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**Zhao Xian Ping the Senior Instructor
of Tai Chi in Yong Nian**

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Editors Note

Welcome to the fourth edition of The Journal of The College of Chinese Martial Arts.

The first article is an overview of my experiences of travelling in China which other martial artists who are considering going there might find interesting.

Next we have a look at the Tai Chi that is practiced in Yong Nian, the main town in the province of the same name. It is not far from the town of Gwan Fu where Yang Lu Chan used to live, (there is an article about Gwan Fu in the last issue of The Journal of The College of Chinese Martial Arts).

The final article is about the Jin and fa jin way of moving.

We hope you find these articles interesting and beneficial for you martial arts training.

The College of Chinese Martial Arts provides information for practitioners of all styles so that all students can benefit.

Good luck in your training

Paul Brecher

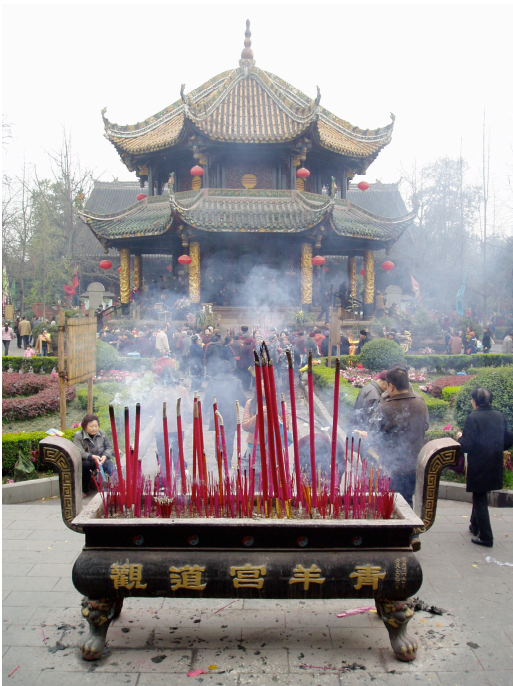
Founder & Chief Instructor of The College of Chinese Martial Arts

An Overview of Travelling in China

by Paul Brecher

This article originally appeared in 2005 in the book,
A Martial Arts Journey Part 2

In trying to describe China people have written volumes and volumes of books and still only scratched the surface. It is not possible to describe China in any one specific way because it is such a diverse and complex place.



Some people are fascinated by the food others by the architecture etc, so these next few paragraphs are in no way comprehensive but rather

just a glimpse of some of the things that caught my attention.



People carry swords and spears in the streets in the mornings on their way to the parks to practice martial arts. Many people spit in the streets and on the floor of buses.

Parents dress their young children up to look like tigers, tiger patterned jackets and tiger hats with tiger ears sown on because tigers will scare away bad spirits.



The Chinese government has decided that English should be taught throughout China because it is the international language of commerce and so wherever you go every one calls you a “Hellohello”, although they often also call you a “Gwailo” the Chinese term for a white foreigner which literally means “ghost man” or “white ghost”.

It was often the case that we were asked where we came from, when I said I was from England they said “ Ying Guo” which is what they call England. The direct translation of this expression is Hero’s Country, I liked this a lot.

One time we were in a rural town that had never had any foreigners visit it and people just came up very close and stared at us, as if we were some strange exotic animals that had been let out of a zoo.



China has gone from an agricultural society through an industrial revolution into a modern high tech economy in less than 20 years, so now all these co exist in a surreal way all at the same time.

Shops have both electronic calculators to work out the cost of the items customers are purchasing and they also have abacuses.

These are an ancient manual means of calculating numbers by moving wooden buttons on different sticks held together in a square shaped board, often the abacus is faster than the calculator.



I saw a Daoist Monk in a thousand year old temple practices his martial arts whilst chatting on a mobile phone, a five star luxury hotel standing alone surrounded by miles of rice paddies and in one

town a collection of ramshackle old wooden houses with tiny winding alleyways surrounded by a forest of shiny brand new skyscrapers.

You can sit for hours in a bamboo chair in an open air tea house in a city park and watch the world go by. People are playing the ancient game of majong, drinking from tea cups that are constantly refilled and playing card games. Others are reading the papers or just chatting about life.



In China old people are integrated into society, they are in the parks in the mornings doing Tai Chi and

Ba Gua, they are having dim sum in the restaurants and looking after their grandchildren during the day so the parents can go to work.

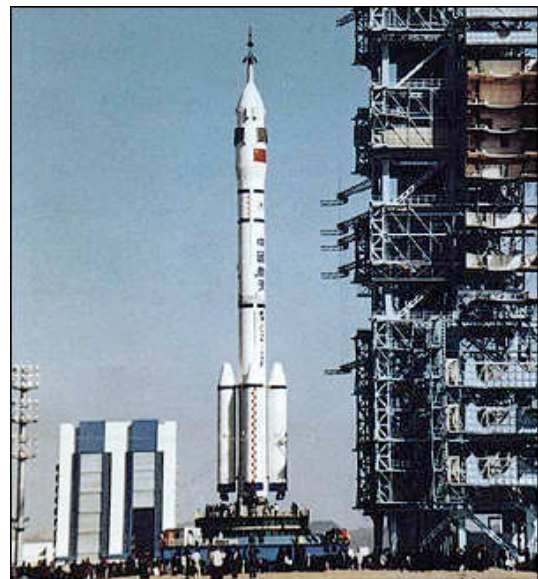


and their personal name last. I wonder with the rapid spread of capitalism throughout China how long this ancient idea of others first will last.

China is still largely an agricultural country using methods that are thousands of years old, people are barefoot in the rice paddies and carrying their produce to market in wooden baskets hanging from both ends of a pole across their shoulders. However along side this aspect of their four thousand year old culture is the recent amazing success of the Chinese Space Program.

The Chinese way of looking at themselves and life is the greater to the smaller, they do not put themselves first, they put themselves last. So an address would begin China, then the province, then the town, then the street, then the house and then last of all the name of the person.

When they write the date they put the year, then the month, then the day. When they write their names they put their family name first



In October 2003 they put a man in space, instead of calling him an astronaut like the Americans or a cosmonaut like the Russians they called him a taikonaut. Taikong means space in Chinese and naut means sailor in ancient greek.

Whilst in space he ate spicy-and-sour shredded pork and sliced chicken, and eight treasure rice and he drank Chinese herbal tea.



The Chinese like their food fresh, outside restaurants are cages filled with a huge variety of creatures soon to be someone's dinner. The Chinese eat, chickens, ducks and geese, rabbits, cane rats and snakes. Scorpions, centerpeads,

cats and dogs and basically anything with legs apart from tables and chairs and anything with wings apart from aeroplanes.

There was an advert on TV that said “Hey People when your pets are ill don’t eat them, take them to the vet instead” !

China is definitely not a perfect place, it is possible to find fault with many aspects of Chinese life and with many of its governments policies. However this article is not to praise or condemn China, rather just to recount my experiences so that other martial artists with a martial arts interest in China can be better informed.



Personally I found China to be a wonderful and interesting collection of the most amazing and complex sights and sounds. The Chinese people are full of optimism and are rebuilding their country and their economy with a breathtaking enthusiasm.

Everything you can imagine is being brought and sold in the shops and in the streets. China has the worlds second largest economy, its sort of capitalism but with Chinese characteristics. They are spending billions of pounds each year building roads, railways and a communications networks.

All the bus and train stations have x-ray machines to check that peoples luggage does not contain fireworks. Whole trains have accidentally exploded in the past because people used to smoke and flick the ash on to someone's luggage not realising it was a box of giant firecrackers.

China has 1.3 billion people mostly packed into the eastern half of the country, it is a very busy, crowded and noisy place but it works.

There is such an amazing feeling of rushing to embrace the future.

Every large city in China is building an underground train system, overhead flyover roadways and gigantic new housing projects and vast factories, almost any and everything is now “Made in China”. China is actually leading the world, its just that the rest of the world has not noticed yet.



In fact China is rushing ahead so fast to embrace the future that it does not seem to be just eight hours ahead of London but rather several decades.

Tai Chi in Yong Nian by Paul Brecher

This article originally appeared in 2005 in the book,
A Martial Arts Journey Part 2

The main town in Yong Nian county in Hebei province was called Yong Nian town, Yong Nian literally means Eternal Years.

In China the main town in a province is often referred to by the same name as the county its in but may also have another name.



Paul Brecher in the shadow of Yong Nian Town Gate

It was here that C.S.Tang had arranged for a friend of his called Mr Ma to meet us but when we arrived we were met by a Mr Yang Zong Jie instead. He explained that

his friend Mr Ma could not make it and had asked him if he could help us. This was a great development because it turns out that Mr Yang Zong Jie was the editor of Yong Nian Tai Chi Magazine and knew all the local Tai Chi people and places.

Mr Yang Zong Jie had very kindly already arranged a hotel for us near the centre of town. Then after we had checked in we had an interesting conversation with Mr Yang Zong Jie about Tai Chi.

I asked him about the history of tai chi, he said:

“There is the outer school known as Wai Jia centred around Shaolin Song Shan and the inner school known as Nei Jia originating in Wudang. The Nei Jia lineage is, Zhang San Feng - Wang Tsung Yueh - Jiang Fa and then Chen Chan Sing who taught Yang Lu

Chan who taught in Beijing from 1850 to 1860.

He said that 70 years later Yang Lu Chans descendants taught and then it became popular at this time. People wanted to know the history and so the Yang family said that Yang Lu Chans teacher was from Chen Chau Coh (Chen Family Village).

In 1929 the Chens taught in Beijing but it was Pao Chui (Cannon Fist) not Tai Chi. Then the next year the Chens returned to Beijing and said they were teaching Tai Chi and that it was an older version than Yang Lu Chans.

So in 1929 in Chen Village is the first record of Tai Chi. The Chens in 1929 then started to change their Pao Chui to make it more like the Tai Chi they had seen in Beijing.

Yang Shao Hu's style of Tai Chi was very explosive and known as Quick Frame later his younger brother Yang Chen Fu created a softer version."

(Mr Yang Zong Jie said he had a friend in Harbin who practised the

Quick Frame of Yang Shao hu, unfortunately I was unable to meet him)

Mr Yang Zong Jie said " Today the Yang Chen Fu style was the most popular then the Yang Ban Hou and the least popular was the Yang Shao Hu style." He said "Yang Shao Hu had grandsons who were alive today and in their thirties but they did not practice Tai Chi."

He said in Yong Nian Tai Chi was first called Soft or Sticky Boxing before it was called Tai Chi. The Soft referred to how a person should be when practising the forms when by themselves and the Sticky referred to how they should be when they fight.

I asked him about hitting the acupuncture points when attacking an opponent, he said of course every Chinese martial art has its own version of acupuncture point striking including Yang Style Tai Chi.

The next morning at six o'clock Mr Yang Zong Jie had arranged for us to meet the top Tai Chi

instructors in the open area in the centre of the town, it was called the Yong Nian Tai Chi Town Square and had a huge Yin Yang diagram about fifty feet across in the centre of the square.



Yong Nian Tai Chi Town Square

When we arrived we saw lots of people doing what looked like the Yang Chen Fu version of the Long Form, they were being led through it by one of the Yong Nian Tai Chi instructors.

Mr Yang Zong Jie introduced us to the group of instructors and they were all very welcoming and pointed to Mr Zhao Xian Ping and explained that he was the most senior instructor.



Zhao Xian Ping and Paul

He had with him his top students who were warming up and training with swords and spears.

Mr Zhao Xian Ping learnt from Zhai Wen Zhang who was a student of Yang Zhao Ling who was the son of Yang Feng Hou who was the older brother of Yang Ban Hou who was the son of Yang Lu Chan.

Mr Zhao Xian Ping also learnt from Zhai Wen Zhang who learnt from Han Xing Xian who learnt from Hao Wei Zhen who learnt from Li Yi Yu who learnt from Wu Yu Xiang who was a student of both Yang Lu Chan and Chen Ching Ping.

We explained we were very interested in the Yong Nian Yang Style of Tai Chi and that we all practised Tai Chi and were on a journey to find out more.

Mr Zhao Xian Ping called forward one of his students who then performed an incredible form, Mr Zhao Xian Ping said it was the Yong Nian Tai Chi Snake Ground Form. This was an amazing form because it was done literally about two inches of the ground.



Snake Ground Form

It looked to me like a composite form of some movements from the Yang Family Style and the Chen Family Style of Tai Chi but with some extra fantastic acrobatics at the end, a kick and a flip and a summersault, it looked great.



Snake Ground Form



Snake Ground Form

Then the fa jin training method of the Yong Nian Giant Spear was demonstrated.

The spear was about twelve feet long and very, very heavy.

To lift it was hard enough, they were doing the most incredible type of body shake to get the spear to shake, a very impressive skill.



Yong Nian Great Spear Fa Jin Training method

We agreed to meet later in the day in the car park behind the hotel we were staying in to continue the exchange, (we had also been demonstrating various forms).

We went for a walk around Yong Nian town, almost all the doors of

the houses had pictures of a guardian warrior with a sword in his hand because the legend says one of the old emperors of China was suffering from nightmares and was advised to put up a guardian picture, he did and the nightmares stopped so now it is a common custom.

Also all the front doors of the houses face south for good luck (like the great wall of China) and when you walk through them you see a wall directly in front of you and have to take a ninety degree turn to enter the house.



This wall is called the spirit wall, and stops spirits entering the house because they can only go in straight lines.

When we met up in the car park we carried on exchanging forms and training methods and demonstrating applications and there was a great atmosphere of friendly exchange and a crowd gathered to watch.

Then Zhao Xian Ping and his students demonstrated their Yang Style Long Form, Yong Nian Practical Short Pau Chui Form, Yong Nian Fast Wrestling Form



Yong Nian Fast Wrestling Form



Yong Nian Fast Wrestling Form

Wu Yu Xiangs Long Form, Yong Nian Yang Style Large San Sau Two Person Fighting Set, Da Lu, Free fighting, Single and Double Pushing Hands both fixed and moving step, free hands applications and Chin Na locking and joint control and counter moves.

Mr Zhao Xian Ping explained some of the principles of Yong Nian Tai Chi he said that it had four pillars:

1. Stick to the opponent
2. Chi Na - Attack the joints
3. San Sau Fighting and Strikes
4. Healing like Acupuncture

He said Tai Chi was soft and slippery and that regular practice was necessary. He said that Shaolin fa jin and Yong Nian Tai Chi fa jin were different. With Tai Chi fa jin one needed to be more relaxed and have a deeper understanding of balance.

We all agreed to take a break for lunch. We were thinking about were to go for lunch when we were approached by a most attractive red silk clad chinese waitress.

She indicated for us to follow her down some corridors and then she opened a door to a private room and indicated for us to enter. Inside the room were all the instructors and their students who invited us in to join their big banquet. They were most warm and hospitable, they were sociable and friendly and talkative and brought out the Bai jiu (white spirit). I don't drink myself so when the toasting started David Leffman an experienced traveller in China bravely volunteered to avoid any loss of face by drinking double.

They welcomed us and everyone drank to that, then we thanked

them for their hospitality and everyone drunk to that and then there was a toast to friendship and then I cannot remember what the other toasts were for but there was a lot more drinking. Then David said “ Gan Bei” (dry cup) and turned over his glass after one of the toasts to show he had emptied it but a tiny drop came out so our hosts insisted that he have two more cups !

The main dish was a huge carp with spring onions and there were lots of other dishes, the most interesting were the thinly sliced lotus roots with chilly and the huge mountain of sweet cherry tomatoes covered in suger. Our hosts said “Eat, eat don't be polite”, this really characterised our time in Yong Nian and in China with all the people who we met, there was no formality, no pretence every one was just straight forwards and friendly.

During the meal I had a great discussion with Zhao Xian Ping about which acupuncture points to strike and he talked about the close relationship between Tai Chi and acupuncture.

Back in the car park after lunch we carried on our exchange. We did some forms and then Zhao Xian Ping and his students demonstrated the Yong Nian Yang Style Broadsword and the Yong Nian Yang Style Straight sword.



Yong Nian Broadsword



Yong Nian Straight sword

The strongest student then demonstrated the whole of the very impressive Yong Nian Long Spear Form, the power strength and skill to perform this type of spear training was impressive.

Earlier we had seen the fa jin training method for the long spear which was hard enough but to do the whole form was a rare feat of skill and strength. The great spear was about twelve foot long and was very very heavy.

It was very slightly flexible but to get a fa jin body shake to cause the whole spear to shudder and to make the spear tip vibrate was very hard to do. The Yong Nian Long Spear Form had about twenty five fa jin movements in it all together.

Zhao Xian Ping then demonstrated the Yong Nian Yang Style Tai Chi Staff Form, it was very smooth and flowing. Zhao Xian Ping stressed the importance of moving in such a way that the opponents strike missed you but you were in a position to hit him.



Yong Nian Staff



Yong Nian Staff

I was asked to demonstrate the Old Yang Style Tai Chi Staff Form. I said the staff that we use is shorter than the one they had, so one of

the students shot off on his tractor went and cut down a sapling came back flipped out his knife and whittled down the wood and produced a short staff, so I then demonstrated the Old Yang Style Tai Chi Short Staff Form.

The day ended on a high with everyone full of chi and very cheerful. The next morning we met in the Yong Nian Tai Chi Town Square and all did more Tai Chi forms and training methods together.

Zhao Xian Ping, his fellow instructors and his students had all been incredibly friendly and hospitable and they were all unbelievably tough people, very, very solid but also able to flow like snakes or water.



Yong Nian Tai Chi Town Square

The Jin and Fa Jin Way of Moving in Chinese Martial Arts by Paul Brecher 2010

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

Chinese Martial Arts Training

All Chinese Internal Martial Arts can be practiced in three different ways.

First is the **Chi (energy) Way of Moving**. This is slow with the whole body moving as a single unit, all the separate parts of the body moving in phase with each other, with attention on posture, structure and basic body mechanics and is how the Chinese internal martial arts are used for healing. The general alignment for the chi way is, the nose is over the navel the shoulders are over the hips. The elbows are over the knees and the hands are on the centreline.

With this way of moving it is usual to have some of the power coming from the legs pushing against the ground and for this force to be transferred into the hands. Also with this way of moving the idea of having a strong connection to the earth is emphasised, which is

sometimes called rooting or grounding. A form when practiced this way would be like a long slow sequence of chi kung healing movements.



Second is the **Jin (internal force) Way of Moving**. This is faster and more flowing, the body looks elastic, each part of the body is out of phase with each other, we move in a loose and heavy way with a noticeable time delay in the flow of power through the body, each segment of the body is moved by the previous segment like a snake, or a heavy chain that is used as a whip. This is how the Chinese internal martial arts are used for

fighting. With the jin way of moving the power comes from the rotation of the hips and the whole body has a coiling and spiraling type of power.

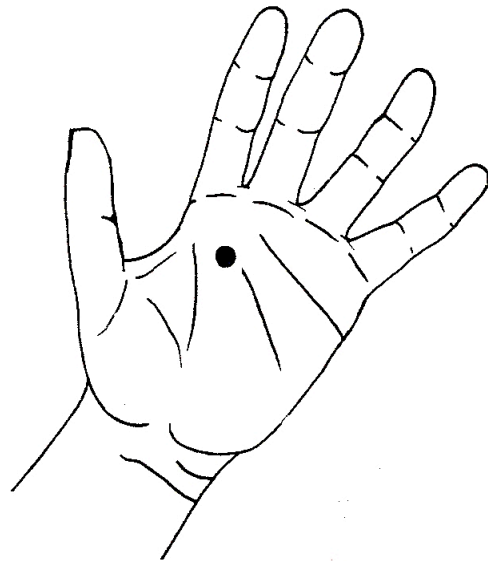
Third is the **Fa jin (explosive release of internal force) Way of Moving**. This is fast and furious with explosive movements of great power for acupuncture point strikes. In old martial arts manuals to try and convey the sudden and powerful nature of these strikes, they are compared to a cannon being fired, or thunder and lightning or a crossbow bolt being released.

Fa jin means an explosive release of internal force. The easiest way to generate and release this power is by turning the hips left – right – left or right – left – right. If we make sure that the elbow movement is a result of the hip movement then we can be sure that the power developed by the hip turn is successfully delivered into the hands.

At an advanced level the movement is initiated by releasing the chi energy from the lower tan tien energy centre in the lower belly just below and behind the navel at acupuncture point

conceptor vessel 3 and 4, (CV 3 and CV 4) and also from the spine at governing vessel 4, (GV 4). With fa jin the whole body shakes just like when a dog is shaking water off its fur, a sudden loose heavy rotating movement with great centrifugal force.

It is traditionally said that the chi flows from lower belly and lumbar vertebrae out to the hand at pericardium 8 (P 8) for hand strikes and to kidney 1 (K 1) for kicks.



Pericardium 8 (P 8)



Kidney 1 (K 1)

Before full fa jin is practiced it is possible to do the movements of fa jin but without full force, this is called soft fa jin. It is to ensure everything is correctly placed for a fa jin to happen but without the full amount of force being sent into the strikes. The hip turn is less dramatic so the resultant energy flow to the hands is less.

Once a move has been practiced as soft fa jin then full fa jin will happen naturally, once the energy has built sufficiently, true fa jin will happen of itself without effort, this is the natural way.

The part of the body that we are striking with could be the fist, elbow, shoulder, knee, head or foot but the origin of the power for these strikes will always be the same, the rotation of the hips.

Some people mistakenly try and use the chi way of moving which is based on the healing principles of chi kung for fighting, this does not work. The jin or fa jin way has to be trained if one want to be able to use the Chinese internal martial arts for fighting. This idea of the chi, jin and fa jin ways of moving apply to all of the Chinese internal martial arts.

The strikes of the three martial arts that I teach are all delivered with fa jin so to use them correctly first one must learn the jin way of moving. You cannot fa jin if you only know the chi way of moving.

To explain why one must learn the jin way if one wants to develop fa jin, imagine a whip. A slow movement of the handle is the chi way of moving a faster movement of the handle is the jin way; an even faster way is the soft fa jin; and the fastest and most sudden movement of the handle is the full fa jin way.

This sudden dramatic fast movement of the handle results in the tip of the whip cracking. This is full fa jin, the handle of the whip is the hips/spine and the tip of the whip is the hand.

If the handle was only moved slowly and carefully and gently (the chi way of moving), the tip of the whip would not crack no fa jin.

With the chi way of moving one's attention is on posture and structure. It is easy to add other chi kung principles such as opening and closing and the chi wave, both vertical and horizontal. With the chi way of moving, each part of the body is in phase with each other.

Some students want to use the forms as big chi kung healing movements, for them the chi way of moving is emphasised. Also some beginners without previous martial experience cannot grasp the jin way of moving so they are taught the chi way first.

With the jin way of moving one's attention is on elastic, loose heavy continuous flow and the out of phase way of moving. With the jin way of moving it is easy to add the other martial skills of acupuncture point striking and fa jin.

The chi way of moving will build up the chi, which is energy, while the jin way of moving will build up the jin which is internal force. When you have jin you can fa jin, which means an explosive release of internal force.



Here is a list of the main Principles of the Chi Way of Moving

Sung

Earth Chi and Leg Power

Rooting

Yin - Yang and Chi

Bone Breathing

Spine Power

Abdominal Breathing

Opening and Closing the Kwa

The Chi Wave - both vertical and horizontal

Lower and Upper Body Integrated Movement

Nose over navel, shoulders over hips, elbows over knees, hands on centre line.

Whole Body in Phase Power

Here is a list of the main Principles of the The Jin Way of Moving

Loose Heavy Power
Hip and Ribcage Rotation and Torque Force
Scapular Spring Force
Tendon Jin Elastic Force
Joint Sinew Jin Force
Intention Force
Connection Flowing Power
Smooth Circular Spiralling Power
Centrifugal and Centrepetal Hip Rotation Power
Yin Yang Palm Power
Squeezing Jin Power
'C' Back Power
Whole Body out of Phase Power
Counter Torque Power
Intention Force and Martial Mind Power

If a student was dedicated to their training and wanted to learn in the traditional way, then they would not only learn the forms and training systems of the style they had chosen, in the correct order but would also learn the ways of moving in the correct order as well.

At The College of Chinese Martial Arts students are free to learn any form from any style in any order with any way of moving they choose.

However I will list here the traditional order of the ways of moving and explain the reasons for them.

Chi Way of Moving
Jin Way of Moving
Soft Fa Jin Way of Moving
Full Fa Jin Way of Moving



First the student learns the chi way of moving, this is so they can have correct structure and correct basic coordinated whole body movement. Also it is going to enable them to build up their chi energy.

Next they would learn the jin way of moving, this would result in them flowing more smoothly and create a body that was elastic and vibrant with loose heavy power.

The next level would be the soft fa jin way of moving, this would give them the ability to practice the feeling of fa jin without doing it at full power.

Last of all would be the full fa jin way of moving, which is the ultimate martial way of moving. One's whole body comes alive as the rippling electric shock force of fa jin flows through the body and is released.

There are a few additional considerations about the different ways of moving that must be taken into consideration. If a person's energy is getting low then one should practice the chi way to build one's energy up again.

A person's energy could be low because they are old or recovering from illness or injury, it could be due to insufficient nutrition in their diet or because of some aspect of their lifestyle. Not enough deep sleep at the right time too much stress or insufficient access to nature and its healing energy.

People whose energy levels are too low should not practice the fa jin way as this is all about releasing one's energy; they should be conserving their chi. They should practice the chi way to build up their energy, and once their chi energy is up to a good level then they can once again practice the fa jin way.

In a conversation I had with eighty year old Han Hui Ming in the inner courtyard of Yang Lu Chan's house, he explained to me about chi exhaustion.



Paul with Mr Han Hui Ming

Han Hui Ming was a student of Li Wan Chang who was the student of Yang Ban Hou who was Yang Lu Chan's son. Han Hui Ming said that his teacher Li Wan Chang used to do fa jin the same way he had seen me do it and that Yang Ban Hou did fa jin the same way as well.

Han Hui Ming then demonstrated the Yang Style Long Form with the most incredible smooth even movement I have ever seen. It was such a well balanced very calm and quiet way of moving that it seemed as if the qualities of quietness and calmness were radiating from him and filling the courtyard.



Han Hui Ming then explained that this was the nei gung, internal work, and stressed that if you did too much fa jin you would be releasing too much energy and that it was especially important to conserve your chi with nei gung practice. He then demonstrated special nei gung and chi kung breathing exercise and emphasised the importance of being Sung, having no unnecessary tension, if one wanted to heal the body and mind.

He then very kindly agreed to demonstrate Tai Chi Chuan with fa jin. It was amazing to watch, he was eighty years old and still doing the most vigorous movements: inside crescent kicks, rushing forward and dropping down in to the movement called punch to the ground, and then leaping up into double jumping flying front kicks.

In China it is a popular custom to exchange business cards. On Mr Han's as well as his name and address it states his occupation....Fighter !

It is possible to check if one's chi levels are full by practicing the soft fa jin way and if, very quickly, the movements quite naturally all by themselves start becoming full fa jin movements then your chi level is definitely up.

In contrast if you can only manage to move the chi way and find it hard to even move the jin way let alone the soft fa jin way then your chi level is down.

There are two final observations to make, firstly there is a training method that we use whereby we only imply a movement but do not

actually do it. We imagine we are doing it and send the full amount of chi through our bodies to perform this move fully but we do not actually fully physically perform the strike. This results in the unused energy of the move staying in the body and so we have more energy in the body.

It is a technique for building up the chi. However this method should only be practiced in the chi way of moving and never in the jin, soft fa jin or full fa jin ways of moving.



The reason for this is that if we generate the force for a movement whilst flowing in the elastic dynamic faster jin way but do not release that force all the way through the body and out through the finger tips, then we are creating an energy block in the body. This obstruction will be uncomfortable and not beneficial.

If one tries to not fully express the strike when moving in the soft fa jin way or, more seriously, in the full fa jin way, then not only is it uncomfortable but could even result in pulled muscles and a feeling of disharmony within oneself.

The final observation is that we should only do full fa jin strikes from the jin or soft fa jin way of moving. It is wrong to try and suddenly do a full fa jin move when you have only been moving in the chi way.

This is because they are at the opposite ends of the scale of movement: the chi way of moving is slow and the full fa jin way is explosively fast. The chi way sedates the mind and body but the full fa jin way is like lightning, dramatic and sudden.

To go from a very passive, non aggressive, meditative, calm, fully relaxed almost self hypnotic way of moving into a fast, furious explosive way of moving is going to damage the body because it is mentally and physically unprepared.

However, if a person is running through a form in the jin or soft fa jin way, then the body is warmed up. It is flowing at a faster pace

and its elasticity is being trained, so to do full fa jin movements is easy, comfortable and natural.

These three main ways of moving that I have been explaining, chi, jin and fa jin, I consider to be the core principles of the Chinese internal martial arts. The chi way could be described as yin and the jin and fa jin ways as yang. In one's martial arts training one should have both Yin and Yang for balance.

The chi way is to use the principles of chi kung in our martial arts forms, which leads us to contemplate chi kung. By describing the areas that we strike on the opponent by the acupuncture points that are closest to them leads us into contemplating acupuncture. Using Dit Da Jou (Fall Hit Wine) to heal our injuries and for Iron Palm and Iron Body training encourages us to contemplate Chinese Herbal Medicine as well.

So we are training martial arts for fighting but they make us aware of Chi Kung, Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine which are outstanding healing systems. Some martial artists contemplate healing but take no action. I have trained in these healing areas and now practice and teach them as

well as the martial arts and feel more balanced within myself.

I have three martial arts systems for fighting (Wutang Shan Nei Jia Chuan, Tai Chi Chuan and Pa Kua Chang) and I have three healing systems (Chi Kung, Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine). So now I feel that I am living a balanced life, Yang Martial and Yin Healing complementing each other.

I recommend all practitioners of Chinese Martial Arts to also learn the Chinese Healing Arts as a way to have a more balanced and healthy life.



Now to return to the jin and fa jin way of moving, as once these have been understood then the strategy and tactics of the martial applications of the movements will work.

Without fa jin, or at least jin, in the strikes, the Chinese internal martial arts do not work for fighting, just like an arrow (fist) does not work unless it is fired from a bow.

In ancient China the bow and arrow was a weapon of immense power. It is therefore appropriate to use it as a metaphor for the power of the Chinese internal martial arts. The bow is the spine, the string is the tendons, the arrow is the arm, the arrowhead is the hand and the sharpness of the arrow point is our intention.

Different types of arrowheads where used to punch through different types of targets, flesh, bone, armour piercing etc and we have different hand shapes for different targets, blade hand, knife hand, cobra strike, immortals finger, tiger claw etc.



Any form of any style can be practiced in the three ways, chi, jin, fa jin or any combination of them that I have described (yes, even the external martial arts styles !). It should be remembered that a form is just a framework that one can use to express a wide variety of different principles.

Some people think that if a form comes from a particular style it must be practiced the chi way but a form from another style can only be practiced the jin way or the fa jin way. This is not true, any form from any style can be practiced in any of these three ways.

Another mistake that is often made is that people think that one style has a high stance and another a low stance, or that one style has large circles but another has small circles, or that one style has a straight spine, another a leaning spine and another a C shaped spine.

The truth is that any style can be done high or low, fast or slow, big or small, slow the chi way for healing, or fast the jin or fa jin way for fighting. With a straight vertical back for healing, or a C shaped back with an occasional lean for fighting. A punch or a kick can be done high or low, kept short or extended long, a movement could be implied but not expressed to cause the chi to stay internal to heal the body or it could be expressed to develop striking skill for martial power; a movement could have a wide variety of different applications for both fighting and healing.

Beginners have to be shown a basic way so that they can get the foundations of their training correct but at an advanced level there are no limits. The true spirit of the martial arts is unlimited.

A martial arts practitioner should not be thinking how a style should be practiced but rather, why are they training ?

If you are training to develop martial skill, then doing it the chi way will not help you achieve your goal. And of course if you were in weak health and tried to practice everything as fa jin it would exhaust you and so would be counter-productive.

A person must first know themselves who they are and what they want and what they actually need. Then one will know how to train, it is we who choose our own path; each person will be different and have their own path to follow, as we are each on different paths to the top of different mountains.

The training is also a Way to find yourself and to know and understand yourself. Even if you are not sure exactly in which direction you should be going the Chinese Internal Martial Arts can help to strengthen your body and

mind and so you can make your decisions from a place of calm stability.

So if you know what to do, then practice the Chinese Internal Martial Arts and if you do not know what to do, then, practice Chinese Internal Martial Arts !

The martial arts are a journey of adventure and discovery to find oneself and to find the Tao, a journey that has no limits. An individual has vast potential and the Tao is all encompassing, so how can martial arts training be narrow, limited and restricted ?

Only through dedicated regular training can the individual find the truth for themselves. The true spirit of the martial arts is to gain health and martial skill and to be on a journey of self and spiritual development.

The Chinese internal martial arts are a way to understand one's self and one's life through deep contemplation. When the individual has found their Way they can be closer to Tao, The Way.



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End Note

I hope you found the fourth edition of The Journal of The College of Chinese Martial Arts interesting and I hope that your martial arts training brings you good health, self defence and self development.

I wish you great success and hope that this journal can contribute information that will be helpful to you on your martial arts journey.

More interviews, articles, analysis of ancient texts, discussions about various styles and principles in the next edition.

Good luck in your training

Paul Brecher

Founder & Chief Instructor of The College of Chinese Martial Arts

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