa again. Hong, as he said later, tried to keep away from sofa, but it ended just like the first time. Hong

became Wang's student and also his students he passed to Wang. Among them was Yao Zongxun (1917-1985), who later became Wang's successor.

In 1940, Wu Peiqing - a xingyiquan master from Shanxi province came to Beijing, pronouncing himself a true successor of xingyiquan. Wu learned xingyiquan from Li Fuzhen, who learned from Che Yizhai. Che Yizhai and Guo Yunshen both learned from Li Luoneng (Li Nengran). Because Wang Xiangzhai was most famous representative of Guo Yunshen's lineage, Wu challenged him. But Wang decided that his student Yao Zongxun would fight for him. Wu agreed and preparations for the fight at premises of Fire God Temple (near Chongwenmen gate) started. Wu invited many famous masters of martial arts to see his victory. After bowing to each other, Wu attacked with zuanquan. Yao intercepted the attack with his left hand and with right palm attacked Wu's chin, stopping the movement in last moment. Wu was surprised by Yao's speed, but mistakenly concluded that Yao has only speed, but no power in his techniques. When Wu attacked with piquan, Yao dodged and at the same time attacked Wu's arm, using so called elastic force (tan jin) threw him away, so that landed in middle of spectators. Wu realized that his opponent was much better than himself, but he couldn't accept being defeated in front of all the masters he invited. So he attacked again. Yao neutralized his move and attacked Wu's ribs, but stopping the punch, in order not to injure opponent. Wu used this moment to attack Yao's throat with his fingers. Yao with lightning speed dodged a bit, neutralized attack, and hit Wu's face with his fist. Before the spectators were able to notice what happened, Wu was laying on ground, uncounscious, bleeding from mouth. Four teeth were on ground beside him. Yao came over, with intention to help Wu to get up. At this moment he was attacked from behind by one of Wu's friends. Yao felt the attack and moved around to face the opponent. At the same time Han Xingqiao (another of best of Wang Xiangzhai's students), seeing what's happening, was able to run up the attacker and throw him to the wall. A total brawling was prevented by the masters present.

When Kenichi Sawai (at that time 5 dan judo, 4 dan kendo) came to Wang, who lived at Zhongnanhai, Wang was sweeping courtyard. Sawai asked if Wang Xiangzhai was in. Wang said that he was out. Sawai said that he would wait for Wang. After some time Sawai asked Wang, whom he took for a servant, if he practiced martial art. Wang said that he practiced a little. Sawai suggested that they compared their skill. Wang agreed. Sawai gripped Wang's hands, trying to execute a throw. Wang with a light movement made Sawai fall down to a kneeling position. Then Sawai asked if the man was not Wang Xiangzhai. Wang smiled and nodded. Sawai asked if they could have another contest. Of course he was defeated again. After several more tryings, with the same result, Sawai suggested using swords. Sawai had bamboo sword, and Wang a short wooden staff. Wang won again, and said to Sawai what he once heard from Jie Tiefu: "Weapon is only extention of body."

In 1941, when Wang Xiangzhai at Yao Zongxun's house talked about painting and poetry with famous painter Qi Baishi, Sawai came with some other Japanese. It was a big man and looked very important. What astounded everybody was that the man was embracing a cock. Sawai introduced him as a martial art instructor in Japanese army, famous judo master Riye (name in Chinese pinyin transcription). Riye said, that he heard from Sawai about Wang's skill, but couldn't believe it, so he came himself to have a fight. Wang agreed and asked what the cock was for? Riye said: "When I heard from Sawai about your skill, I concluded that it was black magic. This cock is to protect me against magic" - Then he cut cock's neck and made a circle on ground with cock's blood - "We will fight in this circle. Your magic will have no power here". Wang laughed: "I know only martial art, I don't know any magic. O.K., we can fight in this circle". Then he went into the circle and stood calmly, with closed eyes. Riye seeing it said that he was going to attack Wang. Wang smiled and opened eyes, with terrifying look. Riye attacked with right hand. Wang slightly slapped Riye's wrist, who cried with fear and was thrown away, with his back hitting trunk of a tree, on which branches Yao Zongxun hung punching bags. Riye felt down, unconscious. Sawai, terrified, didn't know what to do. Wang told his student Dou Shiming, to pour the man with water. And indeed Riye regained consciousness. Sawai wanted to help him stand up, but Riye told him not to touch him, because his heart was beating as if it wanted to get out. After some time he started to repeat: "Witchcraft, witchcraft". Later, when Sawai helped him to stand up, he said that he really admired Wang, and then he went off, together with Sawai.

At beginning of 1940s a famous Italian boxing champion Jiemushi (name in Chinese pinyin transcription) came to Beijing. When he heard about Wang Xiangzhai, he went to visit him and have a fight. The Italian, with typical boxing guard waited for a good moment to attack. Wang slightly moved one of his hands upwards and slowly stepped towards the boxer, with 'poisonous look' in his eyes. It affected Italians psyche so deeply, that he was hardly able to continue fight. But he made left punch and right hook immediately afterwards. Wang dodged and attacked boxer's forearm with his palm. The boxer immediately lost balance and fell over. But he wasn't convinced. He thought that Wang had better technique, but wouldn't be able to stand against his force. So Wang let him punch his belly and ribs. Jiemushi, seeing that his punches have no effect on Wang, suddenly attacked Wang's underbelly with extremely powerful punch. Wang received the punch and the Italian was thrown away, landing with sprained wrist.

Batian Yilang (name in Chinese pinyin transcription) - 8 dan, was a judo master known in all south-east Asia. He heard a lot about Wang Xiangzhai, but didn't believe the relations. When he heard that in "Shibao" paper there was published a text in which Wang said that although western boxing and Japanese judo all have their good points, but they lack the wholistic force, Batian decided to meet Wang and prove the value of judo. He wrote a letter to Wang in which he invited Wang to one of European style restaurants. Wang accepted

invitation, realizing that it was a challenge. When Wang came into the restaurant, he was met by a big man looking like a warrior. Wang has no doubt that it was Batian Yilang. Batian, seeing small, thin Wang, thought that Wang's fame was unjustified. He coldly greeted Wang, and they went into a small room reserved by Batian. When horse-d'oeuvre was brought, Batian said that he was very glad to meet Wang, and would like to have a drink with him and make friends, and also learn a lesson. Wang said that he was not used to alcohol, and if there is a talk about a lesson, they both can learn something from each other. And then Batian just plainly asked when and where they can have a fight. Wang said that it can be done immediately, just where they are. Batian tried to grip Wang in order to make a throw. But before he was able to do this, Wang was already behind him, pushing him from behind and making him fall over. Batian got up and attacked once again. Wang dodged swiftly and attacked Batian's ribs. Batian tried to block, but when his arm touched Wang's hand, he was thrown away, as if by a spring, flying backwards and high upwards. He fell on a small table, which fell to pieces. But immediately he jumped up and tried to catch Wang's leg. Wang not only didn't dodge, but as if purposely lifted his leg, to make catching it easier for Batian. But when Batian tried to pull Wang's leg and throw him down, Wang's feet was already at Batian's belly, and Batian was pushed away and fell down. Then Batian asked how Wang would do if he gripped Wang's both wrists. Wang let Batian to grip his both wrists, and then suddenly he issued force of whole body, throwing Batian away, so he hit wall, making it shake.

Once, in late 1940s, when Wang was teaching at some park in Beijing, there came an elder man with silver hair. He said to Wang that he would like to have a sparring with him, adding that he means learning form each other, it didn't matter who would win. Wang, hearing strange tone in that man's voice, looked at him. Although not young, the man looked strong and very self-confident. Although it was warm, the man had white sheep leather gloves on his hands. Wang asked his name, but the man only smiled, stroking his beard. Wang agreed to a sparring. The man came closer, and then made his steps quicker, attacking with eagle claws. But Wang dodged to the left, and with right arm moved the attacker from behind, so he lost balance and fell on a tree. But he immediately attacked again with a series of punches to Wang's face. Wang's forearm below attacker's arms, when the arms came into contact, Wang just make a shaking movement of whole body and the man was thrown far away and high above ground. When the man felt down, Wang immediately came over to help him stand up. The man started crying, saying that all what he learned in his life was useless. He took off his gloves and showed hands, with knuckles with big calluses. It turned out that the man was a famous expert of eagle claws style, named Wang, known as Wang the Iron Claws. At last the man said that although he lost the fight, he would demonstrate some of his skill. He came to a tree trunk, and with swift movement of fingers of both hands tore off big pieces of bark. Then he pushed his way through a crowd of spectators and went off.

In 1940s Wang was putting more and more attention to teaching exercises for health. In 1947 the health group, which practiced in Ancestors Temple (which presently is Working People's Palace of Culture) had about 100 members. For people coming by, the zhan zhuang exercises, so characteristic for yiquan, were something new. Not understanding what was going on, they commented: "Why are they standing like this? Probably their teacher hypnotized them!?" But seeing that more and more people participated, many concluded that there must be something in it and also joined. Many of them were able to cure some illnesses that couldn't be cured in other way. Therapeutical efficiency and lack of side-effects of these exercises was later proved scientifically.

ANDRZEJ KALISZ YIQUAN - COMBAT TRAINING

The development of yiquan (dachengquan), a system based on classical xingyiquan, was started in 1920s by famous master Wang Xiangzhai. Yiquan is known as both efficient martial art and a good method of cultivating health. Here we will focus on combative aspect.



Yiquan training methods can be divided into two groups:

- Basic training,
- Training with partner.

Basic training teaches mainly:

- Basics of body mechanics - efficient generating of static and dynamic power,
- Feeling body and its mechanics, which is important for efficient use of body,
- Working with the right mindset needed for combat.

The subject of focus is: working with body, movement and power. It is done in various situations:

- Static and relatively static - which helps to start working on mind and body coordination.
- Slow movement - this is a bit more complex situation, but still it is easier to "unify mind and body" than while doing fast movements,
- Fast movement (also footwork) with rapid changes and explosive releasing of power - which of course is extremely important in combat. Learning basic ways of hitting, including pads and bag work can be classified here too.
- So called *dance*, where there appear innumerable changes of movement, its speed and rythm.

All basic exercises are directly related to combat. It doesn't mean concentrating on learning a system of fighting techniques. Stress is put more on working on mind-body coordination in various situations, starting from simple movements in basic directions through more complex paths and ways of generating power, up to the level of free improvisation.

But at the same time, the basic movements are related to exercises with partner and some combat situations. However we want to make number of such *methods-principles* as small as possible. They should be of such kind which would easily give basis for adapting

them to many changing and unexpected situations. It is said: "*One technique gives birth to ten thousand techniques, ten thousand techniques go back to one source*".



Training with partner can be divided into two groups of methods:

- Tui shou – pushing hands,
- San shou – free fighting.

All abilities and skills which you want to develop, should be related to free fighting.

Pushing hands should serve this goal and not be just pushing hands for sake of pushing hands. Tui shou helps to learn the principles which can be used when there is contact of arms of both fighters. If you understand those principles, then you can try using them also when contact is made with other parts of body.

In pushing hands exercises contact lasts for some longer time, but in practical use in free fighting the contact is very often not longer than a split of second. In basic tui shou we do many kinds of circular movements, keeping contact with partner's arms, so it is easier to learn the principles of adapting to changing movements and ways of using power in various situations - with different positions of arms, and different position in relation to opponent.

In pushing hands you learn principles of:

- Unbalancing opponent,
- Searching for holes in opponent's defense and creating them,
- Controlling, neutralizing and counter-attacking.

The process of learning pushing hands can be divided into some stages:

- Basic single and double pushing hands circles, in fixed position and with steps,
- Various forms of using power in single and double pushing hands: short explosive movements intended to unbalance opponent, pushing, hitting with palm, fist, forearm, elbow, shoulder, head, knee etc.
- Neutralizing and countering opponent's power,
- Free (sparring) pushing hands in fixed position and with steps (more stress is put on practice with steps). The goal may be unbalancing opponent or both unbalancing and hitting.

Free fighting training includes some introductory and supplementary exercises, which help to understand some aspects of combat better, but most important are various kinds of

sparring, with more or less limitations, from light to full contact. According to needs and practitioner's level, protective equipment is used.



Usually the san shou practice is divided into stages:

- Hitting only with palm/fist (including chopping movements), using footwork as main tool of defense,
- As above plus using principles and skills developed through pushing hands training: redirecting opponent's attack, opening space for attack, breaking opponent's guard, affecting his balance, so it is easier to hit or throw him. This can be done by direct attacking opponent's arms or contact can appear in result of opponent's defense.
- Low kicks are added,
- Hitting with knees and elbows are added.

Some of basic principles we stress during fighting training:

- Constant attacking with various methods and defending at the same time - "*attack and defense are one*",
- Affecting opponent's balance by using both offensive and defensive actions,
- Using opponent's force - neutralizing and redirecting it, using principle of tun tu - *swallowing and spitting out* [force],
- Use of whole body movement and power,
- Swift footwork, enabling efficient defense while attacking - using triangle and circular steps,
- Low kicks used simultaneously with hands actions,
- Knocking opponent down, while yourself keeping stand up position. Dynamic balance instead of static root,
- Using most simple methods and principles at beginning stage of training, then gradually developing more subtle skills.

Only thanks to the training with partner - the direct experience of combat, you can fully understand the basic methods, verify the results of their practice, and accordingly make the right corrections of basic practice, making it more efficient, so it can really help you in improving combative skills.

ANDRZEJ KALISZ
YIQUAN TRAINING METHODS

ZHAN ZHUANG

Zhan zhuang (zhan - to stand, zhuang - wooden pole), is a kind of exercises in static positions. It can be divided into two groups: ***jianshen zhuang*** (health zhuang) and ***jiji zhuang*** (combat zhuang).

Jianshen zhuang

Learning of yiquan (dachengquan) always starts from "health" positions - ***jianshen zhuang***. There are not only standing, but also sitting and lying positions. Stress is put mainly to relax and tranquility. The state of mental and physical relax and comfort is gradually deepening. Following, also health is improving. Different positions and visualizations can be used, according to adepts health and physical condition. The ***chengbao zhuang*** is most popular position. It will be described here in short:

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, with toes lightly outwards. Knees bent slightly. Arms hanging loosely. Head should be kept straight. Look into space far in front of you, or slightly above the line of eyesight (it helps concentration). But eyes can also be slightly closed. Mouth slightly opened, but breathe through nose. Tranquilize mind and relax body. Slight smile should appear on your face ("si xiao fei xiao" - "like smile not smile"). Slowly raise your arms to shoulders level, bending them, as if embracing big, a little flattened balloon. Palms of hands directed toward body, about one feet or little more apart. Fingers slightly bent. Distance between finger tips - about 3 fist-widths. Elbows slightly dropping down, but at the same time pointing outwards. Keeping such a position needs some effort, but you should avoid using excessive force. To help keeping relax, you can imagine that your arms (wrists, elbows) are resting on something (for example on balls, floating on water surface). Keep the balloon lightly, not letting it "escape", but not pushing too strongly, in order not to "damage" it.

During the exercise, to deepen the state of relax and tranquility, you can try to imagine, that you are in beautiful surroundings, smelling flowers aroma, hearing birds singing, feeling light breeze. You can imagine that your body is submerged in pleasantly warm water - you feel light and gradually more and more relaxed. Imagining that water is lightly massaging your body can be helpful. Other often used visualization is imagining that you stand under shower and water pleasantly warms up and softens body. Directing attention to various parts of body, successively from top of head to soles of feet, and consciously relaxing them is also often used method. Standing in some position you can observe your body, and when you notice tension in some part, you can slowly, calmly relax it. Sometimes you can do 1-3 deep breaths, concentrating on the feeling of deep relax while exhaling. You

can imagine that particular parts of your body (back, buttocks, arms) are resting on soft, elastic objects.

There are many forms of visualization that can be used in *jianshen zhuang* exercises. They are not aim of exercise but only help in achieving state of relax and tranquility. You shouldn't strain to master any form of visualisation, cause it could make you tense and confused. It's better to use those kinds of visualisation that are easy for you and without any strain help you to achieve appropriate state of mind. Actually you don't have to care much about those visualizations if you can relax and tranquilize mind easily. In *jianshen zhuang* some visualisations characteristic for *jiji zhuang* can also be used (*mo li* - "feeling force").

Jiji zhuang

Jianshen zhuang exercises are basis for more advanced *jiji zhuang*. State of relax is basis for "seeking force" (*mo li* - literally "feeling force"). It's not just standing without motion. Sometimes it is called "relative non-motion", "seeking force in relax" or "seeking motion in non-motion".

Most basic posture is *hunyuan zhuang*. A little bit simplifying we can say that it's a version of *chengbao zhuang*, but your feet are not paralell shoulder-width apart, but one feet is in front and the other remains back. Most of body's weight is put on back leg (*dingbabu* position). Arms are in position similiar to *chengbao zhuang*, but one hand is a little bit higher than the other. Imagine, that you are standing inside a big tree, with arms embracing its core. You are pushing forwards with your whole body, including arms, but the tree resists. Use only mind and almost don't move (*bu luo xing* - "not revealing form"), not using force, keeping relaxed. It's not about absolute non-motion and looseness. You should be rather almost not moving and almost not using force. The aim is in achieving coordination (unity) of mind and body, and that would be impossible if you only engaged your mind in the exercise and not your body. This is only very general description of this exercise, without many important details. And it's only the simplest version of *hunyuan zhuang*. We work also with different directions of force, on later stage changing directions during one exercise and with various directions simultanously. The aim is developing *hunyuan li* - force, which could be described as "formless". Some terms that describe this are: "*xing wu xing*" (form without form), "*yi wu yi*" (intention without intention). Apart from *hunyuan zhuang*, there are many other *jiji zhuang* positions. Some of them are: *fuhu zhuang* ("taming tiger"), *jianlong zhuang* ("descending dragon"), *duli zhuang* (standing on one leg).

Jiji zhuang has a lot in common with described below slow movement *shi li* exercises. Those two groups of exercises are well supplementing each other. Wang Xiangzhai said: "*Shi li* is *zhan zhuang* extended in space, and *zhan zhuang* is shortened *shi li*". Why do we use *zhan zhuang*, and not only movement exercises? Because *zhan zhuang* is in some aspects more efficient and enables faster progress. In static positions it is more easy to achieve

tranquility and focus of mind. That's why many meditation practices of many traditions are conducted in static positions. In the state of "*relative non-movement*" ("*non-movement on the verge of movement*"), with using appropriate forms of visualization, it's comparatively easy to achieve "*relax, but not looseness*", "*relax and force at the same time*", and then "*connection*" of all parts of body. We can focus on the essence of exercise instead of concentrating on "flowery" form.

Zhan zhuang is very efficient way of developing power. This power is not only physical force, but rather what in traditional internal arts is called ***nei jin*** (internal force). As some effort is needed to maintain a static position for a period of time, these exercises can also strengthen physical constitution. *Zhan zhuang* are not only basic exercises. They are important on any stage of practice. Other training methods are gradually being introduced, but *zhan zhuang* cannot be neglected. *Zhan zhuang* are most basic, but at that same time most advanced exercises.

SHI LI

Shi li, allows you to try out in motion the "*force*" developed mainly by *zhan zhuang* exercises. We are trying to keep in motion the same feelings like in *zhan zhuang*. We can feel "*force*", all the time ready to use it. For an outsider *shi li* exercises look much alike *taijiquan*. Here we have the same slow (even slower), flowing, gentle movements with the whole body moving as unity. Unlike *taijiquan*, *yiquan* has not complex sets of complicated movements though. Usually, some simple movements are repeated many times. On higher stage one can link different movements at will in improvised form. Just like in *jijizhuang*, in *shi li* you "seek force in relaxation". Actually, it means not complete relaxation but using some very small amount of force. To achieve this, the practitioner must be relaxed, but at the same time imagining that his movements are hindered by some resistance. For example, imagine that some springs are attached to your finger-tips with one end and to a distant tree with the other. Moving you press and then stretch the springs. But you shouldn't tense, using too much force. "*Use mind, not force*". The slower you move in *shi li*, the better, effects will be more satisfactory. It can be described as "*seeking non-movement in movement*". We are moving, but all the time ready to stop or change direction of motion - "*Move as if you'd like to stop, but not stopping*". Later we move to "*seeking speed in slowness*". There are many *shi li* exercises, executed in *pingbu* position (feet parallel, shoulder-width apart), *dingbabu* (basic "*combat*" position) and with steps. One of the simplest is *pingtui shi li*: where you do *push-pull* movements with your hands, stressing and stretching springs. Apart from *push-pull*, there is also *upward-downward* and *closing-opening* forces (you can imagine more springs or use other visualisations that help you feel resistance). You should feel resistance on the whole surface of your moving body. Also legs are very important and should feel resistance there (for example while *closing-opening* knees). In case of *dingbabu* position the weight is moving between proportion 7/10 on back leg and 3/10 on front leg to 5/5. We should feel "*elastic*

connection" between all parts of body. Beginners can start from the basic hands movement, gradually adding supplementary movements and moving other parts of body, according to the rule: "*from part to whole*". Of course this is not detailed description of this exercise. My aim is only to help readers understand what these exercises look like in general.

MOCA BU

Moca bu is steps practice. It is very similar to shi li. It can be called legs shi li. Also here you must be relaxed, but at the same time feel some resistance, like friction (*moca* means friction). But it's important that you feel resistance with whole body (like in shi li) and not only in legs. Our aim is feeling "*force*" in every part of body. As Wang Xiangzhai said: "*No part of body is not like a spring*". Whole body moves in coordination: "*When upper part of body moves, lower part follows it, when lower part moves, uppers part leads it*". Just like in shi li the movements shouldn't be "*mechanical*". We must be alert all the time, ready to stop ("*as if meeting obstacle*") or change direction of movement. Our mental attitude should be as if walking on edge of abyss or on thin ice.

FA LI

Fa li is a group of exercises that help to develop ability of using force in "*explosive*" way. This ability cannot be developed without using basic training methods like *zhan zhuang*, *shi li* and *moca bu*. It doesn't mean that using only those methods is enough. Special *fa li* training is necessary. All training methods are closely connected. Learning more advanced methods, you can better understand the basic ones. Yiquan doesn't mean years of standing in *zhan zhuang* postures, with perspective of starting learning combat in distant future. What attracted many people to yiquan was that Wang Xiangzhai's students after only 2-3 years of study were able to achieve high level of combat skill. Although having some *zhan zhuang*, *shi li* and *moca bu* basics before starting learning *fa li* is necessary, there is no need to put it off too much.

The key to *fa li* is co-ordination of the changes of tension and relaxation. Tension and relaxation are both very important. But because most people have tendency to overtension, which makes impossible developing full dynamic force and speed, so it is necessary to put stress on relax. The act of issuing power is a process of changes of tension and relaxation of various groups of muscles. The time of issuing power (affecting object) should be as short as possible (though "*pushing*" force, which affects object for longer time is also used in yiquan). The force must be "*whole*" (*zheng*), and not "*dispersed*" (*san*), which means that the force of whole body must be used in coordinated and balanced way.

In yiquan the importance of mental activity in training is particularly stressed. Not only in basic methods as *zhan zhuang* or *shi li*, but also in *fa li* it is very important. Engaging mind, imagination into training allows more full developing of our natural potential, which means also making easier developing of the ability of issuing force in explosive way.

To issue force in proper way the mind must be in state of active, alert readiness, as if you stand in front of dangerous opponent, ready to act, feeling that you are able to issue power which can break boards and stones. Depending of particular fa li exercise, various visualisations are used.

The learning of fa li often begins with *fangsong fali* (relaxed fa li). Actually it's kind of preliminary exercise, where stress is put mainly to relaxation, in order to prevent overtension and rigidity. You should imagine that you grab two handfuls of sand from a bowl placed on height of your belly, and in soft, circular movement toss the imagined sand forwards and upwards. Then softly, in circular way bring your hands down, to catch another handfuls of sand. The movement of hands must be coordinated with movement of whole body, which must move upwards and downwards, leaning forwards and moving back. The force must be transmitted through whole body, from feet to head and fingers. In the moment of issuing force ("tossing sand") front foot is "*trampling*". At beginning you should practice softly, comparatively slowly, gradually developing ability of sudden "*impulsive*" using of force, like cracking the whip.

SHI SHENG

Shi sheng - is working with issuing voice, which supports issuing force. Yelling can also influence opponents psychic (inducing fear or just hesitation), though it is not main aim of *shi sheng*. In the moment of issuing force the breath is suddenly "*falling downwards*", "*as if a rock falls into a well*" underbelly muscles are suddenly tensed and instantly relaxed. Two basic sounds: *yi* and *yo* are often used. At first those are articulated separately and then linked together. Although at beginning you use loud voicing, you should gradually make it soundless, but achieving the same effect of supporting force like with loud voicing.

TUI SHOU

In combat contact between your and your opponent's hands happens very often. The training method known as *tui shou* (pushing hands) prepares you for such a situation. People who saw taijiquan tui shou or Wing Chun chi sao (especially schools other than from Yip Man's lineage) can have some idea, what is tui shou in yiquan.

As you know, yiquan is mostly about working with a "force" called hunyuan li. Tui shou is really just about this same. From this point of view tui shou is shi li with partner. During tui shou practice you learn to feel opponents force and its direction, his strong and weak points and his ability of keeping balance. All this in order to develop ability of controlling opponent, changing direction of his force, putting him off balance, putting him into inconvenient position, opening space for attack.

Some important points of tui shou practice are:

Dian (point). It means point of contact between you and opponent. In this point you feel opponents force, its direction, if he is stable or not. In this point your force acts on opponents body.

Zhi li (pointing force). There should be some force in the point of contact, directed towards opponents center line.

Jie (section). It means sections of body and limbs. Importants is understanding how force is transferred.

Xie mian (oblique surface). Receiving opponents force in adequate way, enables dividing it into smaller forces.

Ganga li (force of leverage) and **Luoxuan de yunyong** (using spiral movement) help to use bigger force with less effort.

Gong fang he yi (merging attack and defence into one). Attak suddenly becomes into defence, defence becomes attack. One movement can be attack and defence.

Shou zhong, yong zhong (guard center, use center). Controll opponent's cener and don't let him attack your center.

Quan shen zhi fa (method of using whole body). Tui shou is not just "pushing hands". You should use your whole body in co-ordinated manner. Steps should aid body and hands.

Although we learn some movements in tui shou, it's only starting point in pushing hands practice. In san tui shou (free tui shou) you should be able to act in miriads of situations and not just use some sets of techniques.

SAN SHOU (SHI ZUO)

San shou (shi zuo) is study of combat. We use all parts of body. We attack not only with fists (hands), but also with elbows, shoulders, head, hips, knees and feet. We use also some throws and strangleholds. We don't learn forms or complicated techniques. We are interested in real combat, without unnecessary movements and "*ornaments*". San shou is closely related to tui shou. "*In tui shou there is san shou, in san shou there is tui shou*". Tui shou, in which we concentrate on situation when there is contact between our and opponents arms (we can change direction of his force, take him off balance or open space for attack), is introduction to san shou and a supplement for this training method.

Most tui shou principles are applied also to san shou.

We learn simple, basic punches and kicks, practicing not only "punching the air", but also using punching bags. Exercises with punchbags are for testing the power developed by zhan zhuang, shi li and fa li practice.

Swift, balanced footwoork is most important. So, taking mocabu as a basis, we put much attention to exercises of quick steps. Gradually, we link together various steps. Also various punches, kicks and other fa li movements are being linked together in improvised combinations, together with various footwork.

The original meaning of san shou (shi zuo) is real combat. Of course training sparring, although it should prepare for real situation is not the same as real fight. Both partners should put some attention to the problem of safety. Safety equipment should be used, especially at the first stage of san shou practice. At beginning sometimes limited variants of sparring are used. For example you can attack only your partner's torso, or you can only use fists, without kicking, or you can only use kicks but not punches. Then, the limits are removed, so the sparring gets more close to real combat. Elbows, knees, hips, shoulders and head can be used for attacking then.

Sparring practice is very important part of training. But you shouldn't forget other training methods of yiquan. Although through practicing san shou only it is possible to achieve some skill, without using zhan zhuang, shi li, moca bu, fa li etc. it is impossible to achieve really high level.

There is also some weapons practice in yiquan. Usually wooden staff is used. Some supplement for basic training methods are stretching exercises, learning to receive punches, eye-work training and other.

ANDRZEJ KALISZ
YIQUAN - UNITY OF HEALTH AND COMBAT PRACTICE

In China for centuries there was a strong connection between martial arts and medicine. Many kung-fu masters had substantial knowledge of curing injuries. In many schools some medical prescriptions were passed from generation to generation. Almost each system of traditional kung-fu/wushu contained some exercises for cultivating health, which are nowadays generally known as qigong. In some systems health and combat practices merged into one. Yiquan is such a system.

Yiquan seems to be very simple, but actually it is very rich and profound. Of course it is a martial art. But it contains many various aspects which make it valuable. It is difficult to explain all of them in a few sentences. Yiquan's founder - Wang Xiangzhai, suggested putting them into 3 points:

- Practice for health (jianshen, yangsheng),
- Self-defense (ziwei),
- Satisfaction gained from study, from learning the principles of human and nature (xun liqu).

For different people different aspects can be more or less important. Some start practice, because they want to learn self-defense and thank to this have feeling of being safe. Some want to train and get medals at tournaments and championships. Others practice yiquan because it helps them to maintain and improve health, to keep fitness until advanced age. For some other more important is just the process of study, of development, getting deep satisfaction from learning principles on which yiquan is based, testing them in practice and mastering them. Each part of training can be seen from various sides. For example sparring for some practitioners is just one of methods which help to develop skills useful in situation of being attacked on street. But for some other this may not be so important. Sparring may be for them an interesting method of testing their level of fitness, abilities and skills, their progress in perfecting the co-operation of mind and body. Some can be more fascinated by the deep principles on which yiquan is based - learning them, understanding them, mastering them. Sparring is for them the same as some laboratory tests for researchers in other fields of science.

The value of yiquan is not limited to the 3 points forwarded by Wang Xiangzhai. We know that each of practitioners is able to relate what he is getting from yiquan practice to many other fields and to the progress in those fields.

In this article I would like to concentrate on some misunderstandings regarding yiquan practice for health. For about 50 years yiquan training methods have been used in some hospitals in China as a form of therapy. Some instructors are specializing in teaching those people who have severe health problems. Many such people achieved great improvement of health thanks to zhan zhuang training.

But some people have wrong ideas and expectations. For example they want to learn "health part" and not "combat part", thinking that it will be more interesting for them. Actually they make mistake, choosing only a very limited part of yiquan, and limiting their personal growth, their self-improvement.

Yiquan is for health, self-defense, personal growth and satisfaction - all in one. There is no "combat part" which would be independent from "health part". This is one complete system, learning which can give you many benefits. Each of the practitioners can of course concentrate more on those aspects which are important to him/her. For example if someone is interested in fighting, he will view everything from this side, he will practice a lot of tui shou and san shou. But of course he will also achieve health benefits.

If someone is more interested in training for health, he will analyze the same exercises from the point of view of health and of improving mind and body working. He will not think too much about becoming good at fighting. But there is no reason not to use the same forms of training, as they bring the results which he is expecting.

Starting from the most basic training methods of yiquan, as zhan zhuang or shi li, it's exercises which are beneficial for health, but at the same time those exercises also serve developing abilities and skill useful in self-defense and they are basis for more advanced training. Those who want to learn yiquan as a martial art cannot neglect them, thinking that it is only "health part". Those exercises in fact belong to "combat part" as well.

From the other side, those interested in health shouldn't unnecessary limit their training to zhan zhuang and shi li, thinking that only this is "health part" and other methods are only for combat. This would be wrong. In yiquan there is no single exercise, which wouldn't be related to developing fighting skills. Yes, those methods which are used in hospitals as form of therapy are the same methods which serve as a basis for developing fighting skills in yiquan! All methods of yiquan are at the same time for health and for combat.

Sometimes those interested in training for health don't like practicing fa li, bacause they think that it's "violent movements which only serve beating other people". But they should realize that fa li means also ability of fluid changes between soft and hard, ability of staying quite relaxed also during more dynamic movement. Those abilities are quite important for everybody in everyday situations. It is also some higher level of self-development, the spirit-mind-body improvement, than just working on relax in static postures or slow movements. Practitioners should keep trying to achieve higher and higher levels of mind and body co-ordination, of controlling body - the advanced work of nervous system.

Tui shou are exercises with partner, which help you to get closer to free fighting. But at the same time in tui shou you are learning such use of body, which enables achieving effects without unnecessary effort. It gives you ability of utilizing some force and at the same

time staying relatively relaxed. You are avoiding too much tension, by using among others a proper structure of body. You are able to generate useful force, without too much effort, without putting too much stress on your muscles, tendons and joints. This is extremely important from the point of view of health! In everyday life we are using our body, our force, in various ways, lifting something, pushing something, working in garden etc. With age our body is becoming weaker. Some injuries can happen more easily than when you were young. So you must do everything in a way which doesn't put too much stress on your body. And you can learn this by practicing tui shou! And it will teach you proper use of body not just in several movements in simple directions, but you will learn to be able to do it in changing and often unpredictable situations. Thanks to this you will be able to transfer those skills and abilities to many situations in life. It will help you to avoid injuries, to keep health and fitness longer. So, if we are talking about health, would giving up those exercises make much sense?

Someone practicing for health will not put much attention to san shou (free fighting) and will not so often participate in sparring exercises. But some sparring exercises, carefully chosen, adjusted to individual conditions, can be very useful also from the point of view of health. They will enable testing practitioner's level of achievement, his control over body, over balance, his reaction - in many everyday situations it can be very important and can be directly related to the question of staying healthy and fit. Of course age, level of fitness and health conditions must be taken into consideration, and way of practice must be adjusted accordingly. Some people will not be able to practice san shou at all or only in very limited way. But this is matter of adjusting the way of practice to individual conditions. And just rejecting all those methods completely only because someone is interested only in "health part" doesn't make much sense to me.

In yiquan there is no single exercise which wouldn't serve developing fighting skills. At the same time all those exercises, from basic to advanced are directly related to the question of maintaining, improving and protecting health. One more example - when thanks to practice of fast changing footwork (so called "combat steps") you are able to avoid falling over and injuring your body when stumbling on stairs, isn't it a health benefit? Why would some people come upon the idea that only standing and slow movements are important if you want to care about your health?

In China there is a long tradition of practicing martial arts for improving fitness and health. In biographies of many masters we can read, that they were weak and of poor health in childhood, so parents let them learn martial art with some expert. It was like this with yiquan's founder Wang Xiangzhai, who learned xingyiquan from Guo Yunshen. It was like this with my teacher Yao Chengguang, who because of health problems started learning yiquan from his father at age of 8. Both became later great martial arts experts. Many people who also started this way, had not achieved so high level, but anyway what they practiced was martial arts and not some "health part".

In 1940s more and more people learned yiquan, and they were able to experience both its efficiency as a martial art, and improvement of their health thanks to training. Many were coming to Wang Xiangzhai to learn something which would help them to improve health. Health was their main aim. Sometimes their physical condition and health problems limited their training. So there wasn't so much stress on the more advanced and more demanding forms of practice. But still they learned some fa li or tui shou, according to their condition. It was still yiquan - a complete system, only with different accents.

Unfortunately soon teaching real martial arts openly became impossible for many years. Only some demonstration form of wushu or health form of taijiquan were propagated. The same happened with yiquan. The complete system couldn't be taught officially (so it was done only in small unofficial groups). Wide popularization had to be limited to the most basic methods, like zhan zhuang and shi li, which didn't look so "combative". Health benefits of those methods were widely appreciated, and they were introduced as supplementary form of therapy in some hospitals. Yiquan's founder Wang Xiangzhai also worked in hospitals in Beijing and in Baoding. The methods were limited to zhan zhuang and some shi li. But it wasn't because only those methods could bring health benefits, but because teaching methods which looked more "combative" was impossible. This is why the limited "health version" was developed.

Of course, for people with severe illnesses, often with serious injuries, methods like zhan zhuang and shi li were most appropriate, while using more demanding methods would be impossible or even harmful in their case.

But it is different with most people of different age, with at least a minimum level of fitness and without serious health problems, which would make impossible using more dynamic and demanding exercises. When such people insist on practicing only zhan zhuang and shi li, which they consider "health part", it is unjustified limiting personal growth, limiting mind and body improvement. Practitioner shouldn't create such artificial limitations.

People interested in maintaining and improving health, if they consider starting learning yiquan, they shouldn't think that "health version" limited to zhan zhuang and shi li is appropriate for them. Such limited version is actually appropriate for people very old, very weak, or with really big health problems, who shouldn't be allowed to practice any of those more demanding methods. And for most people of different age, different fitness level, yiquan as a complete system is the most reasonable choice. Practicing complete yiquan, they can adjust the exercises and way of training to their individual conditions. Everybody can find in yiquan something interesting and valuable and achieve the expected benefits, and even discover that he or she is achieving benefits far beyond original expectations!

ANDRZEJ KALISZ
ZHAN ZHUANG TRAINING FOR HEALTH

"In ancient times great masters stood on earth, supporting heaven, controlling yin and yang, breathing with essence of qi, standing alone, guarding spirit, with body being a one".



This quote from "Yellow Emperor's Inner Classics" (from about 3rd century B.C.) is probably the earliest mentioning of the method of zhan zhuang. Exercises known as zhan zhuang were quite well known and used in many schools of Chinese martial arts. But their goal was mainly strengthening legs and increasing stability. So it was quite different from zhan zhuang which is presently used in many hospitals and sanatoriums in China as a form of health cultivating and a medical therapy.

The zhan zhuang exercises we talk about, come from xingyiquan (hsing-i ch'u'an) - one of the "internal arts". But in most xingyiquan schools only one zhan zhuang posture is used - it is santishi. Wang Xiangzhai (1885-1963), prominent exponent of xingyiquan, disciple of famous Guo Yunshen'a, while modifying xingyiquan and creating yiquan in 1920's, made the zhan zhuang exercises the most basic method of his system. It's difficult to say to what extent these exercises were part of "secret transmission" which Wang received from Guo and how big was Wang's own contribution.



 When yiquan has became a popular martial art, many practitioners could experience that zhan zhuang exercises are very profitable to health. In 1940's more and more people were learning from Wang Xiangzhai with the aim of improving health, and not only achieving combat skill. After creation of People's Republic of China Wang Xiangzhai, working in hospitals in Beijing and Baoding, concentrated mainly on using zhan zhuang exercises as a form of health cultivation and therapy.

Usually the system of exercises for health, developed by Wang Xiangzhai is named as zhan zhuang ("standing pole"), because standing positions are used most often. But exercises in sitting and lying positions and supplementary moving exercises (shi li and mo ca bu) are also used. Those exercises are known as: zhan zhuang qigong, yiquan qigong, jianshen zhuang, yangsheng zhuang, zhuang gong, zhuang fa etc.



Zhan zhuang is an unique method, in which both mind and body are engaged, and in which effort and relax are one thing. The basis of zhan zhuang is relax, both mental and physical. The importance of mind is especially stressed. Various forms of visualizations, which help to achieve the state of relax and tranquility, clear the mind from persistent thoughts, enabling recuperating of mental forces are often used. Those visualizations are only a help. We don't try to master some visualization by any means, but we rather use those visualizations which are easy for us, so we can easily achieve relax and tranquility. When we achieve this goal, using that kind of visualization is not necessary

anymore. It is said, that it is just like with a boat in which we go to other side of a river - when you are on the other side already, you don't take the boat with you.



Although body relax is particularly stressed, maintaining the postures for some time, demands some effort. It is not absolute relax. We say: "Relaxed but not loose, tense but not rigid". (Song er bu xie, jin er bu jiang). Relax helps to avoid excess rigidity, which would prevent free blood flow, and the moderate effort enables a moderate stimulation of whole body. After some time of practice you can feel relax, comfort, unity of whole body. The spirit is unified, centered, not occupied with thoughts. The breath is "flowing" freely, without any forced control (gradually your breath becomes more deep, more abdominal). Your body recovers the natural equilibrium which is basis of good health.

After some time of practice you can start using some more advanced methods, more close to "combat" practice methods of yiquan. You seek "movement in non-movement" and "force in relax". It is called "feeling force" (mo li). You experience slight movement (almost not visible), and some imagined resistance (but you are trying to stay relaxed at the same time). In shi li exercises the movement is becoming longer, but very slow at the same time. We say about seeking "non movement in movement" in shi li. It means great subtlety of movement and awareness of "each point of movement". Zhan zhuang and shi li complement each other. Wang Xiangzhai said: "Shi li is zhan zhuang expanded in space, and zhan zhuang is shortened shi li". In both cases we cultivate unity, wholeness of using energy of body. We achieve higher level of harmony, coordination of mind and body. In many schools of "health" zhan zhuang they never achieve this level though. The practice proves, that although by using only those simplest methods, you can achieve quite good results, using after some time of practice the methods like "mo li" (in zhan zhuang) and shi li (together with moca bu, which is shi li for legs) enables achieving even more. Many people, who used to practiced the "health" version, noticed better results, when they started to learn "combat" yiquan.



LIU QIAN
YIQUAN HELPED ME TO RECOVER
Translated from chinese by: Andrzej Kalisz

I'm a student from Nanjing. In 2000, a few months after I started studying, I got serious stomach problems, because I wasn't used to eat meals at student's canteen, and I didn't put enough attention to my health. I felt stomach aching while eating. It affected my health and my study. I started pharmacological treatment, but without visible improvement

In July I came to Beijing and met master Yao Chengguang. According to his instruction I started practicing one of the yangsheng zhuang (health postures), which is often recommended for people with stomach problems. It was half supported position - banfushi chengbao zhuang. I spent 40 days at master Yao's Zongxun Wuguan school. Each time when I was doing this exercise, I felt some gentle warmth in my stomach area, and also something similar to numbness caused by electric current. After 40 days I fel big improvement.

After coming back to school I continued practicing. In November I had medical tests which confirmed improvement.

When I was in Beijing, master Yao told me: "In yangsheng zhuang, the posture is adjusted according to the illness and individual conditions. We don't use just one posture everytime and for everybody. But at the same time it's not as simple as that this posture is for this illness and that posture for that ilness. The exercises should be chosen and consultation should be made by someone very experienced. Yang sheng zhuang can be used as supplementary tool, actively supporting treatment. In our opinion, the treatment and process of recovering should be actively supported, by using the health exercises. We oppose just passive waiting, until the illness is removed by medical treatment only. When you only receive medical treatment, without exercise, there is a danger that you will just become a tank filled with drugs. But we also oppose overestimating value of health exercises." I think it's very valuable opinion. Master Yao's attitude made a big impression on me. I plan to go to Beijing next year again, this time to learn yiquan as a martial art.

Monday, February 5, 1990
"LIFE AND PEOPLE" magazine

SHI WAN

WILL BOXING HELPS PEOPLE GET STRONG AND STAY FIT

The day was just breaking, and a group of people had gathered in a small street-corner park along Nanlishi Road in West Beijing. They came to practice YIQUAN - will-boxing, one of the traditional Chinese martial arts. Led by a man of moderate build, they now moved around, punching and kicking as though they were shadow boxing, now posed in a fighting stance, breathing deeply as if they were doing qigong. Their coach is Yao Chengguang, 36, who is deputy head of the Will-Boxing Chapter in Beijing's Wushu Society.

"Here is the most popular place for will-boxing lovers in Beijing, and every Thursday and Sunday my younger brother and I come here to teach," Yao said. About 10 years ago, Yao's father first used the park to train people in will-boxing, and thousands of people have since learned it as a way of keeping fit. *"I have been practicing it for almost 10 years here in this park,"* one old man said. *"We usually have two groups - elderly people like me practise a stance skill called "standing firm like a stake" while younger people prefer "hand pushing."* "Will-boxing can help health-building and prevent disease," he said. "Whenever I practise will-boxing, I feel warm in my feet. I'm 67 years old now but I feel just as strong as a young man." "Winter is cold here in Beijing but I never need to wear padded shoes or leather boots to keep my feet warm," the old man added. *"Last year I went to Beidaihe beaches for the summer and once took a boat cruise on the sea. We were caught in a windstorm, and many young passengers were made seasick by high waves and confined to their berths. I stood on the bow in a will-boxing stance and was not affected at all."*

PRACTICE

"I used to be a communications officer with the Beijing armed police force, but from 1973 I was afflicted first with a duodenal ulcer and then with hepatitis. I was retired because of my poor health," Wang said. *"I was hospitalized for eight years, but my condition did not improve much."* "Since 1982, I have been doing will-boxing stance exercises here, about three to four hours a day. After a year of practice, I went to the hospital for a check-up and was surprised to find I had fully recovered."

According to Yao Chengguang, will-boxing is a special kind of modern martial art. Different from other kinds of Chinese Wushu, it does not have a series of systematic routines, but to become a master of this unique boxing skill, one needs to go through exercises in six aspects - standing posture, testing strength, foot movement, issuing strength, hand pushing and free sparring. The stance exercise is the key and most basic part of will-boxing. To practise it, one's will or imagination has a very important role to play. *"When you try to stand*

firm, you may imagine you are holding a tree; it moves only if you move, other-wise it stands still as you do," Yao said. *"After a long period of practice, one will acquire a kind of internal strength that can keep one's physical balance despite the movement of one's surroundings, and finally one feels every part of the body miraculously like a spring with a kind of elastic force,"* he said.

Will-boxing was first developed by Wang Xiangzhai (1885 to 1963) in his home town in Shenxian County of Hebei Province. It is based upon XINGYIQUAQN - Form and Will Boxing. This martial art is called Form and Will boxing because its techniques imitate the forms of objects or movements of animals as indicated by their names, such as cannon fish, chop palm, golden cock mounting perch, and monkey climbing pole. In the early 1940s, Wang once beat a well-known Japanese judo master and won much acclaim in Chinese wushu circles. He trained many students and Yao's father, Yao Zongxun, was one of them.

Before the 1980s, Yao Zongxun had taught will-boxing in Zhongshan Park in Beijing but he only passed on its stance skill as a health-building exercise. In October 1984, Yao Zongxun helped to found a will-boxing chapter under the Beijing Wushu Society and he assumed the post as the chairman of the chapter. But he died of a chronic disease a few months later, and his two sons, Yao Chengguang and Yao Chengrong, took over as his successors.

SKILL

"Will-boxing is also a very useful skill for attack and defence. I often received letters from the armed police forces and frontier soldiers who wanted to learn the skill from me," Yao Chengguang said. To demonstrate the skill, Yao went to one of his students practicing in the park and challenged him to a contest. They clasped their hands together, pushing and pulling for several rounds. Yao's opponent was pushed several metres away and fell on the ground. But the loser had practiced will boxing for two years and would not easily accept defeat. He challenged Yao for a second contest. But this time Yao's opponent was shoved away more forcefully, having his head bumped against a tree before he fell. When he struggled up, he gasped out, *"Please be easy with your hand, Master Yao."* *"If I hadn't taken it easy, you would have never been able to stand up again,"* Yao replied.

Yao now works as a security guard of a trolley bus company in Beijing after working as a conductor for years. In 1988, Yao and his brother went to Hong Kong for half a year for professional exchanges at the invitation of Huo Zhenhuan, chairman of the Asian Wushu Federation. They held classes to teach will-boxing as a health-building and self-defense art and took part in many contests with opponents from Canada and the United States. Every time they managed to throw their opponents onto the ground with their powerful hand pushes. Their trip made a small furor in Hong Kong and Huo presented them with an honourable silk

banner inscribed with the words: The Chinese tradition of will-boxing is a national treasure that enjoys a high reputation abroad.

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SONG JILIAN
FINDING A TEACHER
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

I've been fascinated by wushu since childhood. I went to many places, spent a lot of money, experienced many difficulties, lost many years trying to master martial art. I'm over 40 now and almost lost any hope. My dreams finally started coming true when in 2002 I went to Beijing and met an expert of yiquan - master Yao Chengguang.

If someone wants to achieve real skill, finding good teacher is crucial. Developing real skill is absolutely impossible without instruction of a wise teacher. Good teacher is not the one who is famous, but the one who is real expert, a scientist, someone who is linking scientific theory with fighting practice. Today lovers of wushu can read a lot of advertisements, which are repeating slogans like: family lineage, true transmission, successor of the system, great master. Many methods and superhuman skills are advertised: hitting opponent without touching him, methods of becoming an invincible fighter after very short period of training. People are not able to tell what is for real and who is fake, and they are often being deceived. So how can you know if someone is good teacher. In my opinion you shouldn't just listen to what people say, but you should check by yourself. The best way is checking and comparing. Only this way you will be able to know what is real and what is not.

I think, there are three elements which indicate that you met a good teacher:

- his system is very clear, representing high level of development of martial art, when health and fighting aspects become one.
- his skill is great, or at least he knows the system which he is teaching very well.
- he should have clear method of teaching, he should be modest, approachable by students.

Only then we can speak of a good teacher.

I'm over 40. Seeking for real martial arts skill I went to many schools and many teachers. I learned traditional systems and forms for many years, but I couldn't use what I learned in fighting. Then I got to know about yiquan, which is also known as dachengquan. Yiquan was started by a great master of his time - Wang Xiangzhai. It was further developed by Yao Zongxun, becoming a modern art of real combat. When I got to know about it, I was delighted. I started travelling again to far away places in order to learn yiquan. Again I spent a lot of money. I worked hard. I spent over ten years learning yiquan. But I wasn't able to prove value of yiquan in sparring. And my opponents only kept coming to conclusion that yiquan was useless. I started losing faith in value of yiquan.

Then in "Wuhun" magazine I read about Zongxun Wuguan school in Beijing, where Yao Zongxun's elder son - Yao Chengguang is teaching personally. Hope started growing again. I never met Yao Chengguang before, but I heard about him.

During last years I kept spending a lot of money on learning yiquan. We also had big expenses lately because of my daughter's illness. And my wife worked only part time. How could I afford further learning in such situation? And now I had some doubts about yiquan too. My first yiquan teacher was also Yao Zongxun's student. So what difference?

I kept thinking about it, and couldn't make decision. Then I discussed it with my wife. She didn't agree for my trip to Beijing. But finally she agreed that I spend 100 yuan on the 10th CD from the whole set of instructional VCDs of master Yao Chengguang. When I received the package and saw the video, I was surprised - what I saw was so different from what I learned before. But I came to conclusion, that Yao Chengguang, being Yao Zongxun's son for sure learned the real stuff, and others maybe not. I decided to go to Beijing to see by myself what skill Yao Chengguang had.

My wife was against my plan, because in result of daughter's illness we had debts. But I promised that I will work hard to pay the debts off, and with 500 yuan I went to Beijing. In Beijing I went to Ditan park, where I met master Yao Chengguang. Before, I heard people saying that Yao was great fighter, but he was very unapproachable and lofty. But it turned out that he was quite nice and modest. His way of teaching is adjusting the way of training to student's condition. He is always patiently answering students' questions. He made me understand what is meant by "teaching with words and body". Yiquan's way of teaching is different from that of other systems. In most schools teacher is demonstrating movements, and students are mimicking them. But it is impossible to learn yiquan by mimicking movements, without understanding what is hidden "inside". Appropriate method of teaching must be used, if student is to develop real skill. Yao Chengguang is demonstrating standard form of movements, explaining their principles in very detailed way. He often lets students touch his body, feel direction of his force, so they can fully understand what is happening outside and inside and on what principles it is based.

Talking about Yao's skill I don't exaggerate at all. This is all real. When he is issuing force and making opponent fly, it is really like the classics say; "fighting is easy as hanging a picture on a wall". Sometimes he is pushing opponent far away, and sometimes opponent is lifted upward, and falling on his back, as if his feet didn't catch up with upper body movement. Yao has perfect awareness of his body and force, so while demonstrating something or practicing tui shou or san shou, he is adjusting his force according to partners skill and condition. Please do not think that I'm saying so much good about him only because I'm his student now. What I say is absolutely true.

When I first time went to Beijing to meet Yao, I spent there only a week. After coming back home I asked my relatives and friends to help me collect money for next trip.

Meeting master Yao Chengguang I met a real expert of yiquan. I'm not so young anymore, but thanks to Yao I was still able to make great progress in tui shou and san shou. So I want to tell you: if you want to achieve real skill, you must find a good teacher.

WANG XIANGZhai
ABOUT DACHENGQUAN (YIQUAN)
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

From translator: *In 1940 Wang Xiangzhai was interviewed by reporter of "Shibao" newspaper. The complete translation is available for students of our Academy as free study material. Here comes Wang Xiangzhai's short description of dachengquan (yiquan).*

Reporter:

You are a great master of dachengquan. Would you tell us about this art?

Wang Xiangzhai:

When talking about martial art, many thoughts come to mind, it is difficult to explain everything. But when you get to understand the main ideas, it becomes extremely simple. Learning martial art, you should know why are you doing this. If you have clear idea about this, it is easy to gain something. In most cases it is for health and for learning self defense. Health is basis for all human activities. So the aspect of cultivating health shouldn't be neglected. If the learning is done properly, benefits are great, but if methods are wrong, they could even cause death. Among those whose training is based on strenuous movement not many achieve longevity. There were many people who injured their bodies in result of improper training. Such martial art causes sadness and laughter.

Knowing the benefits and problems related to practicing martial art, you should carefully observe movement and non-movement. Movement doesn't mean only change of outside form. Mind/spirit should be observing if each change, each movement, outside and inside, are done in accordance with the principles of training for health and for combat. Why moving? Why not moving? What are results? What happens in the process? Experiencing this practitioner will get close to the essence. The subtlety of the way must be continuously studied and probed, otherwise it will be difficult to gain anything.

Here I will shortly talk about dachengquan, so other martial artists can discuss it. First I will talk about stages of study. Training for health and for combat about which I already spoked are one thing and should not be separated. If one is lost, abuses are created and it will lead astray.

First you need to start from mental training, and then develop natural potential in using nervous system and body. First step in studying martial art is mental work as basis, working on experiencing subtle movements inside body. Second step is shi li - "testing strength" and shi shieng - "testing voice". Third step is self defense. I will talk about them now.

1. Basic training

You should start from zhuang fa - postural training. You can practice anywhere and anytime, walking, standing, sitting or lying on bed. You should assume proper position, body should be naturally straight, mind should be empty from disturbing thoughts. In the state of non-movement and tranquility nervous system is naturally positively stimulated, breathing is naturally regulated, muscles are mildly stimulated, each cell in the body is participating in natural movement. Strength is inside and outside, throughout whole body. This way bones and muscles are not trained in typical way, yet they are trained. Nerves are not nourished with typical exercises, yet they are nourished. You need only to observe the most subtle changes. If one practices for long time, one will find that such standing can bring great results. If one wants to achieve the secrets of martial training, one must first start from zhan zhuang.

2. Testing strength and testing voice

After some period of practicing basic exercises, the natural potential becomes revealed and developed. As for using it, you should avoid following illusion. Very often because of illusions and unrealistic dreams practice becomes something totally different from what I'm calling developing the natural potential. Pulling sprouts up will not make the plant grow faster. The way of using can be adapted to needs. What is most important is understanding the state of force in movement. Only then you can make next steps. Shi li is the most important method, if we are talking about introduction to martial art study. The ability of using force is developed through shi li. You learn the force by "testing" it. Knowing it, you can use it efficiently. At beginning the feeling of force should become even, body should be perceived as agile, with skeleton supporting whole body. This way you will be able to use contraction and stretching, relax and tension of muscles. The force from inside can be issued outside. It is better to do movements slower than faster, with calm and not in haste. The more subtle movement, the more harmonious and full the spirit. You want to move, but you stop, you want to stop, but you move. When you are moving it is as if you couldn't resist stopping. When you are stopping it is as if you couldn't resist moving. There shouldn't be partial force in shi li. There shouldn't be absolute - one directional force. You should check if force of whole body is round, full or not, if you are able to issue force at any moment, if there appears feeling of mutual reaction between body and air. Intention shouldn't be broken, spirit mustn't disperse. You should be able to use both light and heavy. If one point moves, whole body follows. Force should be unified, swift and at the same time solid, round and full, up and down, left and right, front and back there shouldn't be anything lost or forgotten. Summarizing, if someone has not achieved the satisfactory state of comfortable force, we don't call it proper martial art.

Shi sheng - testing voice serves supplementing the insufficiencies of shi li. Each person is different, so he meets different difficulties. The goal of shi sheng is supplementing the skill by using breath. It is called internal breathing. This is what is called breathing with back of abdomen.

3. Self defense

This is combat. You should know that big movement is not as good as small movement, small movement is not as good as non-movement. In non-movement continuous movement is born. Movement which has visible form is expression of lack of proper force. The so called movement in non-movement is a movement as if without movement. Movement and non-movement are rooted in each other. The wonder of using it is based on using mind, mental induction, elastic use of the work of joints, stretching and contracting, firm support, the force of a screw, twisting around axis, moving the center of weight in stable way, using elastic power of breath. When someone can use it, he has basis for combat..

This sounds very abstractive. But there are many things which are difficult to explain using words. If someone practices diligently, he will easily achieve understanding. Distinguishing between big or small movement depends on mastering the basics - achieving practical perception of all kinds of force. When you master basics of using force of whole body, the movement can be big or small, it doesn't matter if movement is big or small. But if basics are not mastered, everything is wrong. The same with so called using force or not using force. People are usually unable to use force without disturbing flow of blood. Such force is stiff, not harmonious, it is not good for health. When you are able to get force without disturbing flow of blood, without excessive effort there appears force when you need to use it, this is natural force.

This is as if seeking miraculous but real things starting from empty ideas. It is difficult to express it with words. Summarizing, dachengquan is not based on beauty of external form, but on using mind. In short, if there is form, it is something not ripe yet. Only when the technique reaches level of doing it unconsciously, the miraculous appears. This is what I'm talking about.

WANG XIANGZhai (1885-1963)
PROFIT FROM PRACTICING MARTIAL ART
Translation from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

There is a saying: "You need good health to make great deeds". In other words, if you are healthy, you can live long and engage in all great matters. Health is extremely important. And health is depending on constant cultivation and appropriate exercises. To know if some exercises are good for health, some research and practical tests are necessary. How can you test their value? Before someone will start practice, some scientific methods should be used - state of his heart should be checked, blood pressure, pulse, breathing, number of white and red blood corpuscles. After some time of practice, the tests should be conducted again. This will enable deciding if some exercise method is proper. Proper method is the one which conforms with the natural principles of functioning of human body. Only such method can be favourable for people's health.

Appropriate exercises can positively affect metabolism of all cells of human body and all organs, can improve functioning of breathing system, and vascular system, improve body metabolism. In other word, we say: can activate whole human organism. So appropriate exercises can activate cells. When we talk about growing youths, it will help their development, strengthen their body and organs. When we talk about mature people it will help them to keep fit and healthy. If the exercises are not intensive enough, you will not achieve results. But if they are too intensive, they will harm body and be cause of illness.

In typical forms of exercises, before body is tired, there are already problems with breathing and heart is overburdened. So the exercise must be stopped in order to let heart rest, to get breath and regain normal state.

Chinese combat science uses opposite method. This is exercise of muscles and vascular system. You can say that it is exercise of all cells of body. The principle is: stimulating all kinds of cells and organs at the same time. Even if during exercise muscles become tired, the pulse is in normal range, breath is natural. And after the exercise you feel that breath is more "free", more "comfortable" than before exercise. This is constant and gradual development, without overburdening your heart. The result is keeping health and strengthening body. There is no age or sex limit.. And because there are no complex sets of movements, nervous system is not attacked by too strong impulses, you get rid of internal tension, achieving mental rest. This is one of the elements which make combat science different from typical forms of exercises.

Although in zhan zhuang you keep some position, actually all muscle tissues and cells start working. This kind of work is very appropriate from point of view of cells development and the work of vascular system. All body and organs are activated. All organs are evenly

stimulated, without danger of overburdening heart. This is not about external movement. You should know that in combat science "big movement is not as good as small movement, small movement is not as good as non-movement, movement in non-movement is the being constantly born and never ceasing movement".

We can say that it is very specific, chinese branch of science, not known elsewhere. But so far not much attention was directed towards those exercises. And it is not something that most people could understand relating it to their former experience. If they think, that simple exercises in static position cannot help developing strength and fitness, they just lack a minimum of knowledge. Actually those exercises not only enable strengthening body in very short time, but can also help to heal many chronic diseases, which it was difficult to heal with medical therapies. They are very valuable in therapy and prophylactic. This is a method conforming with demands of physiology.

If we are talking about typical forms of exercises, some of them are too intensive, harming health, other are too one-sided. So when people with some health problems don't do exercise, they often improve health, and when they start exercises, it not only doesn't help them, but even harms them, making their problems worse. There is lack of scientific research on the subject of sports yet. This is reason of such situations. In the past there were really many martial arts masters who lost their health, because of using bad training methods. It's because those methods were not conforming with demands of physiology. You should know, that science is not about sticking to old methods, and for sure it is not about defending deficiencies in old methods. But science is about development based on experience. The methods should be constantly developed, testing value of the principles in practice. We should take it very seriously. We should think. This is the kind of relation as between reading a book and actual acting. So the exercises shouldn't be too intensive. Continuing, we can say, that most forms of exercises popular nowadays, were created for young people only. The needs of people in middle age and older are neglected. Whereas it is people over 40 years old, who are ready to accomplish big tasks in the state and society, because they have deep knowledge and rich experience. Neglecting their need for exercises means neglecting their health. This is big loss for country! When we talk about principles of exercises, we should stress: calm, respect, realism. Rich spirit should be developed. It is easy to understand for people with rich experience and life knowledge, that they should avoid disturbing breath, making puls too fast, tensing diaphragm. If we are talking about people over 60 years old, this is not age at which people could start seeking big success in martial art, but seeking improvement of health is not so difficult.

There are three main aims of exercises:

Cultivating health,

Self-defense,

Pleasure of study, of learning the principles of nature.

Cultivating health is easiest. It's enough to relax, feel comfortable, naturally, light, not using too much force, as if you start falling asleep, floating in water or in air - these are most of the important demands. If you try anything more, it only disturbs your mind and it's loosing time. And if you want to do something very intensive, it only harms your health.

When body is healthy, we can start talking about self-defense. The so called self defence means, that when attacked "you put in use your fist and half of foot" to solve the problem. The highest level of skill it is difficult to describe with words. But self-defense is closely related to health. First you need health, then agility, strength and skill. But if you want to develop strength, you shouldn't use force. If you use force, you loose chance of developing strength. To make body and arms agile, and movements swift, the best method is non-movement. You find it boring or irritating? You can try small movement. But you should know that in this movement "you move as if you want to stop, you stop as if you want to move". In other words "there should be cause of movement, but there should be no result". The meaning is that it should be strong in your mind, but it shouldn't be exhibited too much externally, you shouldn't "make" movement. If you "make" movement, it can be said: "when there is form, strength is dispersed, when there is no form, strength is accumulating". When "body is broken", the strength is dispersing. So the slower the movement, the better. This way you can gradually be better and better aware of how your body works, including its various parts and cells. You shouldn't do it superficially, slipping over anything. These are the basic conditions for learning movement. If you only seek external beauty of fast movements, you will not only not achieve much, but actually there will be no hope of real progress.

If we are talking about methods and techniques of defeating opponent, you shouldn't have techniques. If you have artificially created techniques, you loose the natural ability of unlimited changes.

This kind of exercises is very easy. You see it, and you know it. The effects come very fast too. But you shouldn't strain too much mentally and to "force" physical force. This way you will develop good habit, useful in normal life, enabling acting efficiently. This is good for body and mind. If you want to demonstrate flowery movements and force, you will not achieve real results.

Although those exercises are so simple, but many intelligent people, the more they practice, the more they find it difficult. They practice diligently, but they are not able to distinguish between black and white. You should know that in the nature, the normal is unusual. If you seek unusual, you will go astray.

If we are talking about pleasure of study, learning the principles on which the exercises are based, it is something about which we could talk without end, and. I don't really know where to start. I will point only to some principles.. I invite all people interested to

study them. For example: movement and non-movement, empty and solid; fast and slow, relax and tension; advancing and retreating, turning and siding; vertical (forward) and horizontal (to the side), high and low; opposing and absorbing, forcing and letting; pulsing and swaying, opening and closing; stretching and shrinking, leaning forward and backward; lifting and stamping, taking in and sending out; yin and yang, askew and proper; long and short, big and small; soft and hard and many other. It is all mutually related. When you come to the beginning of beginning, you should start your study from beginning again. This is all one, not to be divided. If you divide it, you will never understand it.

Relax is tension, tension is relax, there must be harmony between relax and tension. Solid is empty, empty is solid, there must be balance between them. Vertical and horizontal, expanding and embracing are supporting each other. Attack and defense, drilling and dodging, must be used together.

What was said above, is for those starting the study of seeking strength. If they neglect these advices, they can practice whole life and they will not be able to learn it. If they take those advices seriously, they will not be able to get all of this during their life. If we are talking about testing strength, using strength, issuing strength, accumulating strength and other kinds of strengths "with form or without form", it seems too complicated, so I will not talk about it here. It is impossible to achieve it without studying it gradually, step by step. But when you start doing this, you will find that there is nothing unusual here, that it's very easy. Those exercises are simple and accessible for everybody. You don't learn techniques. You react to the changes with open mind, without hesitation. When you understand this, you can understand other related subjects.

Martial art is not some determined punches or kicks. This is not "hitting three times and being hit two times". And in any case it is not set of forms. Martial art is acting according to situation.

In martial art health is stressed. Then there is self-defense. The exercises can help many people with chronic illnesses, who couldn't achieve improvement using normal medicine, to regain health. Thanks to exercise someone can be able to work till old age. If someone lost the ability of working, it can help to regain it. This is the value of martial art. This kind of exercise can be described as "resting while training, training while resting".

Self-defence is a science about "changes" in fighting. It is not "this hand makes such movement, and that such", as most people imagine. This is not so complicated. On the other hand it is not so simple either. Self-improvement is most important, then there is testing strength and issuing strength and then you can gradually start studying the subject of fighting. Otherwise you will not achieve anything. If we are talking about self-improvement, you should start from principles of character, four external attributes and eight demands. The principles of character are: respect for elder, protecting younger, confidence and justice,

humanity and love, being wise and brave, profoundness, being consequent and persevering. Four external attributes are: straight head, straight sight, posture of dignity, calm voice. Eight demands are: calmness, esteem, modesty, realism, respect, carefullnes, awareness, gentleness. Having those attributes we can start talking about serious training of mind and body. This training is concentrating on zhan zhuang. You should study the question of controll over joints and muscles, and use of single and double weight. Single and double weight is not only about distribution of weigth on your feet. Head, hands, torso, feet, shoulders, elbows, knees, hips and all other bigger and smaller parts of body can be divided as double and single, tense and relaxed, solid and empty. If talking about principles of "there parts of expanding and seven parts of embracing" or "four in the front and six in the back" it is difficult to describe with words. Generally you should seek from abstract to real. I'm only pointing to some issues without explaining them.

Shi li (testing strength): there are many names of strenght. It is difficult to describe all of them. You will know the strenght thanks to "shi li" practice. When you know it, you can start using it. No matter what kind of force you practice, ":form shouldn break body", "intention shouldn't be visible", "strenght shouldn't go over tip". If force has one direction, it "goes over tip", and it is limited, partial, and movements are mechanical, the use of force is not effective. Force is "broken" and "dispersed". The fight looks then as bulls struggling, it is stiff and "dead". In shi li you must use imagination. Imagination is formless, is unbroken. There is no direction where it doesn't reach. You learn it in the "void". When there is form, force is dispersed, if there is no form, spirit is accumulated. Spirit and mind should be "full". It is not about mimicking form.

Fa li (issuing force): to achieve effects of issuing force, you need good basis. When you master basis of various forces, you should have feeling of harmony with "force of surrounding air". When you have this feeling of resonanse, you can use relax and tension moving through your body like a wave. You should know that in practicing fa li it is not important if you throw off or not, if you hit or not. You should check if there is balance, harmony in all directions. Wheter you can do it lightly, freely, if the change from slow to fast is natural, as by itself. After achieving such condition there is a hope of learning martial art. But if you will be able to learn it is still another question.

WANG XIANGZhai
KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

Below are some excerpts from Wang Xiangzhai's "Central pivot of the way of fist", written around 1940. Complete work is available for our students.

INHERITED ABILITIES AND LEARNING

People say that someone is 8 feet tall, has tremendous strength and incredible courage. You should know that those are inherited attributes, it says nothing about martial art, about science of martial art. People say that someone is splitting big stones with his fist, crushing bricks with his palm, can jump 8 feet. Even if someone can do this, those are only partial skills, related to the way of training which harms human body. This is not what I'm trying to explain. This is not proper way of martial art. But people usually think that those who demonstrate something like this are great and wonderful. But skills of such people are useless when they meet real expert. As for jumping over walls and roofs, it is all fantasies from novels, you can only smile when you hear about it. As for those stories about crushing big rocks and resisting cuts of a sabre, those are the worst absurd inventions. There is no point in discussing something like this.

REJECTING MYSTERY AND SECRETS

here are people who don't possess abilities and their knowledge is shallow too. But they are quite sincere and honest. They master what teacher passes to them, they have some achievements, they develop some specific skills. Although those skills are partial, many people don't listen to explanation of their basis, they only watch the effects and because their knowledge is shallow, they see it as something magic. They don't understand that this is a mistake. This comes from lack of knowledge, lack of thinking, lack of experience in some field. Even if sometimes they understand some bits, they are not able to understand it thoroughly and reject their usual views. Each time when they encounter something difficult to understand, they see it as something supernatural. And if someone is practicing long time and achieves real understanding, it will become something familiar, easy to understand, and there is no need to seek for using supernatural concepts. It's the same in any field. Why should it be any different in martial art?

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

As for the way of martial art, you need to know and you need to be able to put it into practice. You need to be able to do something and you need to know what is the principle behind it. Otherwise it would be deceiving yourself and deceiving others, it would be continuing the repeating of rubbish. Knowledge and practice are simple words, but the meaning is complex. Some say that it is easy to do something but difficult to explain. Others

say that it is easy to explain and understand something, but it is difficult to do it. Sometimes people say that it is difficult to explain something and difficult to do it. Or that theory and practice are related. Or that actually there is not such thing like being easy or difficult. There is some basis for each of those statements. But they are all very general and shallow. They will not enable understanding the issue completely.

I think, that in any field, if you put enough time to it, you will achieve some results. But because of limitation of knowledge it may happen that it is difficult to explain the essence of what you are doing. This can be described as “easy to do, difficult to explain”. If knowledge is rich and skills developed through long practice are deep, it is “easy to understand and easy to do”. If there is no knowledge and skill, you “cannot do and cannot explain”. There is no limit for development of science. There is some knowledge and some skills. What kind of level of skill could be regarded as true skill, true knowledge? I’m not able to tell. But if someone knows about something and can do it, if he can do something and he understands how he is doing this, it can be seen as a beginning of unity of knowledge and practice. If you don’t understand something well, you will not be able to achieve the level of really deep skill. If you cannot do something in practice, it cannot be said that you have real knowledge about it. Knowledge and practice cannot be separated. It is the same in any science. It must be like this in martial art which is based on moral values. This must be embodied in any moment of practice. When there is a fight, there is no time for thinking. And you cannot only keep talking about it whole life. On the way of science, you should try to understand the principles clearly. You should put time and effort to practice. If someone doesn’t understand principles, doesn’t know demands of practice, he will easily go astray. Then the more time he practices, the bigger harm.

No matter which field of science or art, it is easier to teach young people. Those elder, who have some achievements or even are famous, will not learn new things easily. If something which teacher teaches is not valuable, if student is not truly dedicated to the study, only mimicking what others do and repeating what others say, it is only following blindly. If someone is studying, but results cannot be seen, there must be lack of what is really important – practical experience. If it is like this all the time, when there is no real connection between theory and practice, it leads to thinking about mysterious and supernatural. Such people will never really enter the gate of the field which they study, they will never get practical experience. What a pity!

You should know that skill is only the gate of science. It is said: “even if children are stupid, they should not be freed from the duty of study”. They also should understand principles, learning to use them in practice. External and internal, what on surface and what inside should help each other, otherwise it will be difficult to enter the right path.

WANG XIANGZhai
PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF YIQUAN
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

[From translator] This is an excerpt from Wang Xiangzhai's "Zhan zhuang and four appearances", which was written as a part of one of the earlier works of Wang, but which he decided to omit. The full text of "Zhan zhuang and four appearances" will be available (free) to students of Academy of Yiquan (participating in regular classes or seminars/camps programs). This fragment is explaining the philosophical roots of yiquan. Please remember that yiquan had been developed by Wang Xiangzhai over long time. His views or at least the ways of explaining them were changing. I'm sure that those yiquan practitioners who posses a deep knowledge of the system and solid basis from practice will be able to understand the text. It may be more difficult for laymen, who are not able to relate it to practice, so there is some danger of unjustified speculations and wrong conclusions. I hope that they at least will be aware of this danger. To give them some help I added some comments, talking about the same issues in a language closer to that which was used by Wang Xiangzhai's successor - Yao Zongxun.

I will not discuss the philosophical basis of yiquan in length. I will only put the main issues in a few points, so you can make comparisions and find the true face of yiquan.

1. Zhuangzi said: "Something which is something is not the true something". In yiquan all kinds of force, energy are result of mental concentration. It can be said that force is not a force. In other words, if you are using force, thinking that it is force, it is not proper force. Force is in spirit, mind, intention, will. Hence the name yiquan.

[From translator] In yiquan, when we want to use force, we don't do it in the way as many people do. They tense, thinking that this tension is force, while actually it is spoiling movement, making it slower and diminising effective force. We want to use body in efficient way. It is based on using mind, intention, awareness of body, movement and force/energy, with some level of relax at the same time. Please don't jump to conclusion that it is about some magical force of mind only, without engaging body. What we are working with is mind, intention, nervous system, bones and muscles - we want to achieve their coordination, harmony, optimization of their work.

2. Laozi said: "Not acting, but there is nothing that would not be done". In yiquan we say: "Effective acting has source in non-acting", "Movement in non movement is the always born and never ceasing movement". So called 'non acting' and 'non movement' in yiquan, it is zhan zhuang. So called 'acting' and 'movement' are shi li and fa li. Someone once said that yiquan is old taoist method of static practice. It is not completely unjustified statement.

[From translator] "Non- acting" in yiquan could be explained in relation to various aspects. Wang Xiangzhai is talking about it here in just one simple way. We will discuss it more in the future, basing on other Wang's texts.

3. Laozi said: "Movement back to Tao". In yiquan we say: "When force is born, the two appear, two are one". This is unity of action and reaction. "The complex contradictions must be unified."

[From translator] Unity of contradictions is theoretical basis of yiquan, taijiquan and some other systems. It is the famous concept of yin and yang. Today it is called dialectic philosophy.

4. In chan (zen) buddhism it is said: "Rules are real only if they come out of emptiness". It is also said: "Not thinking of good, not thinking of wrong, getting back the face of when your parents were not born". Face before parents were born is 'emptiness'. In yiquan we say: "All kinds of force are born from primeval, unified emptiness where there is no 'I'". So we are learning "Seeking real in the emptiness, acting in emptiness".

5. In chan buddhism it is said: "No rule, no sticking". In yiquan we say: "Let there will be no single method, no sticking, overcome sticking". In a fight "I am not sticking to anything and forcing opponent not to stick". Not only using force against force is sticking, but also using techniques is sticking. Non sticking should overcome sticking. It is non sticking.

[From translator] What is said in point 4 and point 5 is related to each other. 'Emptiness' is basis for 'non sticking'. An yiquan expert should be able to adapt flexibly to changing situations, without using force against force in typical way (like "oxes pushing each other with head" - ding niu), without hesitating, without sticking to patterns.

6. Ming dynasty scholar - Wang Shouren said about "revealing wonderful knowledge". In yiquan we say about developing wonderful abilities. Wang Shouren said: "As water flowing makes things wet, as fire burning makes things dry". It is like this.

[From translator] In yiquan we stress rather revealing and developing our natural potential, instead learning complex methods, which sometimes would even prevent from developing this potential. It is strange, but some people think that learning fighting is about learning a number of techniques - if you know some techniques, you would be able to fight, and if you would learn more, you would fight better. It implies that before learning techniques you have no fighting ability. It is complete absurd, but some laymen tend to think this way. Yiquan acknowledges simple fact that human being posess some potential of natural abilities, including some fighting abilities, even before you start learning martial art. The goal is rather fuller developing, improving our abilities and skills, and not learning "artificial techniques".

So when in "Theory of yiquan" I used some terms close to those of taoism and buddhism, it was not because trying to "steal fame" from great philosophers. I used the

method of "painting dragon and drawing eyes" to explain philosophy of yiquan, its true principles. Learning yiquan without its philosophy will not bring proper results. Students should be aware of this.

[From translator] *It is not quite sure about which text Wang is talking as "Theory of yiquan", as such title doesn't appear in collections of his works. "Painting dragon and drawing eyes" means presenting something in a very vivid, understandable way. There is a story that one painter made a picture of a dragon, but without eyes. Asked why he did so, he explained that if he only added eyes, the dragon could become alive and fly away.*

WANG XIANGZhai
THERAPEUTICAL EFFECTS OF ZHAN ZHUANG
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

From translator: This is a small part of Wang Xiangzhai's longer essay - "Discussing zhan zhuang". Complete essay is available to the students of Academy of Yiquan, co-operating instructors, schools and organizations as a free reference material. It is a part of an e-book containing translation of Wang Xiangzhai's late period texts (concentrating on health practices).

Zhan zhuang enables regulating nervous and respiration systems, improves blood circulation and metabolism. This is why this method brings good results when treating diseases of nervous, respiration, vascular and digestive systems, problems with muscles and metabolism. It works especially well when treating diseases which turned into chronic ones.

From my 50 years of practice I know that effects are varying, different with different people and diseases, sometimes bigger, sometimes smaller, sometimes slower, sometimes faster. But apart from situations when someone was sometimes practicing, sometimes stopping, there were almost no cases where there were not good results. Many people after getting rid of the problem continued practice, strengthening body and staying healthy until old age.

Here I will talk about my experiences of last two years, when I was engaged in studies of zhan zhuang therapy.

Hypertension. In cases of hypertension related to the state of nervous system effects come very fast. But in case of functional changes, as hardening of vessels, results are slow.

Depression, mental weakness. Typical headaches, feeling of head swelling, dizzines etc. can be healed easily. How fast the results come depends mainly on whether practitioner is able to stabilize his/her mind. When digestion problems or constipation was caused already, results of therapy are slower.

Arthroplogosis.. Normally rheumatical problems and problems which appear in many joints simultaneously are easy to heal. But those being results of other diseases or inherited are difficult to heal.

Trachitis. There are many types. At early stage effects are fast. Inherited problems are difficult to heal. But it is related to age, physical condition, general health condition, mental condition, living conditions etc. When someone is practicing diligently, taking care of proper nourishing and healthy life style, healing or diminishing symptoms is possible.

Liver diseases.. Swelling and hardening of liver. If practicing patiently and in proper way, putting attention to proper diet and healthy environment, symptoms can diminish gradually, even to complete healing.

Cholecystitis. Most patients had undergone surgery. Many of them suffer liver and spleen diseases. Basing on my experience with several patients I can say, that during zhan zhuang therapy their health situation improves. More observation is needed though..

Lungs diseases. If patient practices patiently, in proper way, with proper stages, putting attention to proper nourishing, healing is usually possible.

Hemiplegia. Diligent practice is necessary. Usually healing or improvement is possible. But recurrence is possible. Patient should practice, avoiding cold, exhaustion, irritation. Life style must be regulated. If tip of tongue, palms and feet are not reacting, healing is not possible.

Stomach and intestines diseases.. Effects of healing are very good, but are coming slowly. In some cases 3-4 months are enough, in some more difficult cases it needs 8-9 months, sometimes even 3-5 years.

Schizophrenia, losing body awareness. Healing is relatively easy.

Heart diseases. In most cases results of treatment are good. A lot depends on mental condition and living conditions. If mental condition and living conditions are bad, healing is difficult.

WANG YUFANG
INTRODUCTION TO ZHAN ZHUANG
Translation from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

Nowadays, in the era of science and at the same time the era of seeking healthy, natural life, the therapeutical method of zhan zhuang is becoming more and more popular, because it is scientific, simple, brings great results and its practice is safe. There is no doubt that it will become a popular method of exercises in the 21st century. Many people suffer from chronic ailments. Active practice for improving health, strengthening body, understanding the principles of maintaining health, is very important. We shouldn't only wait passively for good doctors, wonderful medicines or qigong masters with great powers to save us.

Over 2000 years ago the precursor of chinese medical science - Yellow Emperor wrote in the great classic work "Internal canon": "*In ancient times great masters stood on earth, supporting heaven, controlling yin and yang, breathing with essence of qi, standing alone, guarding spirit, with body being a one*". It says about zhan zhuang.

This method is the greatest form of physical activity for self-healing, which is synthesis of chinese medical science and martial art. It is based on natural power, utilizing practice in natural surroundings, in open air, among trees and plants, waters and mountains, using natural sun light. This method, which comes from martial art, doesn't bring injuries, it helps to strengthen body and improve health. This kind of low impact training enables fully revealing and developing natural human potential.

Yiquan was founded by my father - Wang Xiangzhai (1885-1963), from Shen prefecture in Hebei province. In childhood he started learning xingyiquan from great master Guo Yunshen. He was talented, hard working and eager to learn. Thanks to this, after several years he was able to understand Guo's teachings deeply. Before passing away Guo kept saying: "*I had many students, but only Xiangzhai will be able to transmit the real meaning of what I was teaching*". My father travelled all over China, visiting many teachers on his search of the essence of martial art. He learned about advantages of many systems, getting great understanding of martial science. In order to renew the lost original characteristics of xingyiquan, he created yiquan in Shanghai. It was highly appreciated by martial arts experts. In 1950s he focused on research of zhan zhuang as a health practice, revealing for general public, what previous generations kept secret. Zhan zhuang is basis of martial art. At the same time it is a bridge to understanding the highest level of martial science.

1. LEARNING FROM THE NATURE

Nature is the best teacher. Nature is great, it is not selfish, it doesn't know fear. People should learn from nature, get close to nature, get back to nature, study nature, efficiently use

the principles of nature. Nature is a book without letters, it is an ocean of wisdom, it is source of life. We should base our thoughts, feelings and deeds on the fertile ground of nature, seek inspiration in nature. If we will use it in practice, we will get benefits. Everything follows natural changes. People are sad and happy, closing to each other and separating from each other. Moon once is full and once crescent. There is gaining and loosing. So we should not be presumptuous because of success or be broken because of lost, because it would mean seeking for more problems and worries. It would be difficult then to relax, focus and tranquilize mind. The core of zhan zhuang practice is using the mind, the principle is feeling force in the state of natural comfort. This is high quality exercise of nervous system, which is done "*between movement and non-movement*", when "*mind and body are one*", when "*external and internal are one*".

2. THE NATURAL POTENTIAL IS WONDERFUL. REACT ACCORDING TO FEELING.

One of the reasons why the Chinese are different from other nations is our unique way of thinking.

Western science is divided into fields and branches, which are developing independently. Their individual character is stressed. Western science accents importance of analyzing, proving, importance of precise logic discourse. The whole becomes zero, and a lot of fragments are being analyzed.

And eastern science merges into one the objective and the subjective, the study of nature and of human. Martial art practice is based on the principle that everything is linked, although it is not one. It is a science of mutual relation of subjective and objective world.

"Is linked, although is not one" is not the same as *"One is divided into two"* and *"Two are becoming one"*. It is summarizing the experience in many fields, including martial arts. It is a gem, being result of long development of the culture of our nation. This is basis for our mind and body exercises. The world of feelings is a system of continuous changes of perception of light, colour, form, sound, scent, touch. This is our everyday world. We grow in this world. In this continuously changing world we are able to find and adequately process all kinds of information. These abilities are wonderful and can be improved and extended.

For example there are artisans, who can carve a whole poem in a small bean. Their tool is preventing them from seeing what they carve with its tip. They are using incredibly precise feeling of their palms and fingers. Only when checking the effect they are using eyes. Their subtle movements are results of greatly improving their touch feeling.

Next example - good doctor of Chinese medicine can make a diagnosis by watching, listening, asking and touching. He is putting his finger on an artery. Thanks to long practice,

he is able to feel the subtle changes in pulse and blood flow. This is another example how the touch sensing can be improved and extended.

And one more example. When I was a child, my father taught me writing with a brush. He said that the Chinese calligraphy and painting art especially stresses style and character. The brush is soft, so it can express painter's mind. The most beautiful photograph cannot replace painting. Most beautiful characters coming out of printer cannot be compared with characters written with a brush. Why? The first don't possess the unique style, which is expression of artist's spirit in the moment of creation. If, when writing characters, you are able to realize the subtle changes of friction between tip of the brush and paper, it can be said that you learned basics of calligraphy.

"Raindrops are falling down down on ground without sound". You need to practice zhan zhuang diligently to create the place for great abilities.

3. FORM CURVED, FORCE ROUND. SUBTLE , LIGHT POWER.

Developing the great abilities starts from zhan zhuang. First you must achieve the state: *"Form curved, force round. Subtle, light power"*. Body is as if empty inside, and merged with all surroundings outside. You keep natural relax, head straight, eyes watching forward, body straight, spirit solemn, force even, breathing easy, awareness awakened, small hair on your body as if standing up, waist relaxed, some feeling of all joints being slightly bent. Get rid of all thoughts, stand silently in the face of universe. Mind is not wandering outside. External causes don't disturb aware mind. Awareness is light, empty and swift. Whole body have feeling of extreme comfort, of natural power without tensing. There is feeling as if of magnetic force around body, as if you were swimming in air. At the same time you can feel as if all cells of your body muscles were pulsing and vibrating continuously. You have feeling as if wind was going inside and outside through your body, through the pores in your skin. Everywhere there is feeling of expanding and contracting. The more subtle the movement the more "full" the spirit. You are like a great tree. *"Small movement is better than big movement. The movement which is always being born and never ceasing is better than small movement"*. You can feel unity, roundness of intention and force in whole body. You are checking if you can feel the unity, the echo between this intention and force and the universe, whether this imagined force is meeting resistance, friction of air, whether you can feel some force, tension between body and the core of Earth.

Developing the wonderful, subtle abilities is not a matter of one day. You need patience and perseverance, but then you can discover more than you imagined. But you must remember not to use force, otherwise the state of relaxed unity will be lost. Without relax the force is stiff, intention stopped and spirit broken. You are losing everything. When you notice that you lose natural, free breath, or that diaphragm is tensed, it means that you did something wrong. You should not neglect this.

When practicing zhan zhuang you must go through 3 stages. Only then you can achieve something. I will quote words of great scientist of the end of Qing dynasty - Wang Guowei. To achieve success you must go through 3 stages:

First. *"My belt seems looser, but I don't worry, because I know how miserable is condition of human"*.

Second: *"Yesterday the west wind made trees loose their green. Only from the highest floor I can see the horizon"*.

Third: *"Hundred times looked for her in the fog. Now I just turned my had and saw her in the light of lantern"*.

Beijing, summer 2001

WANG BROTHERS
OUR GRANDFATHER - WANG XIANGZhai
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

This year is 100 anniversary of our maternal grandfather, great master of chinese wushu - Wang Xiangzhai. He committed his life to the martial art, making great contribution to research and development of chinese wushu, and getting paramount results. Unfortunately he passed away years ago. And the period of 10 years turmoil caused extremely unfavorable conditions for the research and development of yiquan. But thanks to efforts of Yao Zongxun, Wang Yufang and others, yiquan is becoming popular now.

In 1930s quite many western boxers and japanese judokas challenged Wang Xiangzhai and were defeated by him. Later he spent several years, training his best stedents, with plan of going abroad and proving value of chinese wushu in many countries. Unfortunately after 1937, under japanese occupation he was not able to fulfil this plan. He regretted this all his life. In his last years he used to say: "Not many people know of yiquan yet, but in several tens of years, it will have great influence in China and abroad". He was right. Results of many contemporary researches are similiar to Wang ideas long time ago. We can say that China outdistanced the world.

As a child I was growing by my grandfather's side. When I was just 3 - 4 years old I used going to Sun Yatsen park (Zhongshan Gongyuan) together with him. He was walking fast, so for me it was always running. We seldom visited shops, but the stalls with typical Beijing snacks were a point of our everyday schedule. Grandpa liked to have them at breakfast. He also liked eel, mutton from mongolian hot pot, noodle soup. He used to eat a lot. Sometimes we went to antique shops. About 9 or 10 a.m. we came out from the park and went to Zhubaoshi or Dazhalan area. Grandpa had a collection of old caligraphies, paintings and seals. He was quite an expert. His ability of appreciating and estimating seals was great. Many specialists recognized this. I still have a seal which he used. It is very precious to me.

He was generous and righteous, often helping others. At the same time he had quite fierce temper and students were afraid of him. But as we remember him, he was a very nice old man. He gave us a lot of love. Once he bought some peanuts, spilt them on the table and started eating them. I took an empty box and started putting the peanuts into it, one by one. Soon there was no peanut left on the table. Grandpa said: "Leave some for grandpa". I started crying and spilt the peanuts on the floor. But grandpa mildly said: "O.K., grandpa will not eat your peanuts". He squatted and started putting the peanuts back to the box, until I stopped crying.

Once some friend came to visit him. But grandpa was out. I opened door and asked the guest inside, but he didn't went in. I asked about his name and reason for coming. Before he

left, I said: "Have a good walk, good bye". Then I closed door. This man praised me to my grandpa, saying that he had a really clever small grandson. Grandpa was delighted and bought me a lot of sweets. He often used to tell people about it, and was very happy doing so.

For our grandpa martial art was most important, and he was great at this. But in everyday life he didn't manage too well. Once, when I was 3 y.o., I went with my grandma to Tianjin to visit my mum. Grandpa went with us to the railway station. Grandma was half hugging me, half leading, and was not able to carry anything. So grandpa, carrying a big bundle on his back went on the train and searched for a sitting place for us. The train took off with grandpa, who only came to see us off, and me and grandma stayed at the station instead. Grandpa got off at Fengtai station, and with the big bundle, walking, came back to Yongdingmen. Annoyed grandma said only: "There is no use of you, old muddlehead".

When grandpa was teaching in Sun Yatsen's park, it was mainly zhan zhuang, which was practiced by people with chronic illnesses. But sometimes he started some practice too. His eyes had sharp expression, his body was coordinated, moving harmoniously, with great agility. He was really moving like a fierce tiger, like coiling dragon, with power which could move mountains. And when not moving, he was like a delicate scholar, like a shy virgin, full of calm and dignity. He really achieved the great level about which he was writing in his works.

On evenings students came to our home to practice. Most of them were those who learned fighting. They practiced zhan zhuang, shi li, tui shou, fighting. Grandpa put a table and a few chairs in the courtyard, and made tea, once and again giving some instructions. Sometimes all students stood around him listening to his explanation of the principles and the essence of yiquan. Unfortunately at that time I was too small to learn yiquan from my grandfather. But I will always remember how he looked when he practiced.

In 1962 grandma died. Grandpa was extremely sad. And he was really unable to take care of himself. So the chief of Hebei Province Chinese Medicine Institute invited him to Baoding and offered him a job. Also a secretary was appointed to help grandpa with editing his works on yiquan and zhan zhuang, and to take care of everyday matters.

Unfortunately, there were many reasons, which caused grandpa's heavy illness. We took him to us, taking care of him. We had chance to receive some instruction from grandpa. But because we were not able to appreciate the deepness of yiquan, we were not too serious in the study and practice, and we didn't benefit too much. Grandpa was very sad because of this. When I think about this, I really regret that I wasn't able to use such an opportunity. We, two brothers were 14 and 16 y.o. at that time. When grandpa was feeling better, he was giving us lessons. One afternoon we did zhan zhuang, and then we started tui shou. We were never able to make it properly. Because we heard that grandpa was "making people fly away", we asked: "Grandpa, why we are not able to do this?". Grandpa was sitting on a couch, he moved his

body slightly, raised his right arm, with slightly bent wrist and outstretched fingers, and told me to push his arm. Seeing his thin body, and knowing that he was weak because of illness, I didn't dare use too much force. Grandpa smiled and said: 'Stupid child, use more power, don't be afraid'. I started pushing stronger, but I wasn't able to move his arm. Then I suddenly issued my all power. I felt as if I was in a lift which suddenly moved. My body raised and flew backward, hitting wall. Then I fell down on the floor. Granpa laughed. I and my younger brother were astounded. Old and sick grandpa had such tremendous power! Sitting on the floor, I started laughing too. Mum came from the kitchen to see what happened. Seeing happy grandpa, she shed a few happy tears. Grandpa probably felt that he was still full of energy, that he could recover. Then brother wanted to try, and result was of course the same.

Granpa had a very curious way of taking medicine. First he took some water into his mouth, and then put the medicine there. He did a sudden movement with his body forward, and at the same time he swallowed the medicine. Who would expect that his life will end in such a way. I brought the water and medicine for him. It was cerebral haemorrhage. Grandpa fell on my right shoulder. We were broken-hearted. Our mother was barely alive, crying all the time. Friends and students prepared celebration, remembering Wang Xiangzhai's great contribution to the development of Chinese wushu, the great reform he did, the contribution to the cause of improvement of people's health.

Commemorating Wang Xiangzhai's 100 anniversary we are filled with deep feeling. We will work to do what he was not able to do. Chinese wushu will for sure find its place among all world's martial arts. And qigong for sure will flourish.

WEI YUZHU
MEMORY OF YAO ZONGXUN
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz



From left: Wei Yuzhu, Yao Chengguang, Yao Zongxun. Beijing 1981

This year we are commemorating Yao Zongxun's 85 anniversary. Yao Zongxun's was using science and was opposing fake science. He took over the scientific thought of Wang Xiangzhai, preserved it and further developed, devoting his whole life to the chinese science of martial art.

I was lucky to start learning yiquan from Yao Zongxun in 1977. Although it was the 10 years of turmoil, and Yao Zongxun had to work as a horseherd on grassland, he continued the work of research and popularization of the quanxue - the science of martial art - with enormous perseverance. He had set an example which should be followed by our generation.

Although it's over ten years since our teacher passed away, but we still remember the smile on his face, his strict demands towards students and his extremely fast hands and body. His moral attitude made a great impression on us. His view that "learning a martial art, you should firstly learn how to be a good man" had been engraved in our hearts. Thanks to his deep knowledge and his achievements in the study of quanxue we gained a great benefit.

Yiquan is a new martial art. Its splendor and charm is a result of being filled with deep philosophy and with the traditional though of unity of man and nature. And even more it is a result of being based on knowledge of many branches of modern science. This art has history, but at the same time it's a modern art. Studying yiquan, we should start from learning what was taught by Wang Xiangzhai and Yao Zongxun, from understanding the training methods which were established by them. We should try to understand 'how', and moreover to understand 'why'. We must study the principles of relations and changes of movement and non-movement, relax and tension, full and empty. We must study anatomy, psychology, physics and use this knowledge in our quanxue. Our principle should be: "In the study of martial art understanding of principles is most important".

Yao Zongxun many times repeated: "No matter what action, the important factors are force and speed". The main topic and the path of our study of yiquan is understanding force

and the ability of using it. So we must start from the questions of generating force, of action and reaction, leverage, vectors, through practice we must master the centripetal and centrifugal forces, all relations and changes of forces in the three dimensional space. Starting from generating a highly co-ordinated holistic force, using our muscles, tendons and joints, gradually to its practical use.

The force in martial art is material, but at the same time it is related to the spirit, mind, intention. Spirit is determined by the material, and spirit affects matter. With help of mind activity (imaginings), our muscles and tendons, our breath and functions of nervous system can achieve a high level of co-ordination and harmony. Thanks to using appropriate imaginings and suggestions we can achieve harmony between our mind activity and all groups of muscles, which normally we are not able to control and use so freely and efficiently. There appears feeling of a multidirectional elastic connection between all parts of our body. Under such conditions there comes the possibility of extremely fast and various changes. This is the initial capital of our art. And this is a big contribution of yiquan to the training methods of martial arts.

Remembering Yao Zongxun and taking benefits from his great achievements, we should work to develop yiquan further. Using the concepts of Yao Zongxun as the basis, we should make next step, researching deeper, perfecting yiquan as a scientific system of training methods and theoretical concepts.

XIE YONGGUANG
SUBTLETY IS THE KEY
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

In autumn 2001, just before master Yao Chengguang's trip to Italy, I visited him in Beijing. When we met at the western side of Nanguan park, master Yao started from checking my exercises. I did mo jin (seeking force) in hunyuan zhuang posture and zonghe shi li (improvised form, mixing basic shi li movements randomly).

Master Yao said:

"Young Xie, you've been learning with me for two years. You are in the amateur group, but because you are studying wushu at the Academy of Physical Culture, you have good basics, and you are making fast progress. But while learning yiquan, you must remember, that if you want to achieve something too fast, you will not be able to achieve it at all. You shouldn't think only about learning as much as possible and as fast as possible. And during the exercises, there shouldn't be any haste. You must concentrate on feeling and experiencing everything very carefully. In yiquan we stress mind, spirit, feelings, development and use of the natural force. Consciousness is most important. And how do you make your mind and all parts of body coordinated? When you do seeking force in zhan zhuang, you must do it very carefully, very slowly, with great subtlety. In everything there is unity of contradictions. The slowness and subtlety during exercise actually are for seeking fast movement in slow movement. You start from slow movement, focusing on feeling the subtle changes in your whole body, getting the feeling as if your body was linked with the air around you. You achieve high level of concentration, seeking force in relax, finding force in comfort. You maintain unity and coordination, completeness of intention and force. In such situation you can achieve high coordination, force, speed, fast reaction, ability to do various subtle changes in movement at any moment. When the feelings in all parts of body become fuller, more unified, more round, your natural abilities can be fuller displayed.

Young Xie, your postures and movements are proper, you are using your intention in right ways. But your mistake is that you are doing the seeking force too fast. It makes it too rough, not subtle enough, so it affects development and use of hunyuan li. When you learn yiquan, you should firstly search for quality, and how much and how fast is of lesser significance. Only this way you can achieve maximum result with minimum effort. While learning you must be very careful. You must avoid haste. In science and in life you should use this principle. You must go forward step by step".

This lesson gave me some new understanding of yiquan and of life. Master Yao's attitude moved me deeply.

XIE YONGGUANG
YAO CHENGGUANG AND ZONGXUN WUGUAN
Translated from Chinese by:Andrzej Kalisz

Article from a Shijiazhuang (Hebei province) paper

Famous wushu master, representative of 3rd generation of yiquan ⁽¹⁾ - Yao Chengguang was a very able child. He started learning yiquan from his father when he was 8 years old, and gradually he learned its essence. For 40 years yiquan has been his life, something he's been nurturing and developing. He brought this art to many places in the north and in the south of China and abroad. When fighting, his opponents were impressed by his skill and at the same time by his ethics. Yao is very open-minded. He maintains that "*the science of fist should be for everybody, if it belonged only to one person, only one person could benefit from it*". So with intention that this art should serve people and country, in may 1994 he opened Zongxun Wuguan ⁽²⁾ school affiliated with Beijing Wushu Association. Thus he entered a way of promoting and developing yiquan - the gem of chinese culture. It demanded a lot of effort and commitment. He is admired for this by friends home and abroad and people from wushu circles.

The training place of Zongxun Wuguan is inside Nanguan park. This is place where local people come to have some rest and pleasant time. But because Yao Chengguang is teaching here, wushu practitioners from all over world keep coming. There is grass and flowers, there are beautifull pavillions. Students everyday practice zhan zhuang among trees: "*standing on earth and supporting heaven, controlling yin and yang*". They are carefully listening to Yao's explanations and remarks. This is a great place to nurture health and learn martial art.

The dormitory of Zongxun Wuguan is in Dafangjia hotong, quite close to Nanguan park. It is a typical Beijing siheyuan ⁽³⁾. Inside there is an old tree. There is office room here, student's rooms, a kitchen and library. Everyday letters from all over world are read here and phone calls are received. There is a worker responsible for cleaning. The students get 3 meals every day, both meat and vegetables, very nourishing. After supper they take bath, relaxing after whole day practice. They watch TV, read books and magazines, talk about life and about their dreams.

Yao Chengguang - the director and main istructor of Zongxun Wuguan in teaching is using the principle of "*scientific, systematic, rigorous, standard*". He maintains the science is the core of the martial art. All principles opposing science will lead astray. Having scientific basis we should seek systematization. In this way students can go a straight way, learning systematically and metodically. Then the theory must be closely connected with practice. This way students will develop proper technique and reaction. Yao Chengguang, inspired by his

father is maintaining attitude of seeking truth. Having strong basis coming from practice, he is using knowledge of psychology, physics, philosophy, anatomy, biology and other fields, linking theory and practice. This way he developed his specific system of teaching yiquan. He maintains that "*one must be responsible for the student, and responsible for yiquan*". He uses "*confucian way of teaching*", he enables his students to learn gradually, step by step. He stresses the importance of relation between teacher and students. He also adjusts teaching methods according to the students. He is teaching with passion, hoping that his students will achieve great results.

Yao Chengguang rejects the principle of "*practicing zhan zhuang for 3 years, before you learn anything else*". He maintains that jing (stillness) of zhan zhuang, huan (slowness) of shi li and ji (rapidness) of fa li are just different states and aspects of seeking hunyuan li (holistic force). The most important is using mind in seeking hunyuan li. The basic methods of zhan zhuang, shi li and fa li are practiced simultaneously. After students learn basic methods, they should link them with fighting practice, so the two aspects supplement and help each other. This helps students all round development. Long time ago Yao Zongxun just after 3 years of learning yiquan achieved such high level that Wang Xiangzhai let him fight for himself in challenges and also let him teach in his name. What we just said is the secret of such fast progress. The practice proves that this teaching method is very effective. In Zongxun Wuguang students after just 2-3 months of intensive study achieve agility of body and steps, the skill of issuing force in the moment of contact - first results of training can be seen. Thanks to this method Yao's students seldom loose fights. Among them there are winners of first yiquan san shou competition and first yiquan tui shou competition ⁽⁴⁾.

Yao always maintained that in martial art practical power is important. It comes from the principle of "*scientific, systematic, rigorous, standard*". Yiquan is not mysterious. Those artificial concepts making yiquan something mysterious and mystic are wrong. Learning yiquan you should choose wise teacher. Only wise teacher is able to "*transmit the meaning, transmit the teaching, remove doubts*". Also the student should have ability of understanding, and also should be hard working. But this hard work should be based on scientific principles and methods, otherwise student will not achieve results.

After establishing Zongxun Wuguang in 1994 thousands of students were participating in classes or used correspondence course materials. Xu Lu from Beijing is one of successors of full teachings of Yao. Liu Zhongchun from Shandong opened a school there. Bu Yi from Dongbei learned with Yao intensively for 7 years. Kubo Isato is one of the main yiquan teachers in Japan. Andrzej Kalisz from Poland opened Academy of Yiquan. There are also other students, Maurizio Trott and Vittorio Botazzi in Italy, Karel Koskuba in UK, Chen Jumin in Austria ...

Stefano Agostini from Italy studied yiquan before. In 2001 he came to Beijing, and after one week of study with Yao Chengguang he said: "*Comparing what I learned before with what Yao Chengguang teaches, it is difference between small teaching and great teaching*". Walter Marek from Austria came for 20 days, but then he decided to prolong the time of study for one more month. Zhong from Hong Kong studied yiquan for 10 years. When he compared his skill with a student of Yao, who learned only for 1 year, he pointed his thumb upward and said: "*Wise teacher has good students*". Cheng - a martial arts instructor from US, after he saw demonstration of skill of one of Yao's students, said: "*I travelled all over China, meeting so called yiquan masters, but only today for first time I had chance to see real yiquan*".

Yao Chengguang went through a long and difficult way. He is using a scientific, systematic and rigorous method of teaching. All martial arts people are welcome to come to compare skill and exchange experiences!

From translator:

1- Yiquan founder - Wang Xiangzhai is first generation. His students are second generation. Their students are third generation. Yao Chengguang learned from his father - Yao Zongxun, who was successor of Wang Xiangzhai's teachings.

2 - Zongxun is for Yao Zongxun, Wuguan - martial arts school; Zongxun Wuguan is one of so called minjian wuguan - people's martial arts schools.

3 - kind of building typical for old Beijing.

4 - Also in second yiquan tui shou competitions on 31st March 2002, majority of winners were from Yao Chengguang's school.

XIE YONGGUANG
MASTER YAO CHENGGUANG TALKING ABOUT SHI LI
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

FROM TRANSLATOR:

Xie Yongguang is graduate of Shijiazhuang Academy of Physical Culture wushu department and student of master Yao Chengguang. This article is part of a small book "YIQUAN - YAO CHENGGUANG'S METHOD". English version of this book (e-book) is available free to the participants of seminars and camps of Yiquan Academy. It is not available on sale.

When you have some feelings and experience regarding hunyuan li, you should put some more attention to shi li practice too. Master Yao Chengguang says, that zhan zhuang is basis, but shi li is the crucial method. The scope of shi li practice is largest, and the level of difficulty is highest. In the training system of yiquan, shi li is the method which creates the bridge between basics and advanced training. The fighting abilities depend on shi li training. When practicing yiquan, you must put a lot of attention to shi li training.



Why must we practice shi li? In zhan zhuang you develop and enhance hunyuan li in relatively static position. Usually when you start moving, the feeling of fullness of hunyan li disappears. Only after next adjusting of posture and mind activity, the feeling appears again. Yao Zongxun said; “You cannot talk about real fighting skills, when you lack hunyuan li. But you cannot fight by using zhan zhuang posture. The hunyuan li, developed through zhan zhuang, must be kept also in movement. You must be able to use it also in rapid and fast changing movement. The process of passing from static posture to movement is done by practicing shi li”.

The main idea of shi li is continuing of developing and enhancing hunyuan li, with use of appropriate mind activity, in situation when body is moving – so when position changes, you can still feel this unified, full force, and you are able to use it freely. This way you create conditions for the ability of issuing force in any moment, any situation. Shi li is also a method of checking the quality of zhan zhuang practice. Quality of zhan zhuang is basis for quality of

shi li. Zhan zhuang and shi li are mutually related, an affect each other. Shi li is form of expanding zhan zhuang in space.

When you start shi li practice, you must use principles of: natural, soft, slow, relax, subtlety. The feeling of force of whole body must be unified and balanced. Bones give support, joints are relaxed and agile, muscles are relaxed and stretched, you have feeling of “as relax not relax”. You should feel movement of your body through surrounding air, subtle as unwinding a silk thread. When something moves, you must have feeling of movement of whole body – “when some part of body moves, there is no part which doesn’t move”. Gradually the movement becomes more subtle, you become more focused and alert, intention and force are not broken, whole body is moving naturally.

Regardless if it’s zhan zhuang or shi li, when you start the practice, there should be no haste. Yiquan is stressing spirit, mind, feelings. When movements are fast, mind is impatient, you are loosing feelings in some moments of movement, the effects of practice become “rough”, which affects development of hunyuan li and ability of it. So, at beginning you should practice slowly – the slower, more subtle, the easier is developing the good coordination of mind and body.

Because hands are very sensitive, when you start the practice of shi li, you can concentrate on hands. Then you should try to get the same feelings in other parts of body, with you whole body „tasting” shi li in slow, gentle and subtle movement.

In shi li, no matter which movement and what mind activity used, when you move forward, you should have feeling of some force directed backward. When you move backward, you should feel some force directed forward. It’s the same about upward and downward, to the left and to the right. This is the meaning of saying: “force in direction opposite to movement”. The goal is: developing the feeling of contradictory forces in various situations, so you can get basis for the ability of issuing force according to feeling during fight.

There are several forms of shi li practice:

Shi li in fixed position. At beginning you practice one movement many times. For example you do pingtui shi li. Then you learn and practice next shi li movements, like: kaihe shi li, fu’an qiu, boshui etc. It prepares you for practicing mixed shi li in fixed position.

Mixed shi li in fixed position. You are mixing various shi li movements in freely changing order. So you can do one pingtui movement, and then kaihe movement, fu’an qiu, boshui etc. It prepares you for various changes in single pushing hands practice.

Shi li with steps (steps practice will be described in next chapter). You repeat single shi li movement while doing steps forward, and then steps backward. It prepares you for mixed shi li with steps.

Mixed shi li with steps. During one exercise while doing steps forward, and then steps backward, you freely mix, all kinds of shi li movements in changing order. The goal is preparing for various changes in double pushing hands and free fighting.

When your movements are natural, coordinated, you can start freely changing between steps forward and backward. For example you can do one step forward, one step backward, one step forward, two steps backward etc. After some time you can start doing it with steps in various directions, changing postures and paths of movement, avoiding any determined order.

When during subtle, slow movement you have clear feeling of hunyuan li, you should „pull down the fences”, changing the slow movement to faster, big movement to smaller. Sometimes you can practice slower, sometimes faster. Sometimes doing longer movements, sometimes shorter. Then the order and rhythm must be changing during one exercise. In fight, you cannot first prepare some movement and then use it, you must be able to change according to situation. So you should keep feelings of continuity, but you change the rhythm, making pauses too. You must develop ability of being ready for issuing force in any moment, according to situation. This is demand of combat.

When you get to high level of shi li, no matter what changes, you always keep the feeling of fullness of “comfortable force”. When mind is reaching, force is reaching – there is no difference between mind and force. Finally even the concept of shi li ceases existing – you achieve the stage of natural force.

Yao Zongxun said: „You should be like a flag exposed to wind, like a fish in river. The flag is moving in ways which cannot be predicted – when wind blows, it reacts. Fish is as if moving slightly, but actually it is moved by the movement of water.”

XIE YONGGUANG
ABOUT MASTER YAO CHENGGUANG
Translated from Chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

"If you don't want to study yiquan, you don't have to, but if you want, you must be the best, because you are Yao Zongxun's son"

Yao Chengguang started learning yiquan not because he liked wushu, but because he was of poor health, so his father told him to practice zhan zhuang. Who would suppose that this zhan zhuang standing will start next 40 years of training.

Yao can still remember, that as a child, when he was coming back from school everyday, his father told him to put down his school bag and practice zhan zhuang.

Yao Zongxun was teaching martial art for living. But during cultural revolution he couldn't do this and the family lost source of income. They used to sweep roads, deliver coal briquettes and pick some vegetable leaves. But even then father insisted that sons continue practicing.

In 1969 whole family had to move to Changping to a people's commune, where they worked as farm workers and horseherds. The difficulties didn't destroy Yao Zongxun's passion for yiquan. He kept telling sons that in time of poverty they must develop their will. In summer and in winter, regardless how much and how hard they had to work, he demanded that they wake up at 4 a.m. and practice. In evenings, after whole day of hard work, they had to practice again. This lasted 10 years. Those years actually gave good basis for Yao Chengguang's skills.

After the cultural revolution, in 1979 Yao family came back to Beijing. At that time the authorities of physical culture already noticed value of yiquan. It inspired Yao Zongxun and he started working with new energy.

"One day my father asked me to come to his room and said: we cannot loose time, I cannot let yiquan to be lost when I die. Beginning from tomorrow you and your brother will start enhancing training, You shall become great experts. But remember: if you don't want to study yiquan, you don't have to, but if you want, you must be the best, because you are Yao Zongxun's son. So you must tell me if you are able to take this big burden, if you will live for yiquan? - I didn't sleep this night... In the morning I told father: yes I want".

Soon Yao Chengguang learned what this decision meant...

"60 kilos in the morning, 56 kilos in the evening"

To educate good successors, in 1979 roku Yao Zongxun started special enhancing training for some chosen students. They were: Yao Chengguang, Yao Chengrong, Cui Ruibin, Wu Xiaonan, Liu Pulei. 26 years old Yao Chengguang was working in trolleybus company at

that time. To be able to practice at daytime, he started working on night shift. In the morning his weight was 60 kg. After a day of training, his weight decreased to 56 kg. After he had rest at evening, in the morning his weight was again 60 kg. He was always wearing canvas shoes, so he could practice at any time. In winter, although he was wearing only a very thin sweater, while he was practicing his body sweated and his hair was wet. In summer, when he practiced punching sandbag, his palms were covered with calluses. He could hit the bag 880 times in 3 minutes. When he practiced tui shou and san shou half naked, his body was covered with bruises. Yao Zongxun insisted that they should have feeling of reality during practice. So the sparrings were tough. It was normal when they had bruised eyes, bleeding noses and injured lips. Because his lips were often injured, when at supper there was something salty, he couldn't eat, sometimes only drinking thin rice porridge.

He was coming to work at 10 p.m. and first he was teaching yiquan to some friends. After 11 he stayed alone. But he had to stay awake. Sometimes he was so tired, that he was half standing and half leaning against wall, and sleeping for a moment. Colleagues from work used to say: "Yao Chengguang is a real master - he can sleep while standing". Next day, after coming back home, he had some short rest, and soon as a lively tiger appeared at the training place. This period of enhancing training lasted 5 years. It costed a lot of sweat and blood. And it decided his future life - working for the development of yiquan.

"I had chosen life full of commitement and sacrifice, but also full of glory. It costed me a lot, but I don't regret"

During last 40 years Yao Chengguang has been constantly practicing yiquan, maybe with thought of becoming worthy successor of his father, or maybe because for love of yiquan. Yiquan is in his body and in his mind. Yiquan is his life.

In July 1997 I for the first time came to Beijing Mao'er hutong. When I saw those narrow lanes and small rooms, when I saw Yao in plain clothes, with gentle smile on his face, it was difficult to believe that Yao Chengguang lives here. That he is Yao Chengguang - one of the greatest wushu masters of our times.

"He is thinking only about yiquan, nothing else. When we were young and I was coming to him, each time I saw him practicing. Now he is practicng and also teaching, doing theoretical studies, taking part in conferences and other activities, he is busy all the time. Once I took his bicycle and went to do shopping. When I just started riding, I noticed that the bike is almost falling apart. But he is busy, hasn't time to think about fixing it." - says Zhao Guoqing, Yao Chengguang's student and friend.

A neighbour lady says: *"We live in neighbourhood some years, but I wouldn't realize that Yao Chengguang is a man famous all over world, if I didn't see that foreigners keep coming here all the time".*

Yes, he is not interested in fame, he is not interested in profit. He is only interested in working for the development of yiquan. This is Yao Chengguang.

In 1985 Yao Zongxun passed away. Yao Chengguang was many times invited to Shanxi, Shandong, Henan, Guizhou, Sichuan and many other places where he was teaching yiquan. In 1988 he spent 6 month in Honkong, invited by Hong Kong Yiquan Society. It helped to develop yiquan in Hong Kong. In 1992, invited by Japanese Taiki-ken Association he went to Japan, demonstrating real kung-fu at the foot of Fuji-yama, in great extent influencing development of taiki-ken - japanese branch of yiquan. In 1992 some Korean teakwondo 4 dan was travelling in China. He kept saying that chinese martial arts are not practical. He changed his opinion after meeting with Yao Chengguang. In 1994 Yao established Zongxun Wuguan school. In last 7 years many people from China and abroad were learning here. In 2001 invited by Maurizio Trotti and Vittorio Botazzi Yao was teaching in Italy, opening a new chapter in the work of popularizing yiquan in the world.

"My dream is to educate good successors. It doesn't matter if students are Chinese or if they are foreigners. What is important is if they really want to study yiquan".

"The prospects of development are great. But there are many difficulties. I couldn't cope with them alone. Hope that we all together will work for popularization and development of yiquan"

"I had chosen life full of commitements and sacrifice, but also full of glory. It costed me a lot, but I don't regret."

XIE YONGGUANG
ON PRINCIPLES OF STUDYING YIQUAN
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

FROM TRANSLATOR:

Xie Yongguang is graduate of Shijiazhuang Academy of Physical Culture wushu department. This article is actually an introductory chapter of his book "YIQUAN - YAO CHENGGUANG'S METHOD". English version of this book (e-book) will be available free to the participants of seminars and camps of Academy of Yiquan. It will not be sold otherwise.

FROM AUTHOR:

Learning from master Yao Chengguang, I had opportunity of listening many times to his explanations of various questions regarding yiquan. His descriptions and explanations are always very precise and are directly related to practice. With master Yao Chengguang's approval, I prepared this work, which is based on his teachings.

HONEST ATTITUDE, SEEKING THE TRUTH, CREATIVITY

According to master Yao Chengguang, yiquan is a branch of science. We should keep scientific attitude while studying, verifying old concepts and developing new ones. We should learn yiquan and keep developing it, seeing yiquan as a whole, not concentrating only on some part of it.

SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE IN LEARNING YIQUAN

In last years there appeared some people in yiquan circles who talk of emission of qi, hitting opponent without touching him, about supernatural abilities. There are also some people talking about "eighteen fighting methods", "thirty six methods" and some "ultimate techniques". According to master Yao Chengguang yiquan is an art and science based on facts proved during practice. From the very start of the development of yiquan, the main idea was getting rid of fallacies and superstitions, and seeking the basis in scientific concepts. All its principles, like: "relax and tension", "mutual relation of movement and non-movement", "simultaneous use of pushing and pulling", "unity of absorbing and throwing away", "force in direction contrary to movement", "frontal and diagonal used together", "soft and hard help each other", "forward and backward", "single and double", "light and heavy" etc. are based on the concept of dialectical unity of the opposite.

Even such great masters in history of yiquan as Wang Xiangzhai and Yao Zongxun didn't do emission of qi, hitting opponent without touching and didn't exhibit supernatural abilities. Propagating such concepts makes people think of yiquan as something supernatural and mysterious. Those concepts are contrary to the principles of yiquan, because they oppose

the physics of human body. According to principles of mechanics, when there is no external force applied to body, the body is staying in state of non movement, or continuing movement without changing speed. If there is some change in this state, it is because some force is applied. When we talk about force, it means mutual relation of bodies. Basis of tui shou is contact of hands and relation of forces used by both partners. Then it is possible to use many principles of physics, like: leverage, sum of forces, movement of a screw etc.

Wang Xiangzhai said: "No method is basis of martial art, if there is a method, it should be empty". The value of any martial art is based on its principles, and not how its outer form looks. It's like with coins: we have 1 fen, 2 fen, 5 fen. There is no need to issue 3 fen, 4 fen or 8 fen coins. The method of martial art is "one action is changing into hundreds, hundreds are based on one". So the method of yiquan is a method of principles, it's "great unified method", method of developing our natural abilities. It's not some techniques, which are something very superficial. Wang Xiangzhai said: "All those forms and techniques caused degeneration of martial arts". So there is no place in yiquan for all those "eighteen fighting methods", "thirty six methods" and other "ultimate techniques".

Those "mystical concepts" and "ultimate techniques" appear, because those who propagate them didn't undergo systematic study and practice of yiquan as a whole system. They try to hide their lack of knowledge and understanding of yiquan by talking about "ultimate techniques" and about miraculous, supernatural, so people would think how advanced they are and how their level of knowledge is far beyond understanding of normal people.

Many students ask master Yao Chengguang about the problem of some teachers keeping their knowledge in secret. Yao thinks that teachers who act in this way just don't have real knowledge and skill. Those people don't have much to offer to their students, and what they have is not really profound. So they are afraid, that if they teach students all they know, they will not have anything more left which they could teach. So they choose mysticism and obscurity. Yao Zongxun used to say: "I open my treasure house for all of you, and you just keep trying to take from it as much as you can". Yiquan is not something mysterious. But at the same time it is not something very easy to learn. So even if student have chance to learn from good teacher, the results of study and practice depend also on student's ability of understanding, his character, perseverance, courage, physical fitness etc. Even if teacher is trying to teach student everything he knows, it is not sure if student will be able to understand it and master it. So if teachers try to hide their knowledge, how can wushu develop?

Master Yao Chengguang always stresses, that yiquan is a branch of science. Studying science, we shouldn't be arrogant and impatient. We must treat the field of our study seriously, not making people think it's something miraculous, and not keeping our knowledge only for ourselves. Those who learn yiquan should not follow some fallacies, but should keep

attitude of a scientific researcher, connecting practice with theoretical studies. Studying a martial art, you should try to understand its principles. Only then you can make real progress. Only then yiquan can be further developed.

LEARNING YIQUAN WITH USE OF A SCIENTIFIC SYSTEM OF METHODS

"Science, system, strictness, standard", this is the principle which master Yao Chengguang is using in teaching. According to him, the study of yiquan must be based on scientific concepts, on a systematic program of study, strict demands and standard postures, so students can gradually get knowledge of all practice and theory of yiquan, from simple to complex, from shallow to profound. Students must have chance to follow clear path, developing proper reactions and movements. Learning and mastering some skills is based on creating appropriate system of reactions. By repeating exercises many times, the reactions are enhanced, and certain skills are developed. Without the principle of "science, system, strictness, standard" wrong reactions can develop, which would make mastering some skill impossible.

Master Yao Chengguang got rid of the old teaching method of showing something without explaining. He uses modern method of linking practice with theory, gradually leading student to higher level, using standard demonstration with vivid explanation, making yiquan easier to learn. According to master Yao, zhan zhuang, shi li, fa li and other basic training methods are just various forms of seeking and developing of hunyuan li. So mind activity is key point in all those training methods. After some time of practice of basic methods, students should also make fighting practice a part of their program, under more demanding conditions continuing seeking and developing hunyuan li. They should practice running, rope jumping, fa li, tui shou, san shou, developing physical attributes, improving endurance, speed, coordination.

Yiquan stresses practice. Test of fighting skill is the ultimate indicator of effectiveness of training methods. Development of fighting abilities and skills is result of improving of functioning of neural system, improving your physical and mental side, mastering skills and strategy. There are no shortcuts in study of yiquan. The only possible shortcut is: proper method + good teacher + ability of understanding + courage + physical attributes + hard work.

CREATIVE ATTITUDE , ABSORBING FROM MANY SOURCES

Yao Chengguang says, that while studying yiquan, you should have contact with people from other martial arts, so you can know their abilities and skills, and absorb from them what is valuable. You shouldn't be like a frog in a well, seeing only small part of the sky. When Wang Xiangzhai met western boxers, he noticed that boxing is very practical and scientific, so he absorbed a lot from boxing. Later, thanks to Yao Zongxun's work, the

training system of yiquan was further developed. We started using hitting pads and bags, gloves and other protective equipment. At that time many people in chinese martial arts circles were critical about those changes. But science should be developed all the time. Developing means getting rid of some old stuff, absorbing from many sources, and creating new concepts and methods. Practice proved that Yao Zongxun was right when making those changes. Introducing bags and pads made training of punches closer to real fighting. Gloves and protective equipment make possible hitting hard and testing fighting methods without injuring training partner. It enriched training system of yiquan, making training more effective. It was next breakthrough in history of Chinese wushu.

Some people talk a lot about "training of tendons and bones"¹. According to master Yao Chengguang it is early and not mature concept of Wang Xiangzhai, from the first period of development of yiquan. Wang never mentioned such a concept in later years. "There is no limit to the development of martial art, how could we talk about great perfection". All masters with great achievements devoted all their lives to seeking and perfecting, absorbing new, rejecting what was wrong, gradually developing their systems. Their views were changing, different in early period, in middle period and late period. Later teachings are more mature. But we still have people who keep propagating early concepts of Wang Xiangzhai. Obviously it is result of not knowing and not understanding history of yiquan, not understanding the process of its development. Of course those early concepts of Wang were very popular at some point of time, at some stage of development of wushu. But during process of development some ideas must be rejected. It's the same in society and in martial arts. Today, high technology is used on battlefield. If we would rather use spears and halberds, because we think it is our precious tradition, anybody can predict the results. Also martial arts should be developed creatively, according to demands of new times and modern knowledge. Rules of yiquan tui shou and san shou competitions have been prepared during last years. Thanks to support of Chinese Wushu Association such competitions were already conducted. It is next step which we made. We can expect that yiquan will soon appear at international events.

Master Yao Chengguang says that now it is crucial moment in development of yiquan. Wang Xiangzhai and Yao Zongxun were precursors of this science. We should continue their work. Let's hope that yiquan people will not think just about their private benefits, propagating yiquan as some mysterious system, but will keep honest attitude, doing deep study and research, seeking truth, cooperating with others, making contribution to the development of yiquan.

I - Yiquan which we do is based on concepts developed by Wang Xiangzhai in later period. We don't treat the classical concepts like qi or nei jin (internal strength) as something not related to biomechanics, but as some old way of describing functioning body and relation between consciousness, neural system and movement system. So there is no place for the concepts of dividing training into two parts: "training of tendons and bones" and "training of qi" (from translator).

YANG
VISIT TO A MASTER
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

In October 2000 I first went to Beijing to meet master Yao Chengguang, the representative of yiquan's third generation (*Wang Xiangzhai is first generation of yiquan, and his direct students are second generation - translator's note*).

In childhood I learned Shaolin martial art from a local expert. At beginning of 1980s I went to Cangzhou and learned from Yao Baoyun, who was nicknamed Flying Feather Legs. Then in Xi'an I became student of Zhao Wenhua - vice-president of Xi'an Xingyiquan and Baguazhang Association. I learned xingyiquan and practiced hard, profiting a lot from master's teachings. I also practiced boxing and sanda.

Yiquan/dachengquan... "*when one moves, all moves*", "*like a flag moved by wind, like fish in a river*", "*all parts of body being like springs*", "*in moment of contact, there is immediate issuing of force*", "*tossing opponent 3 metres away is very easy*". I admired the system, but had not practiced it, I wish I started it earlier!

Once I talked with friends and someone said that Li Zhaoshan from Xinyang is good at dachengquan. I went to him three times. I'm grateful that he taught me the method of tossing opponent away.

Old wushu experts say, that Yao Zongxun was the one of Wang Xiangzhai's students, who fully learned the spirit and meaning of yiquan, all its principles, both of combat and of health cultivation. But master Yao Zongxun passed away long time ago. In autumn 2000 I met Yao Chengguang - elder of Yao Zongxun's sons. We met at his very small apartment in Mao'er lane. Yao is a man of medium height. He is friendly and welcoming. It turned out that he was a few years older than me. He looks like some average, weak office clerk, not as someone who possesses fighting skill. When I saw him, my first thought was that probably my trip to Beijing would become useless.

In afternoon I went to Nanguan park - the place of training of Zongxun Wuguan school of yiquan. Quite many people were already practicing there. Some of them doing tui shou, some shi li, fa li, some other san shou. Yao introduced some of his students and friends. Among them was the president of Japanese Taiki-ken Association - Kubo Isato, who came from Japan to learn from Yao. There was also an yiquan practitioner from New Zealand and a husband and wife - both of whom train fighting. It turned out, that grandson of Zhou Ziyan - other of the best of Wang Xiangzhai's students, was there too, and was just practicing fa li.

I was watching people practicing and started thinking that it would be good to check personally what the yiquan taught by Yao is worth. Yao as if guessed what I was thinking about, and said: "*Old Yang, maybe you try some san shou with one of my students?*" I blushed,

thinking that it could lead to some awkward situation. But on the other hand, if I loose, what problem? I came to learn, anyway. And if I win, I can always say that the student is still young and unexperienced, so I would be able to ask Yao form some instruction anyway. Probably when Wang Xiangzhai travelled all over China, his attitude was like this.

I decided that it would be better if we first try some tui shou, so I can have some idea about opponent's skill, and only then decide or not to do san shou. I said: "*Yao laoshi, please choose some student with whom I could try tui shou*". And Yao said with a smile: "*Choose yourself*". I thought that it was very convenient for me that he said that. If he was choosing, it would be for sure the best student. And when I'm choosing, I could avoid this. Because it is impossible that all students would be very good.

I never participated in any competitions, but training martial arts for many years I sparred with many opponents, and sometimes I had to fight with some hooligans too, so I was quite sure about my skill. I looked on the students. Choosing some small, weak guy would make no sense. But if I choose some big and strong, my chances could become lower. Finally I decided for a young but quite tall boy.

I planned not to attack at first, but check boy's skills, waiting for occasion to use his force against him. But at the moment when we touched arms, I suddenly felt as if I was a wooden stick, losing control over my body, and I was pushed away some two metres. Second time, I attacked fiercely. Maybe I did mistake putting myself in inconvenient position, or maybe the boy was fast enough to move to the side and attack me obliquely - I felt as if my legs were tied up, and I fell down. Next time I tried to keep stable position, but my body suddenly twisted - I was pushed away, and fell on the ground. I had practiced martial arts for so many years. Why a young, unexperienced body could defeat me in such a way?

We joined forearms again. I placed my palms just in front of his chest, in a position convenient for pushing. Suddenly I felt as if abyss opened ... I wanted to move back, and then it was as if a great wave hit my chest - I was thrown away again. I was losing like this each time. I even tried some dirty tricks, attacking opponents ribs and head, but it didn't help. I was angry. I don't know if I was angry with myself or with the boy. Next time I gripped his wrists firmly. The boy, smiling, said: "Yang shixiong, you gripped my wrists", he suddenly shook his body, his arms getting out of my grip as two eels, and I was tossed away again.

I didn't know if I should laugh or cry. I couldn't stop trying again and again, and the result was the same. The boy was as inspired, and I was becoming more and more ashamed. Then, during some next try, when the boy was just issuing force in my direction, Yao suddenly came closer, and pulled boy's arm, so the boy's body moved to the side, and the fa li movement didn't reach me.

Yao started rebuking the boy: "*Your shiye (Yao Zongxun - translator's note), many times represented Wang Xiangzhai in challenges, but he always let his opponents keep face.*

He had both skills and warrior's morality. Yang shixiong is tired after long trip. Shouldn't you stop this earlier?" The boy agreed tht he should have.

My thoughts became chaotic. I was ashamed and I was delighted. It was really worthy to travel to Beijing. What a shame, that practicing martial arts for so many years, I didn't find such straight road earlier!

Next day, at 8 in the morning, I went to Yao's apartment, to listen to his lecture, and learn more about the way of martial science. Yao said that the basis of the great way is in the highest simplicity. In combat science - quanxue we start from zhan zhuang. Using mind activity, in no force we are seeking for force, in non-movement we are seeking for movement, in the changes between relax and tension we are seeking internal strength. Through shi li we learn to know it, in fa li we use it, thanks to tui shou we understand it, with shi sheng we can strengthen it, in san shou we learn all the variability of changes.

Wang Xiangzhai taught that "*small movement is better than big movement, non-movement is better than small movemetn, movement in non-movement is never ceasing movement*". But some people in yiquan circles think that it is not "*movement in non-movement*", but just "*non-movement*" which "*is never ceasing movement*". So they don't move, only use mind. But it is not like this in yiquan. You must understand that in non-movement you should seek for slight movement - this is the most important stage for a beginner. You are establishing contradictory forces between head and front foot, between legs, between head and arms, between back hip and front knee, between arms, between head and feet, feet and ground, body and the air which is surrounding your body. Also the springness of breath is part of this. You are trying to feel this, starting from non-movement. Then you are "*moving as if you wanted to stop, wanting to stop, but still moving*". When you push - it doesn't let you do it. You are squeezing - it resists. You are trying to move it, you cannot. You are pressing down - it doesn't go downward. You are lifting - you are unable to lift it. When one hair on you body moves, whole body moves - this is the true hunyuan zhuang. Thanks to this, you can be motionless, and when you start to move it suddenly becomes violent movement, like a thunder, like great wave. Yao kept explaining and demonstrating with his own body.

The student whom I had chosen turned out to be very good. But now suddenly I thought that maybe I would check if Yao had the skills comparable to those of Wang Xiangzhai, by attacking him unexpectedly. I decided to use the method which I used many times before, winning in sparrings and fights. If opponent is able to neutralize my first attack, I continue with a series of piquan, attacking and defending myself at the same time, and finally hitting with bengquan. I attacked Yao suddenly. His arms touched with mine and did a sharp jolt. Yao patted my chest, which felt as electric shock. My body hit the wall, and I felt down. I was astounded. After three months, any patting on my chest still caused sharp pain.

Later, each time when I came to Yao, he was very friendly to me, treating me as a brother. His children call me uncle. To express my sincere admiration for master Yao I wrote this small poem:

*I've practiced martial arts for years
But never met someone whose art was on such level as Yao's
In Geng Chen year in Beijing
I saw that Wang's teachings are alive*

"CHINESE YIQUAN"
MASTER YAO CHENGGUANG'S SET VIDEOS
VIDEOS INTRODUCTION COMMENTARY
Translated from Chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

"While not moving, like a quiet leopard, when moving, like a coiling snake, like billowing waves, breath unified with the primeval source, in harmony with universe, powerful voice penetrating through air and clouds"

"Great Qi embracing universe; billowing waves; whirling tornado; when breathing out, creating great rainbow; when shouting, mountains shake and valleys respond; dancing like dragon, flying like pear flowers, solid as a mountain, with power breaking iron, walking like coiling dragon."

Those are descriptions of the level of highest achievement in yiquan - the great science created by Wang Xiangzhai.

In his youth Wang Xiangzhai learned from famous xingyiquan master Guo Yunshen. But Wang didn't stick to the ideas of sectism in martial arts schools. After learning deeply this style, in 1907 he started traveling all over China to meet famous masters of various martial arts and compare skill with them. After long studies and practice, in order to promote the true essence of martial art, in 1920s he started teaching yiquan, which became famous afterwards. It was also called Dachengquan.

Yiquan rejected methods which were practiced for several hundreds years, like forms or determined fighting movements. Health cultivation and fighting practice became one. It was renewal of the simplicity, practicality and profound spirit of Chinese martial science. Very soon it made great impact on martial arts circles, because of its different appearance and great efficiency. History proved the value and living power of yiquan.

After Wang Xiangzhai, Yao Zongxun became inheritor of this science and further developed yiquan.

Yao graduated from literature department of University of China. He studied psychology, physics, philosophy and other modern sciences. Thanks to deep knowledge and spirit of continuous seeking for scientific explanations, during years of studies he was able to make yiquan a complete scientific system. He summed up his all-life studies in the book "Yiquan - modern Chinese science or real fighting".

Being a great master of his times, Yao Zongxun not only made a great contribution to the development of theory of yiquan, but put even more stress on expressing the theory in real combat practice. In 1940s, the era of yiquan flourishing, Yao already developed high level of skill. He represented his teacher in teaching other students and taking challenges. He never lost a fight, but he never injured his opponents, and his attitude was admired by everybody. So

those who came to fight, had very high opinion about his skill, and about his warrior's morality.

"Among students I have Zongxun. He found some inconsistencies in my method, studied it in depth and employed creativity to develop the method further". In mid 1940s Wang Xiangzhai wrote a poem and presented Yao with honorary name, officially recognizing him as a successor.

During the "*10 years of turmoil*" Yao Zongxun had to move with family to the country, settling in Changping wild area. Suffering cold and hunger, he still regarded yiquan as a national treasure, and didn't give up his teaching it, passing it to his twin sons - Yao Chengguang and Yao Chengrong. Under guidance of a master of such a high skill and morality, Yao Chengguang and Yao Chengrong became great wushu experts.

After "*10 years of turmoil*", Yao Zongxun committed himself to educating new generation of yiquan students, until his last days. After he passed away in 1985, his son Yao Chengguang took over the hard work of developing and popularizing yiquan.

Yao Chengguang started learning yiquan from his father at age of 8. Taught directly by father, under strict supervision, practicing and studying diligently, he received the complete transmission of yiquan. Now he is outstanding representative of yiquan's 3rd generation.

In 1982, during first after "*cultural revolution*" all China san shou competition, which was held in Beijing, Yao Chengguang knocked his opponent out after 47 seconds. With his iron fists, he "rewrote" the newly established "*All country san shou competition rules*".

In 1988, on invitation of first vice-president of Asian Wushu Federation, president of Hong Kong Wushu Federation - Huo Zhenhuan, Yao Chengguang together with brother came to teach in Hong Kong. He had over 30 challenges with representatives of various martial arts in Hong Kong, winning every time. The Hong Kong wushu people noticed: "*The art of Yao brothers is not for exhibition, it is the highest level art of real combat!*" Hong Kong newspapers and magazines published a lot of articles. Such a raise of interest towards kung-fu was not seen in Hong Kong in last years. The stay of Yao brothers in Hong Kong, which was planned for 3 months, was extended to 6 months, according to wishes of people interested in learning this art. From those facts we can see what furore Yao's yiquan made in Hong Kong.

In 1991 Yao Chengguang went to teach in Japan. There he fought with Japanese national karate champions and vice-champions and won every time, arousing great interest of martial arts circles in Japan towards yiquan. President of Tokio Taikiken Association - Kubo Isato once said: "*My martial art brother is the best in China, his name is Yao Chengguang*".

Yao Chengguang, after 40 years of hard training developed his own style of combat science. His skill is very deep, technique very complete, issuing of power very sharp and

sudden, changes unpredictable. After mastering the way, he many times compared his skill with other people, and never lost. Winning with many Chinese and foreign representatives of various combat methods, he was always staying modest, this attitude winning him a lot of appraise in martial arts circles. Many experts say that Yao Chengguang is a successor, popularizer and protector of the real combat science. In last years, apart from teaching and popularizing yiquan, he has been concentrating on further study and research, publishing his articles, explaining his views on combat science, putting a lot of effort to the cause of developing and popularizing yiquan.

In "Chinese Youth", "Beijing Daily", "Beijing Evening", English edition of "China Daily", Hong Kong "Great Community", "Literature collections", "Bright", "Commercial" and other papers and magazines there were published many articles about Yao Chengguang. Articles with a lot of photos showing him teaching and fighting were published in French and Japanese martial arts magazines.

Yao Chengguang possesses high skill, deep knowledge and moral virtues of a great master. He is president of Yiquan Research Association under Beijing Wushu Union, director of Beijing Zongxun Wuguan martial art school, technical advisor of Hong Kong Yiquan Association, honorary president and chief instructor of Hong Kong Yao's Yiquan Association, honorary president of Japanese Taikiken Association, honorary director of Poland Academy of Yiquan, honorary president of yiquan research associations in Guizhou, Shanxi, Henan and Shandong.

It can be said, that inheriting the methods developed by Wang Xiangzhai and Yao Zongxun, using solid foundation coming from many years of training and study, stressing the principle of linking theory with combat practice, always seeking the truth, utilizing knowledge of psychology, physics, philosophy, anatomy, getting rid of superstitions, Yao Chengguang become next generation great master who further developed and renewed yiquan, making it a unified system of cultivating health, developing combat skills and seeking for self-development and deep satisfaction.

The set of Video CDs "Chinese Yiquan" most completely and systematically explains the methods of yiquan. For the first time it offers opportunity of viewing precious video materials with late great master Yao Zongxun to the wide public. We believe that this set will be of great value not only to yiquan practitioners, but also to people practicing other martial arts. Obeying the will of his father, exhibiting broadminded attitude of a master of new times, Yao Chengguang is revealing his system to society.

Yao Chengguang is willing to co-operate hand in hand with all yiquan and other martial arts people, making contribution to the development and international popularization of Chinese wushu.

"CHINESE YIQUAN"
MASTER YAO CHENGGUANG'S SET OF VIDEOS
JIAN WU - YIQUAN HEALTH DANCE
Translated from Chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

Health dance (jian wu) is an advanced training method of yiquan, where you are freely exhibiting your level of skill. It summarizes all kinds of yiquan basic training and combat practice. It expresses spirit, mind and force. It is done between intention and no-intention. Mind and force are not separated. It's vivid and profound. You are doing anything at will, happy with what you are doing. You are expressing pulsating in all parts of body, bringing out and taking back of your mind and force, lightness and swiftness of steps. In body methods, hands methods and steps methods there is mutual complementing of hard and soft. Relax and tension are one. Internal and external are one. *"Your spirit and energy are reaching mountains and rivers". "You have power of universe in your mind"*.

This "dance" is not the same what is usually meant by dance. This is kind of beauty of internal strength which can only be expressed when the highest level of skill is achieved. *"In movement like a coiling dragon, in stillness like a hare transfixed by fear, soft like floating clouds, hard like a thunder"*. You move in all directions: forward and backward, to the left and right, upward and downward. Your spirit reminds that of a leopard moving in fog, like a rhinoceros, moving naturally with grace, like floating clouds and flowing water.

The aims of practicing yiquan health dance are: to express feeling, mould ones noble mind, develop once wit, improve health and lengthen life. You can fully express spirit and mind, you can stimulate nerves and muscles of whole body, making them to work in highly coordinated way. You can to the highest extend develop the ability of mental commanding of body, so there is no part of body which would not be like spring, there is no part of body which you couldn't use to defeat opponent. It looks like just a dance, but it's very deep and profound, full of the principles of the science of combat and it is unpredictable at the same time.

The yiquan health dance brings yiquan to the highest level of martial art. It is a great method of merging all methods, of mastering the science of combat. It is not like some *"eighteen methods"* or *"36 techniques"*. Our predecessors were saying that the highest level of martial art is when: *"There is technique and no technique, intention and no intention at the same time. No technique and no intention is the true meaning of martial art"*. The true meaning means the great method of the science of combat. The yiquan health dance is summarized embodiment of all skills of yiquan. It is not chaotic movement without any aim. You keep all universe in your mind. You are in a state of being ready for real fight, of being ready to use any part of body, where there appears the contact with opponent. In the appearance of doing anything at will, completely freely, there is actually obeying the

principles of yiquan. If you would practice blindly, without obeying the principles, it would be only chaotic movement. When Wang Xiangzhai and Yao Zongxun were practicing the yiquan health dance, they expressed unity of heaven and earth, unity of mind and force, unity of body with whole universe. Moving or not moving, they were in the state of being ready for any combat action.

Health dance is high level training method of yiquan. It is free combat movement with strong awareness of opponent. It is summarizing of all training methods, unifying spirit, intention and force.

YAO CHENGGUANG
ABOUT IDEAL AND REAL PUSHING HANDS
Edited by Xie Yongguang
Translated from Chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

From translator:

*This is an excerpt from chapter on pushing hands from master Yao Chengguang's new book "Yiquan xinfa" (Yiquan concepts). Presently the book is available in Chinese, but the big chapter on tui shou is available in English to full and special members of **Yiquan Training Worldwide Support Forum**. I have chosen this small excerpt for public presentation now, because it talks about some very common problem. Too many people let themselves being deceived by those who only can talk about miracles or make astounding staged demonstrations, making audience believe that they would be able to present such skill in real fight. Those people who are deceived this way, look for miracles only, and are not able to see what is real, what the actual training process is like. They dream only and never learn anything. Please remember words of Wang Xiangzhai: "Some people only seek miraculous. They don't understand that miraculous is to be found in normal and usual".*

ABOUT IDEAL AND REAL TUI SHOU

Ideal tui shou is what some people imagine: that in tui shou there should be no using force to oppose opponent's force, that when there appears contact of arms, you will project opponent without any effort, as if casually. When such people watch real tui shou training and competition, when situations of opposing and tension appear frequently, they come to conclusion, that this is not proper yiquan pushing hands.

Their understanding of tui shou is based only on the impression received from listening to the stories about how Wang Xiangzhai was able to throw opponents effortlessly, with slight movement. But they don't understand that achieving such amazing level of skill was result of long and hard process of training.

In tui shou, when you do something, opponent reacts. You use some strength, and opponent too, and sometimes his strength is bigger. When your opponents possess similar strength and skill, winning is not so simple matter. But when there is big difference between strength and skill of both opponents, what meaning has comparing them? Actual possibility of making progress of many practitioners was hindered by listening to wrong opinions of people who think only about astounding effects, but don't want to see the hard process of achieving high level.

Actually in tui shou training you need to go through stages of skill: from opposing, through no opposing, to rapid changes. In this process solid basic practice is necessary. You

will not be able to omit hard training. Thinking that getting great results without hard training is possible is dreaming and deceiving yourself. Finally people will laugh at you, if you keep such attitude.

When Yao Zongxun was explaining the relation between basic training and tui shou, he talked about when he just started learning from Wang Xiangzhai, he practiced tui shou with Yang Demao. Young and strong Yao Zongxun was not able to do much against Yang Demao, who used proper yiquan methods. Then Yao Zongxun started practicing basic methods very hard, training many hours a day. After just some half a year he was able to make a tremendous progress in tui shou.

Realistic attitude wins over beautiful stories. Those who talk only about not opposing force with force in tui shou, are dreaming, not understanding the training process and the process of developing skill in tui shou. Such "experts" simply have not went through proper training process, were not able to master right use of strength, of rapid changes in tui shou, changes between relax and tension and ability of issuing force at any moment. They have not practiced the violent. combat-like tui shou and san shou. They can only talk useless, empty theories.

FIVE STAGES OF TUI SHOU SKILL

Stage of circles with intention of attacking

At the first stage, although practitioners just start this kind of training, the intention of attacking must be included in exercise. You do fixed forms of circles, but all the time you must keep force pointing toward opponent's center. At the same time you develop sensitivity of reaction.

Stage of "bulls pushing"

After some time of circles practice, when you have some experience and understanding of strength, you should move to learning how to use basic methods: pulling, tilting, turning, pushing etc. You should observe opponents strength, and attack immediately when opportunity arises. But because at this stage practitioners' skill is not ripe yet, they have not enough experience, there appears stiffness, they tense a lot and oppose with force, this is known as "bulls pushing". You will need to pass through such stage. This is stage of skill "sprouting", from where you will advance.

Stage of attacking with proficient use of various means

After the stage of "bulls pushing", when technical strength and skill gradually increase, experience enriches, there will be less of "dirty force", you will be able to freely use various methods, you will develop the ability of observing opponent's strength and fast reacting to changes. At this stage there is a lot of attacking.

Stage of proficient controlling

After some time of practice, you will see that event without attacking, you will be able to control opponent. Controlling is advanced stage of tui shou. At this stage footwork is swift, changes of hands movements uncountable, body work free and natural, issuing of force is clear, movements compact. In the point of contact there is controlling opponent or affecting his balance. Both controlling and attacking are as if casual, as if Buddha was playing with Monkey King on his palm.

Mixing pushing and hitting together.

Putting pushing and hitting together is an intermediate form of practice between tui shou and san shou. In yiquan we issue force with any part of body: palms (fists), arms, shoulders, head, elbows, knees, hips. There is no part of body which is not like a spring. Attacks often come when there is contact with opponent - this is typical for yiquan. Tui shou training should serve to help in developing free fighting skills. When in a fight there appears contact with opponent's arms, you use the skill developed through tui shou training, in order to immediately gain control over him, destroy his balance, hitting him and projecting, using all parts of body to attack him..

It can be said that tui shou is a jewel of yiquan, the key to winning. When Wang Xiangzhai compared skill with boxing world champion - Yingge (it might be Hungarian Imre Harangi, Olympic champion in 1936), he used tui shou skill - when there came contact of forearms, he used ability of controlling and issuing force, projecting opponent. Yao Zongxun defeated some Chinese master the same way in 1940s. The skills developed through tui shou training are very important in free fighting. Of course you need solid basic and technical training to be able to use them. Those who would like to achieve skills like those presented by Wang Xiangzhai or Yao Zongxun, without hard training are like idiots daydreaming.

Yiquan tui shou is very specific, because it is directly related to violent fighting. The highest stage of tui shou is actually san shou. High stage of san shou is putting san shou and tui shou together.

Just think, is there any point discussing with those who talk only about ideal tui shou, and don't understand that it is not possible to achieve high level of skill, not going through lower stages first?

MASTER YAO CHENGGUANG ANSWERS QUESTION

Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz



Dear Liu Xiangyu,

I received your letter to the editors of "Boji" magazine. Here I'm answering your questions about dachengquan (yiquan).

Maodun zhuang (contradictions posture) is important part of dachenguan training methods. I would like to ask, whether the feeling of forces in six directions means that there should be all those forces at the same time? Are there any stages in training? Do students practice with some of the directions first? How should it be practiced? The intentions and feelings should be fierce or gentle?

Yiquan was named dachengquan in 1940 by Wang Xiangzhai's friends. This name had been used until 1947. Then Wang started using the name yiquan again (which he used before, since mid 1920s). Wang said: "There is no limit to the development of martial art, how could we talk about great achievement (dacheng)?" In early period Wang Xiangzhai used the name maodun zhuang, but later changed name of this posture to hunyuan zhuang (unified posture). The method of pole training (zhuangfa) in yiquan is based on unifying mind, movement and force. This is simultaneous mind and body training. It's a method of working with whole body, not just some parts. There are several stages of seeking force (mo jin) training in hunyuan zhuang: forward-backward, opening-closing (and left-right), upward-downward, with changes of directions and in all directions at the same time. Seeking force in all directions at the same time is an advanced method. Students should start from basic exercises and gradually move to those more advanced. While practicing hunyuan zhuang, you should carefully observe your body and feel the force of resistance, from soft to strong, from feeling on surface of your body to perception of force reaching further away. It depends on student's level if the used intention is fierce or gentle. Generally, students shouldn't try to make progress too fast. So stress should be put rather on slow, even, relaxed way of practice, with carefully observing the feeling in all parts of body. Depending on student's level, various forms of mind activity are used. But you should remember the principle of zhan zhuang training formulated by Wang Xiangzhai:

"Small movement is better than big movement, non-movement is better than slow movement, from non-movement the never ceasing movement is born".

When someone is able to practice maodun zhuang for one hour, it is "entering the gate". Should we try to practice it longer, after achieving this level? If so, how to find time for other kinds of training methods of dachengquan?

My father - Yao Zongxun used to say: "If you want to learn the essence of martial art, you must start from zhan zhuang". When you are learning martial art, you should try to understand its principles. If someone doesn't understand the principles of zhan zhuang, even if he is able to stand 10 hours everyday, he will still have no idea about the essence. His zhuang will be empty and dead. When someone really understands the principles of zhan zhuang and can stand for one hour, we can say that he "entered the gate". The time of standing practice can be decided according to student's goals and ambitions, and his physical conditions. Usually half of the time of practice is devoted to zhan zhuang, and half to all other methods: shi li, steps, fa li, tui shou, punching, kicking, shi sheng, san shou, jian wu, wooden stick practice etc. Student should seek quality first, and then quantity.

Maodun zhuang is practiced with left hand and left foot in front. Can it be changed to opposite position?

All jiji zhuang postures are practiced both ways, on left and right side. It's the same with other training methods, like shi li, punching, pushing hands etc. This is necessary, as during fight you could be attacked from various directions and angles. You must be able to act quickly, swiftly, according to situation. If you practiced only on one side, wouldn't you be like half paralyzed during real fight?

Which of the postures serves strengthening legs? How should it be practiced? Which points are important?

First you should master the principles of seeking force in hunyuan zhuang (maodun zhuang). Then, if you want to put stress to strengthening legs, you can use fuhu zhuang (da zhuang) and duli zhuang. The same stages of seeking force as in hunyuan zhuang are used here. The student should know what is common about seeking force in various postures, and also what is specific for each of those postures. Whole body should be trained, so later in fighting training you are able to issue force with any part of body. The student of yiquan (dachengquan) should train in proper, systematic way, instructed by good teacher. Otherwise it is difficult to understand yiquan.

How moca bu should be practiced? Are there any sideways steps? What should be stressed in moca bu? Are there some special secrets?

Moca bu (frictions steps) is basis for the practice of combat steps. Jiji zhuang is important part of training, which serves developing hunyuan li. Having some basis, developed

through zhan zhuang training, in shi li practice you can continue working with hunyuan li while doing movement. Shi li is actually zhan zhuang extended in space, it's moving zhan zhuang. When practicing friction steps, your foot shouldn't be rubbing ground, but mind activity should be used instead. You can imagine that your feet and whole legs are moving through mud or sand. You should carefully observe the feeling of overcoming resistance, without too much tension, "using mind and not force". Moca bu is actually shi li. Not only legs, but whole body is working. The steps training in yiquan contains fixed position steps, moving steps, big steps, changing steps, round steps, moving to the side and attacking straight etc. There is moving in all directions - forward and backward, to the left and to the right, in higher and lower positions. Yao Zongxun said: "Good footwork must be swift, accurate, elastic, so there are conditions for issuing force in any moment, any situation; when upper moves, lower is naturally following, when lower moves, upper is naturally leading; the balanced, holistic, unified force must be there all the time". This is the goal and meaning of the steps training. As for secrets. there is nothing like this. The only secret is that good teacher, an expert, should explain the principles, so the student is not loosing time. The student must think and understand what he is doing. If he will keep working diligently, he will gain benefits, improving his health and his fighting abilities.

Because of limited space in the magazine, I had to make my answers short.

MASTER YAO CHENGGUANG'S SPEECH FOR INAUGURATION OF YIQUAN CONFERENCE IN BEIJING, 30 MARCH 2002

Translated from Chinese by: Andrzej Kalisz

Respectable Li Jie - president of Chinese Wushu Association, Wu Bin - vice-president of standing comitee of Association, vice-president Li Yapei

Respectable Huo Zhenhuan - vice-president of Asian Wushu Federation

Respectable Wang Yufang

Vice president of Beijin Wushu Association Wang Shi'er

Sekretary of Beijing Wushu Association Mao Xinjian

Dear guest, dear friends, welcome!

After one year of preparation, the conference on Yao Zongxun's scientific thought is finally opening. This is very important event for yiquan people. This is very important for popularization, development and improvement of yiquan. Representing Beijing Yiquan Research Association I would like to welcome leaders of Wushu Association, elder teachers, all yiquan people. I would like to welcome foreign guests who came long way to meet with us.

When Yao Zongxun became Wang Xiangzhai's student, he was practicing diligently, studying yiquan deeply, and he made great progress. This is why Wang Xiangzhai liked him very much and gave him honorary name Ji Xiang, with meaning of being designated as his successor. Wang let Yao Zongxun teach students instead of him and accept challenges in his name. All those challenges were won by Yao. Many of Wang Xiangzhai's students actually learned from Yao Zongxun. In 1940s Yao Zongxun already had very mature skill. He won many fights with Chinese and foreign experts.

The history of Chinese martial arts is very long. And yiquan, started by Wang Xiangzhai, has been practiced just about 80 years. It met many big difficulties. How is it possible that it survived? One of the reasons is that Wang Xiangzhai's successor - Yao Zongxun, made creative contribution to yiquan and educated new generation of successors, and also established Beijing Yiquan Research Association. Thanks to this yiquan has its important place among martial arts.

Yao Zongxun all his life dedicated to studies on martial art. During the cultural revolution he had to move with family to a village, close to mountains. Living there was very hard. There was cold and hunger. But Yao Zongxun never stopped training, and strictly supervised my and my brother Chengrong's training. It was pure happiness if after all someone interested in yiquan was able to come there and my father was teaching and explaining yiquan.

Learning from Yao Zongxun, we should learn his will and spirit. We shouldn't be afraid of difficulties, we should dedicate ourselves to the development of chinese wushu. After cultural revolution, chinese wushu started flourish again. In 1979 Yao Zongxun came back to Beijing. His training methods were appreciated by authorities of physical culture. He was asked to make lectures and demonstrations, explaining specific training methods of yiquan, which helped in research work in many sports disciplines. During this time Yao Zongxun was concentrating on educating new generation of successors.

There is no pure gold, there is no perfect man. Yao Zongxun had many ideas, which he wasn't able to put into life. Yao never thought his yiquan was perfect. He was very open, and all the time assimilated many valuable things from other systems. What is characteristic for Yao Zongxun's theory and practice is that he took from Wang Xiangzhai and further developed the scientific attitude, opposing superstitions and all teachings advocating supernatural and mysterious.

Learning from Yao Zongxun, we should learn this scientific attitude, be modest and never stop our development. We should learn from others, what valuable they have, to improve yiquan. We should get rid of bad teachings. In 2001 our association had a meeting criticizing Falun gong. We made a statement, expressing respect to science and opposing bad teachings. The attitude of respect to science and opposing superstitions should be used in our theoretical studies and training and teaching practice. We should go the way of basing yiquan on modern science and the best of chinese culture, making next steps in developing yiquan's theory and practice.

Learning from Yao Zongxun we should develop the spirit of culture and ethics. Everybody knows already that our country will organize olympics. Internationaly Wushu Federation has been already recognized by International Olimpic Comitee. This is great opportunity to introduce chinese wushu into olimpic disciplines. When the situation is favorable for chinese wushu, also we should make contribution as big as possible. In last year some progress in our work was made. Some schools participated in competitions and got good results. Some schools made a lot for popularizing yiquan. Beijing Yiquan Research Association, adapting to the present situation (*when organizing san shou events with using elbows and knees is not possible yet - Andrzej Kalisz*) put accent to development of tui shou competitions. After first competition, there were some trials, and the rules were modified. We expect that yiquan people will express their views, so standard rules could be decided as soon as possible, to make popularization and development of yiquan easier.

Developing yiquan needs a lot of effort. What we do is not sufficient yet. We must create conditions for making next step in our work, regarding both combat and health aspects of yiquan. We hope, that yiquan people will join their efforts, to achieve support for yiquan development from all circles of society, regarding combat, tui shou, health. So many people

can get benefits, and at the same time there would be some financial input, enabling further development of yiquan.

Present board of the Association is working on unity of yiquan people. We expect opinion about our work. Let's look in the future, work together, even though there are some differences. We hope that yiquan people will reject mutual prejudices and will unite for the aim of developing yiquan. Only this way we can really appreciate Yao Zongxun's work.

This conference met with support of Chinese Wushu Association and Beijing Wushu Association. We received support from Huo Zhenhuan and Hongkong Yiquan Society, and from many Research Associations in Beijing. Representing Beijing Yiquan Research Association I would like to express our great gratitude.

YAO CHENGGUANG
PRINCIPLES OF YIQUAN PUSHING HANDS TRAINING
Edited by Xie Yongguang
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

From translator:

*Those who learn from master Yao Chengguang and use his books and videos can feel lucky. Those who make progress in their training will have opportunity to go deeper and deeper into the study of yiquan. Next books are being prepared. Presently a serious work on yiquan pushing hands is available to full and special members of **Yiquan Training Worldwide Support Forum**. Here I will only present small parts of two chapters.*

1. Excerpt from chapter: Practical use of concepts of "section", "point", "surface", "line".

The concept of 'line' means the path of 'force'/energy'. In yiquan pushing hands the principle "form bent, force straight" is stressed. "Form bent" means that joints are bent during all changes, so there is no 'even surface' or 'one-directional force'. 'Straight force' doesn't mean straight path of movement, but actually the meaning is the same as when we say 'round force' - everywhere, in all directions there is intention of force. It is expressed by spiral movement around some pivot. Spiral and straight line are contradictions which are unified. In other words, no matter how complicated paths and changes of joints bending during movement, it is all transferred to the 'pointing force' - from point of contact to opponent's center. In pushing hands, when hands make circles, there should be spiral force all the time. This twisting should be there, no matter if you do offensive or defensive action. "When hands attack, they are like a steel file, when they come back, they are like a grapnel". There must be rolling and twisting in it. This kind of force is result of spiral movements of body. Yao Zongxun used to say: "When you are learning martial art, you must master the pushing hands circles. You should know that small circles are better than big circles, subtle circles which don't reveal form are better than small circles, unifying whole body is still better than subtle circles. This kind of intention and force is the way of protecting center and using center".

This is why in pushing hands we very seldom use straight line movements. Even if we use such movement, it is short and abrupt and immediately changing again into spiral movement, into all kinds of circles, those circles about which Yao Zongxun was talking in above quotation. This is not just circles of arms, but also head, shoulders, elbows, hips, knees etc. The path of circles is changing, direction of circles can change, the circle can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal. Summarizing, there shouldn't be straight line movement. "No matter if you attack or defend yourself, there should be a spiral", "waist as a wheel, legs as a drill" - there is the same meaning in those quotations. It must be stressed that basic demand is: "seeking fullness of spirit and intention, not mimicking form". You should understand the

essence of this, so in your mind there will be readiness and ability of reacting according to countless and unpredictable situations. It doesn't need to be expressed in obvious external form. And if you only express those circles in external form, this is a big mistake, extremely big mistake.

Summarizing, if we are talking about 'section', 'point', 'surface' and 'line', we shouldn't think about one of those concepts without relation to other. This is all one thing. All principles are linked together, creating each other and supporting each other. Together they form actual tui shou and the ability of subtle, swift changes in tui shou. Practicing tui shou without understanding what is behind those concepts is like trying to chop wood with a handle of an axe - it will take a lot of effort and will bring no results.

2. Excerpt from chapter: About technique in tui shou

a) Technical versatility

In free tui shou there are no paths of movement which could be determined in advance. There can appear various complex forms: both hands can start simultaneously, but only one will complete the action, or one of hands will do forward movement, but then both will move back, or left side can be solid and right side empty, or top can be heavy and bottom light. While seeking opportunity for attacking, both opponents are continuously making changes in their offensive and defensive actions, so it is not possible to use prearranged forms of movement. You can use opportunity, but you cannot force it. You shouldn't lose opportunity. When you lose it, the same kind of opportunity will not appear soon. Hence the form of movements in tui shou becomes quite complex.

So you should not limit your technical means to simple, often used methods like e.g. xuanfa, piangua or gougua, but you should develop proficiency in adapting to various situations and ways in which your opponent is using force. As for means of attacking, you should not limit them to using palm or fist, but your whole body should serve as a weapon. When opponent is grabbing your hand, your force can be issued there, when he is grabbing your forearm, you can use your forearm to issue force. Generally there are no fixed rules. Your body is as an inflated balloon. You are issuing force anywhere, where contact happens. But you should not forget about using spiral movements: the principle of a screw. No matter if it is clockwise or counter-clockwise, there should be twisting all the time, it should not be just a straight movement.

There is a popular saying: "when your foot is entering middle gate, to take position, even a spiritual being will hardly be able to defend himself". Using this saying in yiquan means that footwork in tui shou is very important. You can attack while doing forward step or backward step, or some shorter steps, being ready to change direction. Victory or defeat is usually related to whether you will do the right, crucial step.

Moreover you should remember about attacking not only frontally, but also sideways. When opponents will suddenly move to your side and you will not manage to make change and attack frontally, you should be able to direct force to the side. You need to use your arms in right way to close opponent's line of attack and find situation favorable for your own attack.

Of course if you really want to master the technical aspects of tui shou, you will not be able to do it by reading text and watching pictures. You must boldly engage in intensive practice. Only this way you will be able to gradually improve your skill. You can try out various forms of movement, provided that what you do will not be contradictory with the basic yiquan principles. During training you should not fear losing. You should only fear that you will not be able to try out some possibilities. Wang Xiangzhai said :"there is no correct or not correct, there is only right or not right". If there is no correct or not correct, the crucial thing is whether something is right or not in some situation. Yao Zongxun used to say: "understanding principles is crucial in martial art, if there is only explaining some fixed situations one after another, student's creative thinking will be limited, it will be difficult to reveal the potential of intuitive understanding of principles and spontaneous using them in various situations."

YAO CHENGGUANG
WORLDWIDE POPULARIZATION OF YIQUAN
Edited by Xie Yongguang
Translated from Chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

„It is my dream to popularize yiquan worldwide, to let more people learn the traditional Chinese culture".

While teaching people from any country, I'm willing to pass the best quality, the highest level yiquan to them. I feel happy when students learn seriously and practice hard. I can see that there is a real chance for yiquan developing worldwide. Many westerners have deep interest in the unique training methods of yiquan and the traditional Chinese philosophy contained within this system.

Already in 1935 an English historian Tangbiyin (this is Chinese transcription of the name) anticipated that eastern thought will have a big impact on the West. There is a great potential hidden in the traditional Chinese philosophy. Beginning from 20th century people from the West started discovering the spiritual richness of the five thousand years old civilization of China. Wushu, painting and calligraphy, opera and music, construction and engineering, cloths and jewelry, cuisine and other aspects of Chinese culture, all are related to the traditional Chinese philosophy – the Taoist concepts of nature, the thought of unity of man and universe. This eastern thought influenced life views of many people in many countries, giving them new understanding of spiritual development, helping them to move toward the beauty and harmony – the hunyuan (aspect of unity and harmony) of human life. This is why more and more people become interested in yiquan – the unusual crystallization of Chinese traditional culture.

How should yiquan be popularized and developed worldwide? I think that scientific attitude should be stressed and anything mysterious should be rejected. The yiquan which we want to popularize worldwide should be scientific and not something related to "supernatural effects", "killing an ox from behind a mountain" and other kinds of "wonders".

We should use the experience of managing organization and the means of popularization used by western boxing, taekwondo and other martial arts. Trying to develop but at the same time trying to keep door closed would be wrong way. Those who practice and teach yiquan should seek for what's true and real, should work in union, discuss together, put stress on practical verification, developing team spirit.

In the days of globalization of economy we must actively try to open the market for yiquan. Keeping the traditional characteristic of yiquan, we must make it modern too.. It should mean following the direction of development of competitive sports on international scene. In last years Beijing Yiquan Research Society with support of authorities created

experimental rules for yiquan san shou and yiquan tui shou competitions and conducted first san shou competition and two times tui shou competitions. It is just first step on the road toward international development of yiquan.

Now China accessed World Trade Organization, participating in globalization of world economy. This is great opportunity and challenge. The reality of more than 20 years of reforms and opening, introducing modern technology, made us realize the gap in the field of economy and technology between us and most developed countries. This is a moment in the history, when if we don't work hard to go forward, we will move back. If China wants to have a strong position among nations of the world, it must popularize its traditional culture, making the best of our nation achievements known to the whole world. Yiquan should play one of the main roles in this popularization of Chinese culture on the international scene. Yiquan which was born in China, now should develop worldwide.

YAO ZONGXUN (1917-1985)
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF YIQUAN
Translated by: Andrzej Kalisz

From translator: This text comes from the book "Yiquan - Zhongguo shizhan quanxue" (Yiquan - chinese science of real combat).

I. CHARACTERISTICS AND EFFECTS OF YIQUAN TRAINING.

When we talk about practicing martial art, there are three main aspects: health, satisfaction of studying, and self-defense. Health means getting rid of illnesses, cultivating health. Satisfaction of studying means that we study and research the principles on which martial art is based, getting great satisfaction from this. Self-defense means ability of fighting. All those aspects are interrelated. There is no martial art if one of them is lacking. If practicing martial art is not good for body, so why should martial art exist? From another point of view, what can you achieve in martial art without good health and enthusiasm. And if the martial art is not based on scientific principles, if you blindly chase some mirages, isn't it opposite to the basic sense of martial art? This way you not only waste a lot of precious time, but it is not good for your health and spirit too. So you must seriously consider those questions.I

According to yiquan's point of view, practicing martial art, you should develop body and mind. Then you should reasearch it, checking what is valuable and what is not, further developing it. And then there is also self-defense. Fighting is not the main aim of practice of yiquan, but it is one of its parts. In first chapter it was already said, that yiquan is a specific kind of martial science. This science was developed on basis of xingyiquan, but it absorbed the best of various martial arts. Yiquan has very complete and consistent system of training methods. The experience of half a century proved that yiquan has very great advantages, both in the heatlh cultivation and in self-defense. At the same time yiquan is absorbing scientific methods of chinese and other martial arts. This is to enrich and further develop this art. So we can say, that yiquan is a modern martial science, which is developing continuously.

Yiquan is based on zhan zhuang as the main training method. That's why when someone speaks about yiquan, people immediately think about zhan zhuang. Actually other martial arts also use zhan zhuang, but only yiquan made from it the core training method of the system. Yiquan zhan zhuang is very different from other systems zhan zhuang. This is not just static practice. The main aim is not strengthening muscles. Yiquan health zhan zhuang is different from qigong too. We don't talk about small or big "heavenly circles", we don't concentrate on dantian, we don't control breath. Everything is natural. Focused attention, relaxed body, natural breath is enough. This is training while resting. This training method of yiquan is easy and simple, it doesn't put too much burden to mind or body. There are no

special demands regarding how much place you need for practice, or how much time you must practice. Actually, if you are walking, sitting or lying on bed, you can practice. That's why this method is so much appreciated by normal practitioners and people with health problems. From the martial point of view, there are no forms, no sequences of techniques - this is rather about spontaneous reaction based on feeling. This is important characteristic of yiquan.

Yiquan's point of view is, and this is actually based on common sense and practical experience, that in fighting it is impossible to first determine order of actions and then do them. In yiquan there are no forms or determined technical sequences, but it doesn't mean chaotic brawling. The methods which yiquan uses are: principles.

What are effects of yiquan training?

1. It strengthens body, enables holistic development.

Yiquan stresses holistic training. Body is a whole. Although there is torso, arms, head, legs, we shouldn't treat them as separate. We shouldn't concentrate on one-sided training. Although some one-sided exercises have some value, long term one-sided practice is harmful. In yiquan, through zhan zhuang practice we "unite" mind, "unite" movements, "unite" strength, coordinate mind and body. In this way all parts of body receive exercise. Yiquan doesn't stress developing of normal strength and training with use of fierce movement exercises. From the health point of view, just standing with focused mind enables exercise for both body and mind, strengthening health and getting rid of illnesses. From fighting point of view, just standing, you can "seek strength in lack of strength", "seek agility in clumsiness", "seek speed in subtle movement". It gives exercise to spirit and will, blood system and muscles. The advantage of yiquan is ability to issue power under various conditions, adapting to situation. In yiquan training we stress changes between relax and tension, in both mind and body. Those changes are closely related to strength, speed, agility, coordination, ability of taking punches etc. Yiquan uses a specific training method, where mind activity is related to all forms of changes between relax and tension, and is effectively affecting all aspects of fitness.

2. It develops will and courage, improves mental condition.

Martial art training can positively affect psyche. If someone is ill, his psyche is not in good state. It is difficult to think about great undertakings then. Even though such man is trying to do the best, the results are not so good. If there comes some unexpected problem, he may break down mentally. Martial art practitioner can develop strong, sound psyche, be self-confident in work and in life. He is able to overcome unexpected difficulties. It is said "When you have skill, you are brave, when you are brave you have even more skill". Yiquan is not just training of body, but even more training of mind, spirit. All yiquan is about psychological training. You develop focus, courage, a will to overcome all problems. In last years

psychological training has been also introduced in sports. Specific yiquan training methods has been appreciated by specialists of physical culture. Practice proves, that thanks to yiquan training, practitioners achieve good mental attitude, not only getting confidence about possibility of improving health, but also when there come some difficulties, they are able to keep clear mind and ability to work according to situation, with optimistic attitude. Those are results of courage, determination and elasticity, ability of fast and effective reaction which are developed during yiquan training.

II. SCIENTIFIC CHARACTER OF YIQUAN TRAINING

Just like any other forms of physical culture, yiquan is a science of human body. So it must have scientific basis. Training must be continuously verified from the point of view of scientific theories. Theory of yiquan is based on biomechanics, anatomy, and psychology of sports. We should work continuously on linking together our training practice with scientific theories. We should get rid of all superstitions, in order not to cheat ourselves and not to cheat others. This is yiquan's point of view.

Body movements are controlled by nervous system, and are effects of working of muscles and skeleton. We can see skeleton as a system of levers, joints as axes, and muscles as source of force. This way all kinds of body activity becomes possible. Nervous system is very important. And nervous system is influenced by mind activity - "spirit". The traditional formulæ says: "mind is commander of force". In yiquan we stress the word 'yi' - mind, intention. The name of this art - yiquan is pointing to the importance of mind activity in training. It is said that in case of good calligrapher "intention is before brush", and in case of good painter "the bamboo is born in heart". The same is in martial art. If you neglect mind leading, there is no real use of strength. Martial art is about great degree of co-ordination between mind and body. If body is not working, the mind activity is 'empty'. If mind is not engaged, body movements are 'blind'. No martial arts expert would rely his skill on "automatic qigong" (zifa dong gong). We can take some inspiration from the famous story of Li Guang, who shot a stone with a bow. Li Guang thought it was a tiger and not a stone. And the arrow stuck into the stone. When he saw it was a stone, he tried again many times, but wasn't able to do the same. It says about relation between mind and force. There are different effects, when the state of mind is different. Without proper state of mind, proper stimulation is impossible. Wang Xiangzhai used to say: "mind is force". There is no real force without mind.

All forms of body movement are caused by activity of muscles. We cannot separate the activity of muscles from mental influence. From the point of view of the biology of movement, force is depending not only on the size of muscle. It is about nervous system affecting muscle fibres. No matter how big body, there are no big differences in the number of fibres. But usually many fibres don't work. They are not being stimulated by nervous system.

Thanks to proper training it is possible to increase the efficiency of mind affecting muscle. In other words, to put more of those fibres to work. Yiquan stresses the importance of mind in training, thanks to which body potential can be better used. That's why Wang Xiangzhai, although very slim, was able to issue great "explosive power". As was already said yiquan is not just activity of mind, but also of body. Some people think that yiquan uses so called "empty force" to defeat opponent without touching him. This is a big misunderstanding.

From the point of view of biology of movement, the development of movement skills is based on creating a system of conditioned reflexes. Using strength in martial art is different from normal use of strength. That's why training is needed to achieve success. Creating the system of reflexes, or developing skills can be divided into 3 stages. First is when the beginner is not able to do the movement. Second stage is when sometimes he can and sometimes not. Third is when he can do it. Only then we can speak about using it. The basic training method of yiquan is zhan zhuang. This way we can continuously reinforce proper reactions, by using focus and mental induction. We can notice problems and overcome them. The developing of the proper form of generating strength, which can be used in fighting, is very fast this way. Without this training, when you stand in front of opponent, you "lose fighting ability". The practice of sports training proves, that if you want to do something fast from the first time, you are not able to do it. So learning a new movement should start from slow movement, from non-movement to movement. This is how it is in our martial art.

Learning a martial art, you should not only have some knowledge of biology and anatomy, but also of physics, mechanics. You should study such areas as: lever, screw motion, friction, sliding, triangle of forces, balance of forces, object of force etc.. Only this way, and practicing diligently you can achieve results in yiquan. You should use common sense, taking science as basis, continuously drawing conclusions from experience. This way progress will be possible.

This was only a short look at the issue of scientific character of yiquan.

III. THE CONTENTS OF YIQUAN TRAINING.

The main training methods of yiquan are: zhan zhuang, shi li (and shi sheng), zou bu, fa li, tui shou and san shou.

Zhan zhuang is basic training method of yiquan. There are two variants: health zhuang and combat zhuang. This is a training method without external movement. Health zhuang accents mind training. Mind commands body. Mind is focused, body is relaxed, breath is natural. Combat zhuang gives basis for fighting training. Having some basis, thanks to health zhuang, you work on the developing of feeling of "antagonistic forces" ("antagonistic forces" can be to some extent understood as mutual relation of aspects of relax and tension of various parts of body, there is high coordination between mind and body, body and outside, you can better use abilities of mind and body). This is called holistic force (which means balance,

harmony of forces and feelings of forces in all directions). Zhuang which servers seeking this force is called combat zhuang. Although those two variants of zhuang are different, they are closely related. If you practice only for health, there is no need to learn combat postures. But combat postures also help to improve health. So the two gorups shouldn't be separated.

Zhan zhuang is the core of yiquan. Using mind activity, you are "seeking force in lack of force", "movement in non-movement". This is a method which serves developing and preparing to use the "holistic force". Practice proves that this kind of exercises enables effectively developing natural human abilities.

In yiquan, we treat relax and tension as a pair of contradictions on which body movement is based. Such attributes as speed, strength, agility, coordination, ablity to receive punches, are closely related to the question of relax and tension. It can be said that yiquan training is about mastering and using relax and tension. This is not only physical relax and tension, but also, and foremost the relax and tension in mind. The work of muscles is leaded by nervous system. And nervous system is affected by concious mind. Mind is most important. Yiquan stresses use of mind (yi).

Zhan zhuang is basic training method of yiquan. We practice relax and tension. First you learn relax, then changes between relax and tension, to achieve harmony between them. We try to be "relaxed, but not loose, tense, but not stiff". In such a state blood can flow freely, metabolism improves, all organs work in harmony.

Through zhan zhuang practice we achieve high level of coordination of whole body. All limbs and whole body become 'linked', creating one whole. "When some part is moving, there is no part which is not moving". When you achieve some stage in your practice, you feel agility and coordination of whole body. You develop "springy strength" of whole body. "Let there will not be a part of body which is not like a spring" (any part of body should be able to issue force in springy way, so you can use it in fight).

Shi li (testing strength) is zhan zhuang extended in space. You shouldn't seek force to forcefully. Slow movement is better than fast. "Seek non-movement in movement", then "seek speed in subtle movevement". You should check if "when some part is moving, there is no part which is not moving", if you have this holistic force developed by zhan zhuang. If in movement you can maintain the feeling of strength, harmony and naturality, you create conditions to be able to issue force freely, in any situation.

Fa li is ability of effective issuing force. Zhan zhuang and shi li serve to create conditions for issuing of force, so you can use it freely in any situation. This is great advantage of yiquan.

Zou bu (walking steps) is also known as moca bu (friction steps). This is a training method, where steps are done in the same way as shi li. The demands are: "When upper part is

moving, lower part is naturally following, when lower part is moving, the upper part is naturally leading". In movement you try to keep balance and coordination, so you can issue force in any moment.

Tui shou (pushing hands) and san shou (free hands), is practical fighting training.

Tui shou is embodiment of shi li and zou bu. You can say that it is shi li with partner. Tui shou training serves preparing for the situation, when there is contact with opponents arms - you can control him and attack effectively. San shou is crystallization of all training methods of yiquan, it is a way of direct checking your skill.

Above were described main training methods of yiquan.

ZHANG CHAO
I'M A BEGINNER
Translated from chinese by Andrzej Kalisz

I'm a wushu enthusiast from Heilongjiang province. I've been practicing sanda before. I didn't know much about yiquan, apart from what I read in "Wuhun" martial arts magazine. At beginning of 2000 I took a few days leave and went to Beijing to start learning yiquan at Zongxun Wuguan school. This is where I got some understanding of yiquan.

Yiquan's most basic training method is zhan zhuang. When I first started doing zhan zhuang it was very difficult for me, and I felt very uncomfortable. I became tired very soon, and started feeling a lot of pain. Master Yao explained that it was absolutely normal reaction of body. So time is needed, before you get rid of those unpleasant feelings. It turned out that after just 2 days of practice, the pain and fatigue diminished, and I could practice much longer. There appeared new feeling, especially in my palms. When I started the exercises my palms were cold, but then, when I used proper mental attitude, they were gradually becoming warmer. Afterward I got feeling as if my arms were floating in air. Then those feelings started expanding for my whole body. There appeared a feeling of my body as a unity. During shi li practice, some of feeling which I got in zhan zhuang became stronger. The slower I was doing the exercise, the more I was concentrated, and the stronger were the feelings.

According to master Yao you must think a lot, when you are learning a martial art. You shouldn't just blindly repeat the exercises. I could notice, and some training-mates who started learning yiquan at the same time as me had the same opinion, that in yiquan you can learn basics very quickly. Also first results of practice appear very soon. But if you want to move to higher levels, you need the ability of comprehension.

Although my stay in Beijing was short, I derived great benefit. I found that yiquan is not something contrary to sanda or boxing. It is rather taking sanda or boxing to a higher plane. This is a martial art based on science. This is a system which gives you chance to use all your natural abilities.

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E-mail: public@yiquan.pl*

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WWW.YIQUAN.PL**