

Journal of The College of Chinese Martial Arts

www.taiji.net

Volume 1
January 2010



Yang Zheng Guo the son of Yang Chen Fu

www.taiji.net

Published in London by
The College of Chinese Martial Arts

British Library Cataloguing in publication Data
A catalogue record for this title is available from The British Library

First Published January 2010

Copyright © 2010 Paul Brecher

Paul Brecher asserts his moral right to be identified as
the author of this work.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, electrostatic, magnetic tape, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Disclaimer

All training should be under the supervision of a qualified instructor of the College of Chinese Martial Arts. All techniques, theories, training methods, and any other information contained in any part of this book are presented for information purposes only! No liability whatsoever will be accepted, by the author or publisher for any damage or injuries that may arise from the use or misuse of information contained in this book.

Index

Page 4Editors Note

Page 5.....Interview with Yang Zheng Guo

Page 9.....The Death Touch

Page 13.....Ancient Martial Arts Texts

Page 20....End Note

Editors Note

I would like to welcome you to the first edition of The Journal of The College of Chinese Martial Arts. This journal is produced monthly and is free.

The purpose of this publication is to make available information about the Chinese martial arts and related subjects so that all those people with an interest can increase their knowledge and so gain more from their training.

Each edition will contain a mix of interviews, articles, analysis of ancient texts, discussions about various styles and principles that are common to all styles.

Good luck in your training

Paul Brecher

Founder & Chief Instructor of The College of Chinese Martial Arts

An Interview with Yang Zheng Guo Conducted by Paul Brecher in 2005

This interview originally appeared in the book,
A Martial Arts Journey Part 2

I was exploring China searching out and training with some great martial artists, some well known in the west and some only famous within China. I was very fortunate to have as my guide the great travel writer David Leffman, who speaks fluent Chinese and has been visiting China for over twenty years. He also has many contacts in Chinese martial arts society.

Through David's friend C. S. Tang the top student of Ho Ho Choy we were put in contact with Yang Zong Jie who was the editor of Yong Nian Tai Chi Magazine and knew all the local tai chi people and places of interest. He took us to the town of Handan to meet Yang Zheng Guo the son of Yang Chen Fu.

We were warmly welcomed by Yang Zheng Guo in to his front room, we gave him the bags of food, that we had been recommended by Yang Zong Jie would be an appropriate gift to bring.

Yang Zheng Guo offered us tea and invited us to sit down.

There was a large book case against the main wall and on the top shelf was a statue of an eagle then a large picture of his father Yang Chen Fu then a picture of his uncle Yang Shao Hu and then a larger picture of his great grandfather Yang Lu Chan and then a picture of his grandfather Yang Jiang Hu and then a statue of a horse.

On the next shelf down was a photograph of his mother and a separate photograph of the whole family showing him together with his father Yang Cheng Fu.



Paul Brecher with Yang Zheng Guo

With both Yang Zong Jie and David Leffman acting as translators I asked seventy eight years old Yang Zheng Guo about his families history, he pointed to the photos and said:

“There was never any photographs taken of Yang Lu Chan and that the picture of him is actually a reconstruction based on the picture of Yang Shao Hu.”

(David said later that when he had mentioned this to C.S.Tang many weeks later that CS had explained more about the story. Apparently someone said many years ago that they had a picture of Tung Hai Chuan the creator of Pa Kua (Bagwa) and so there was great pressure for there also to be a picture of Yang Lu Chan, the creator of Tai Chi Chuan. In reality Yang Lu Chan looked a lot like his son Yang Pan Hou but Yang Pan Hou had a very serious and intense countenance. So they decided to base the photo of Yang Lu Chan on his grandson Yang Shao Hu’s expression which was more serene instead).

Yang Zheng Guo continued that “Yang Chen Fu and Yang Shao Hu studied Middle Frame with their father Yang

Jiang Hu and Yang Shao Hu studied Small Frame with his uncle Yang Pan Hou. Yang Shao Hu invented a new Small Frame which was very fast and explosive. Between 1920 and 1930 he went to teach martial arts in Nanjing and Hangzhou.”

“Yang Shao Hu died aged 68 in Wuxi and was buried in 1930. In 1937 Yang Chen Fu and Yang Shao Hu’s bodies were taken back to the family grave yard near Gwan Fu Town in Yong Nian Province.”

I asked Yang Zheng Guo if he could correct my Yang Style Tai Chi Long Form. He said he would, so I went through it slowly.

Zheng Guo said “No mistakes, not bad”.

Yang Zheng Guo then demonstrated his fathers form and said that this is what his father taught all his children.

His movements where calm and smooth and wonderful to watch, I hope to be as good when I am 78 years old.

It was a great honour to have been drinking tea and talking and training with the son of Yang Cheng Fu.

When we left he walked with us for a while. We then all shook hands and said farewell.

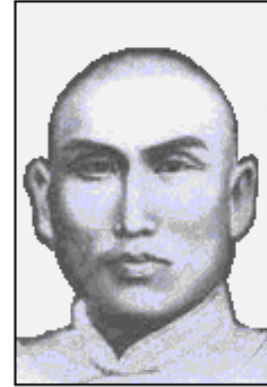
As we left I turned around and took a photo of him standing outside his home.



Yang lu chan 1799- 1872



Yang jian hou 1839- 1917



Yang pan hou 1837- 1892



Yang shao hou 1862- 1929



Yang Cheng Fu
1883-1936

These pictures clearly show how the picture of Yang Lu Chan was based on the image of his grandson Yang Shao Hou with the hat of Yang Jian Hou ! However Yang Zheng Guo said that yang Lu Chan looked more like his son Yang Pan Hou.

The picture of Yang Lu Chan is accepted by many people as being authentic, it just shows that without proper research things are accepted without question. In martial arts (and in life !) it is so important to find the truth.

An Explanation of The Death Touch and The Delayed Death Touch !

by Paul Brecher 2010

This information is from The College of Chinese Martial Arts Training Manual.

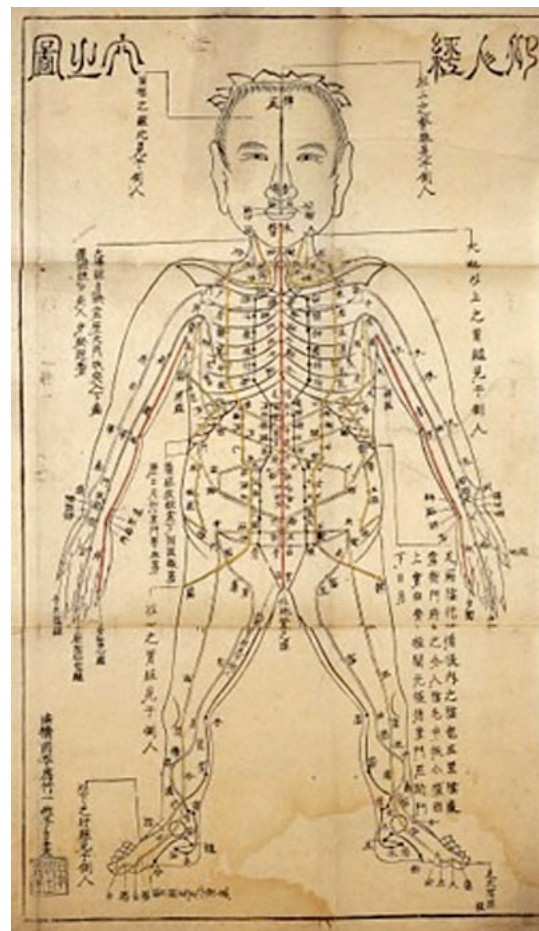
In the Chinese martial arts there is an expression, 'The Delayed Death Touch'. This sounds quite dramatic but is really not a mystical skill rather it is just a problem of language.

Instead of people quite simply saying that a combatant after the fight later died from their injuries, such as internal bleeding, or organ failure due to major trauma, people start saying they died due to a "delayed death touch" !

There are no "death touches" but there are plenty of death strikes. If enough force is used then strikes to the temple, neck, throat and heart will all cause death.

When discussing striking these areas, martial artists talk

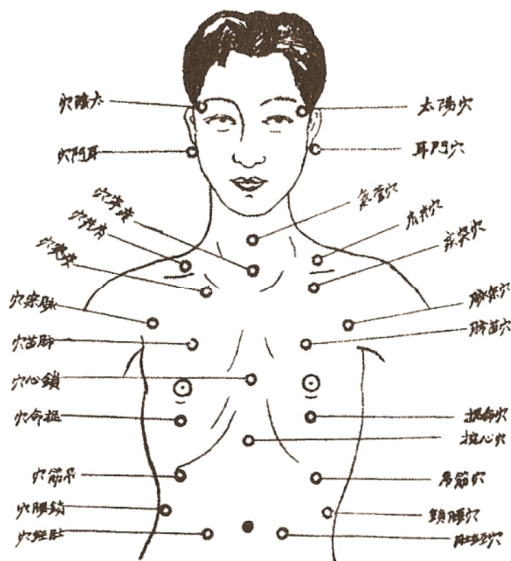
about their locations by referring to the acupuncture points that are on those locations.



An old Chinese acupuncture chart

Some people ask if an acupuncture point is so small, how can we hit such a tiny target on a moving opponent?

Well, we are using the acupuncture points to describe general areas of the body. If we are in that general area we will get a result even if we are not exactly right on the acupuncture point.



A sketch of the acupuncture points that are over vulnerable parts of the body from a 1920's martial arts training manual.

For example there is an area on the right side of the torso that is over the liver and thoracic diaphragm near the floating rib. So if a person was

to strike this area it would do a lot of damage, as the acupuncture points Liver 14, Gall Bladder 24 and Spleen 16 are all over this area. So yes, if one of these points was hit exactly it would have a very big effect.

However, if this general area was hit then it would still be very damaging because the liver and thoracic diaphragm would be injured. This could cause shock, pain, collapse, difficulty to breath and even unconsciousness if struck hard enough.

So the basic level of the use of acupuncture points is a type of code to describe target areas.

For example, instead of saying we strike to the throat we say Conception Meridian Point Number 22, (CV 22). For the solar plexus area we say Conception Meridian Point Number 14 (CV 14) and for the temple which is the thinnest part of the skull, we say Gall Bladder Meridian Point Number 3 (GB 3).

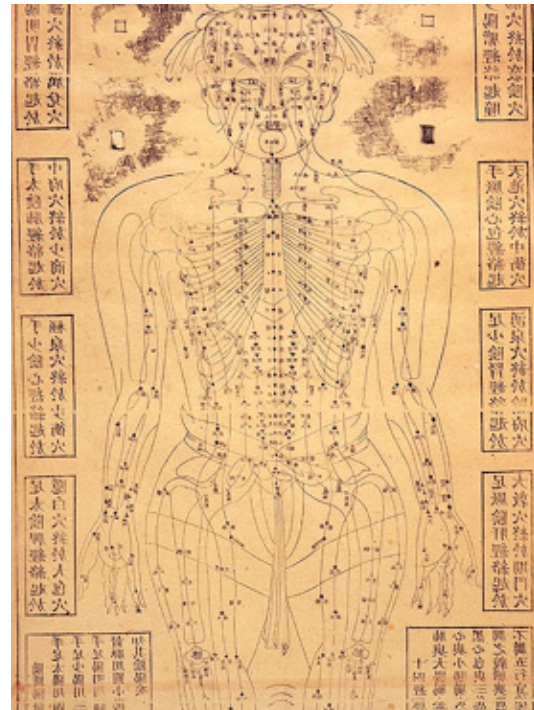
We use the acupuncture point names to describe vulnerable locations but we are not attacking the acupuncture points on the surface of the skin rather we are attacking the vulnerable anatomical parts of the body that are under that location.

The situation is a bit confused by these acupuncture points being referred to in other ways such as death point strikes, blood stop point strikes, restricted air point strikes, paralyse point strikes and faint points. Yes when they are hit they can cause these effects however they are all acupuncture points.

So beginners get the basic idea, they are taught to attack areas that are not death strikes but will definitely reduce that opponent's ability to attack or re attack, such as the eyes, groin and the joints.

Intermediates are taught the more dangerous areas to strike that could cause paralysis,

unconsciousness and death, which are mainly on the throat, neck and head (CV 22, CV 23, ST 9, St 10, SI 16, LI 17, LI 18, GV 15, GV 16, BL10, GB 20 and GB 3).



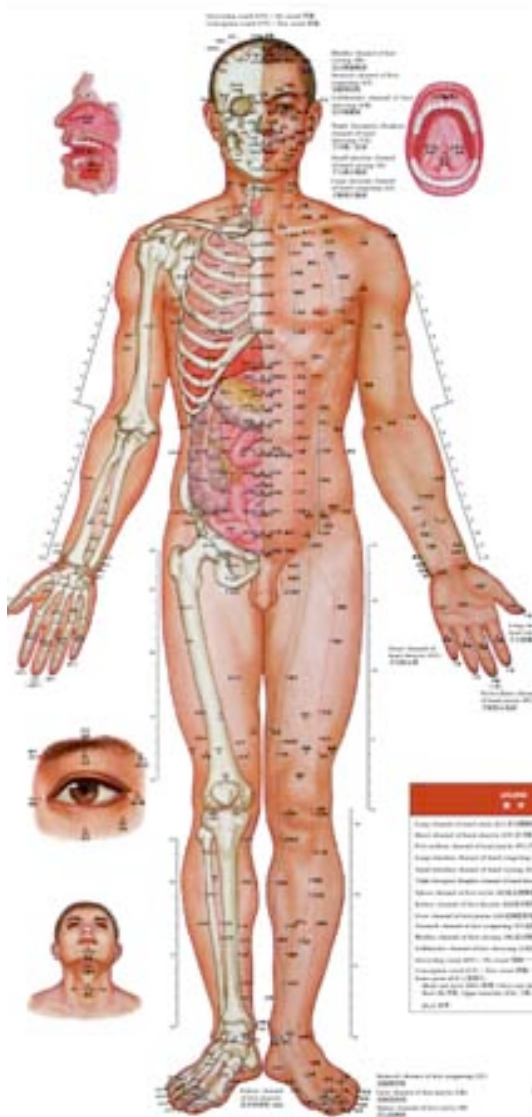
An old Chinese acupuncture chart

There is an advanced level of the use of acupuncture points which is beyond using them to damage or kill the opponent.

Acupuncture points are used by acupuncturists to heal people! After many years of learning how to take a person apart, it is necessary, if one wants to have balance in one's

life, to know how to put them together again. Also, martial artists can use acupuncture to heal any injuries to themselves or their students so that they can keep on training.

針灸穴位掛圖
英漢對照



A modern Chinese acupuncture chart

There is just one more thing that needs to be mentioned about striking the acupuncture points. There is the often repeated misunderstanding that certain points will only work if struck at a particular time of day.

This is not true, all the acupuncture points on the body work all the time which is how it is possible for acupuncturists to treat patients at any time.

There is also the more obvious explanation. If we are striking GB 3 because it is over the temple, the thinnest part of the skull that could fracture when hit, then the time of day is not important. GB 3 will always be over the temple and the temple will always be a weak point on the skull.

The same is true for all the other points I have mentioned: they will always be over the same anatomical weak points.

www.taiji.net

Chinese Martial Arts Historical Texts by Paul Brecher in 2010

This information is from The College of Chinese Martial Arts Training Manual.

There are various documents from ancient China which are detailed explanations of various martial arts styles which contain the same postures and principles that we have in Tai Chi Chuan, Pa Kua Chang and Wutang Shan Chuan today, but are not about these styles.

So we have textual evidence that Tai Chi Chuan, Pa Kua Chang and Wutang Shan Chuan are actually developments on much earlier martial arts systems. And the texts about these systems reveal them to be comprised of a variety of even earlier systems.

This may have been obvious to some and a revelation to others. To discuss these texts, is not only to show that Chinese internal martial arts have a real history and are the

results of efforts by people like you and me to develop systems that give realistic skills, but also because these old texts contain such a wealth of valuable information about how to practice Chinese Martial Arts.

Not to mention them would be to miss out on some key principles that can help the student give depth and substance to their art.

An example of the great antiquity of what we think of as recent martial arts principles can be found in Sun Tzu's classic text, The Art of War, which some people say may be dated to as far back as the sixth century BC.

It is a clear step-by-step guide on how to win large scale confrontations, full of every conceivable type of warfare

imaginable: battle field maneuvers, siege warfare and espionage.

In this book it states:

I allow the enemy to initiate the attack, but my blow lands first.

Just a little bit later, around 2350 years ago, the Taoist philosopher Chuang Tzu wrote:

I move only after he does, but my sword lands first.

And in the Tai Chi classics written about 160 years ago it says:

**If your opponent does not move, you do not move,
If the opponent makes the slightest move, you move first.**

So clearly we can see that what was thought of as a concept from Tai Chi Chuan for one-to-one fighting was originally a concept from battlefield tactics and was not

a closely guarded secret or a revolutionary idea.

Rather it was a well established strategy that is at least two thousand years old which was incorporated into the Chinese Internal Martial Arts because it worked.

In this chapter, through textual comparisons, I will also show that Tai Chi Chuan, Pa Kua Chang and Wutang Shan Chuan did not appear in a vacuum but are the inevitable consequence of a long history of research and development over many thousands of years.

They are the culmination of not only the combination of martial arts with chi kung, but also with large scale military strategy and what we now call TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine), and the naturalistic philosophy of Taoism.

By Taoism I am not referring to the religion of Taoism, which was partly a reaction to the introduction of Buddhism into China from India, but

rather to the philosophy that we are part of nature and should understand its ways to better understand ourselves.

For example: dress warmly in the winter and be in the shade during the midday summer heat: eat more fruit and vegetables in the summer to cool and hydrate the blood and eat more meat in the winter to have the energy to fight the cold, (fish is good all year round).

Try and go to sleep early and rise up early; be in tune with the natural cycles and understand the ebb and flow of life. Beginners feel as if they are in a boat being carried by the wind and tide, but at an advanced level, when one knows how to sail the ocean of life, it is possible to tack against the wind.

Essentials of the Classic of Pugilism Published in 1584 by General Chi Chi Kuang 1528 -1587

Before Tai Chi Chuan and Pa Kua Chang were invented,

there was another style, created by General Chi Chi Kuang. It combined 16 other styles, some very ancient, General Chi used this combination style to train his troops.

What is interesting about this style is that at least 29 of the postures of this system later appear in the Old Chen Family Style of Tai Chi and the Old Yang Family Style of Tai Chi, and many of the movements are also in Pa Kua Chang.

Some of these postures are:

Single Whip
Golden Cockerel Stands on One Leg
High Pat on Horse
Step Up and Form 7 Stars
Penetration Punch
Immortal Points the Way to Heaven
Double Dragon Palm
Fishes in Eight
Double flying Front Kick
Parting The Wild Horse's Mane
Sparrow hawk flies to Heaven
Spear the Armor
Shoulder Strike

So it looks like Tai Chi Chuan and Pa Kau Chang have their origins in a style that was for military training and was a composite style taken from many different sources.

The following pictures from Essentials of the Classic of Pugilism by General Chi Chi Kuang show some of the movements that are also in Tai Chi Chuan.



In the Old Yang Style Tai Chi Long Form this is movement 19, Shoulder Strike



In the Old Yang Style Tai Chi Long Form this is movement 15, Double Dragon Palm



In the Old Yang Style Tai Chi Long Form its movement 33, Hammer Hand Punch, it is also in the 4th form of The Wutang Shan Chuan.



In the Old Yang Style Tai Chi Long Form this is movement 221, Immortal Points The Way To Heaven



In the Old Yang Style Tai Chi Long Form this is movement 224, Pigeon Flies to Heaven. In Pa Kua Chang this movement is called Sparrow Hawk Pierces The Sky. This movement is from the 1st and 2nd forms of Wutang Shan Chuan.



In the Old Yang Style Tai Chi Long Form this is Movement 214, Neck Break Punch. It is in the 5th Wutang Shan Chuan form.

General Chi Chi Kuang's book was part of the Chen Family manuscripts that were uncovered in 1937, a strong indicator that Chen Tai Chi

Chuan is at least partly derived from this style.

Yang Lu Chan spent ten years studying with Chen Chang-hsing, so this text is important for practitioners of both Chen and Yang styles of Tai Chi.

I would go further and say all practitioners of Chinese martial arts whatever their style would find these writings interesting and useful.

Here are some ideas from Essentials of the Classic of Pugilism by General Chi, I have added my comments in brackets.

Eyes clear
Hands relaxed.

Kick to deceive
(and then)
Strike with fist

Strike high
(when he reacts high)
Strike low

(This deceptive manoeuvre is evoked in an ancient saying from Chinese books on military strategy, Sheng Dong

Ji Xi - Make a noise in the east then attack from the west.)

Attack the opponent's kicks
(This means do not defend yourself from his attacking limbs but attack them, as it is a well known concept in the Chinese Martial Arts to use the part of you that is closest to them to attack the part of them that is closest to you. So if they make the mistake of kicking you with a low kick, then kick their kick, if it is high then strike it.)

Lure the opponent in
Then turn on him

Deflect left
Attack right

With a single blow take the opponent's life
(this would only be possible if a very vulnerable part of the body was hit, so it is an oblique reference to acupuncture point striking)

Deliver repeated kicks
Beat the opponent
He is stunned and terrified

Arch the back

Advance without delay

(This is the C shaped back that releases the yang chi into the body to make us more powerful for combat, this shape of the back in ancient times was called the turtle shell back)

Follow the opponent

Then Strike

(Follow here means understand his movement before you strike)

He retreats

I follow up

(This is sometimes called chasing the opponent, sticking, following or keeping them on their back foot; it has many different names but the principle is the same. Once we have hit them we hit them again and again, as we want to have the opponent constantly in a state of reacting to our strikes. So it is we who are dictating the situation, it is we who are keeping them under pressure. The reason for having unrelenting forwards

movement is to end the fight as soon as possible with this opponent, so if there is another opponent approaching we do not have to fight two enemies at once.)

Show no mercy to your opponent. Win the day with superior skill

Strike like thunder echoing in the valley

(This means your fa jin – explosive strike should be sudden and powerful)

You must go beyond postures and technique.

(Eventually you will know what the martial arts are about and you will know yourself. With this deep understanding you can have any move expressed in any way you like and it will still be correct, you can even express a move that you have never been taught and it will still be correct).

[**www.taiji.net**](http://www.taiji.net)

End Note

I hope you have enjoyed the first edition of The Journal of The College of Chinese Martial Arts and I hope you are enjoying your martial arts training.

Whether you are training for health, self defence or self development I wish you great success and hope that this journal can contribute information that will be useful to you on your journey.

In the next edition there will be more interviews, articles, analysis of ancient texts, discussions about various styles and principles that are common to all styles.

Good luck in your training

Paul Brecher

Founder & Chief Instructor of The College of Chinese Martial Arts

www.taiji.net