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Yuan Chu Cai

internal and external training

MEI HUA ZHUANG



**Yuan Chu Cai**

**MEI HUA ZHUANG**

**Poles of Plum Blossom**

**FREE TRIAL VERSION**



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**Yuan Chu Cai**  
**MEI HUA ZHUANG**  
**Poles of Plum Blossom**

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# Contents

## Preface

### **I** WAI GONG and NEI GONG. Differentiation between “Internal” and “External” Mastery.

#### Section 1. NEI GONG. Internal mastery.

- (1) Persistence and carefulness
- (2) Concentration
- (3) Training QI
- (4) Rearing QI
  - (a) Method of transformation of “emptiness” into “fullness”
  - (b) Method regulating fullness
- (5) Streamlining QI breath

#### Section 2. WAI GONG. External Mastery.

- (A) DA SHA DAI. Striking at a Sand Bag.
- (B) JI MU REN. Attacking a Wooden Dummy.
- (C) GUN SHA TONG. Rolling a Tube with Sand.

### **II** YING GONG. Mastery of Hardness.

- (A) ROU DAO FA. Technique of Massage and Rubbing.
- (B) QIAO DA FA. Technique of Tapping.

### **III** QING GONG. Mastery of Lightness.

- (A) ZHUANG DING ZOU BI. Grasping Nails and Climbing up a Wall.
- (B) ZOU SUO. Walking on a Rope.
- (C) YUE ZHUANG. Jumping from one Pole to Another.

## **IV MEI HUA ZHUANG. Poles of Plum Blossom.**

### **Section 1. TIAN PAN ZHUANG. Celestial Poles.**

- (A) DU LI ZHUANG. Single Pole.
- (B) ER LONG ZHUANG. Poles of Two Dragons.
- (C) SAN XING ZHUANG. Poles of Three Stars.
- (D) SI MEN ZHUANG. Poles of Four Gates.
- (E) MEI HUA ZHUANG. Poles of Plum Blossom.

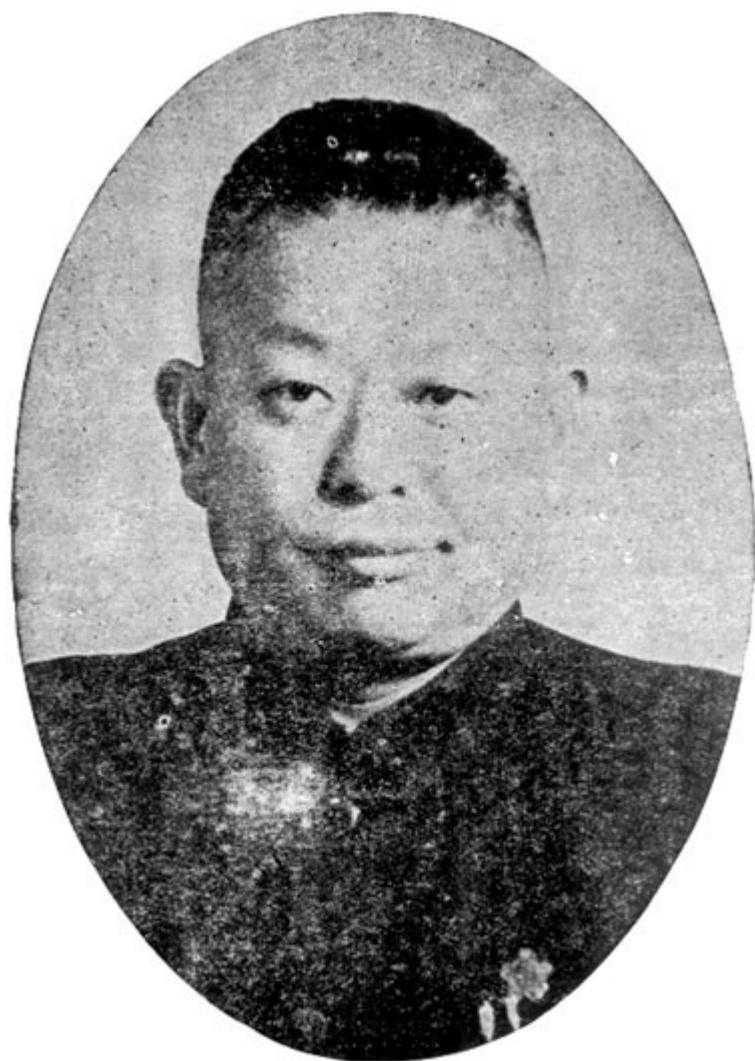
### **Section 2. DI PAN ZHUANG. Terrestrial Poles.**

- (1) SHUN SAO TANG. Sweeping with Front Undercut.
- (2) FAN SAO TANG. Sweeping with Back Undercut.
- (3) DAO GUA. Hooking from Behind.
- (4) YU GOU LIAN. Right Hooking with the Shin.
- (5) ZUO GOU LIAN. Left Hooking with the Shin.
- (6) FENG GUAN. Closing Gate.
- (7) JIAO JIAN. Cutting with Scissors.
- (8) BA GEN. Uprooting.
- (9) GUI XI. Squatting on One Knee.

## **V LONG HU YI QI GONG. QI GONG of Dragon and Tiger.**

- (A) QIE LONG GONG. Exercises “Dragon Lying on its Side”.
- (B) FU LONG GONG. Exercises “Dragon cuddles up to the Ground”.

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**Yuan Chu Cai**

# Preface

Martial arts practiced in our country<sup>1</sup> can be divided into “internal” and “external”, “soft” and “hard”. There is also division between styles with a “form” and without it<sup>2</sup>. Styles without forms are “internal” styles; first of all they train JING<sup>3</sup>, QI<sup>4</sup> and SHEN<sup>5</sup>. The styles that have (external) form are “external” styles; they are intended to train muscles, skeleton (bones) and skin. However, it is merely general deliberations which do not give an answer how one must exercise to reach top mastery and not to end in deadlock. How can one individually, during many months and years, persistently improve GONG FU and achieve big results?

A saying goes: “Strength can not overcome a style (technique)<sup>6</sup>, a style can not overcome mastery (GONG)<sup>7</sup>”. Or they say: “A master of strength is not the master of a style yet, a master of a style is not the master of internal art<sup>8</sup> yet.” What is meant when it is said that “strength can not overcome a style”? Let’s take, for instance, a case when a hawker becomes a soldier. Thanks to his profession he is able to carry heavy loads, that is, he has physical strength. But if he engages the enemy with those skills, he will be far from perfection with helpless movements of his arms and legs. Even the possession of

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## Editor’s notes:

<sup>1</sup> China is meant here.

<sup>2</sup> Here “forms” imply a set of formalized methods of a style, i.e. its “external” form.

<sup>3</sup> JING, primary vital substance, foundation of life.

<sup>4</sup> QI, vital energy, an analog of the Indian “prana”.

<sup>5</sup> SHEN, spiritual, conscious origin.

<sup>6</sup> Here hieroglyph QUAN, “fist”, stands; it can also be translated as “style”, “technique”.

<sup>7</sup> GONG, it is “internal” mastery that is meant here.

<sup>8</sup> It implies that the acquirement of “internal” art is the highest form of mastery.

strength of several hundreds and thousands JUNs<sup>9</sup> does not give a chance to use one's abilities effectively. It happens because of lack of coordination between movements of arms, eyes, torso and waist, stances and motions. If you remain to be an ignorant, then each hand raising, each kick, each step in a combat with the enemy will be ineffective. That's why it is said that strength alone can not overwhelm a style.

What is meant when it is said that “a style can not overcome mastery”? The man who reached mastery in a style, i.e. in “external art”, displays dexterity in arm and legs methods, is in command of his torso and waist; his movements are swift and quick. Movements of an ordinary man are often strained and awkward, a fight with him is like breaking a withered tree, and it is an easy task for a specialist. But if a master of “external art” engages a master of an “internal art”, he is “like an ant, trying to swing a big tree”. Masters of “external art” have bronze muscles and iron bones, filled QI and unflinching spirit SHEN. Using force, they intimidate their enemy and bend to their will. But it is merely external force, acting on the external level. It is not effective against an expert in internal art. Therefore it is said that “a style can not overcome mastery” and we find a proof to that everywhere.

For each man, improving his “internal art”, there are hundreds and thousands of trainees in “external art”. This fact explains the following saying: “It is easy to train a style but it is difficult to upgrade mastery.” Therefore, there are a lot of people who train a style and only a few who train mastery (GONG FU). From ancient times till now we see fighters, courageous and artful in combats, who by far surpass natural abilities of the man. They had to overcome thousands of difficulties, deliver thousands of blows during hundreds of training sessions, equally succeed mastery and strength in order

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**Editor's notes:**

<sup>9</sup> JUN, a measure of weight equal to 30 JINs, it is about 15 kg.

to comprehend secrets of mastership for a short time. Meng-Tse<sup>10</sup> said: “My kindheartedness is supported by nature of Spirit. With grandeur you reach firmness and envelop everything betwixt the Sky and the Earth.” The man who learns martial arts must incessantly repeat that saying.

There is a section on training of special force in each style of WU SHU. Usually it contains such exercises as, for example, “poles of plum blossom”, “iron palm”, “lantern of seven stars”, “gold bell”, “iron shirt”, “gold coins”, “arrow and arbalest” and many others. All those exercises belong to “internal” mastery GONG FU and must be done correctly from methodological point of view, regularly, determinately, and persistently. The best way is to exercise twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. On the whole, the sequence of training process is as follows: at first, it is necessary to acquire the technique of a style (“external mastery”) to develop abilities of arms and legs and then train “internal mastery” with the aim of strengthening muscles, sinews and bones. A proverb is passed on from one generation to another among those who practice martial arts: “The style is the flesh of mastery, mastery (GONG FU) is the skeleton of the style”. Therefore, style and mastery are interconnected; one can not be neglect in favor of the other. Only exercising in both yield good results, those two aspects are closely interconnected.

Although it is said that is a single way to martial art, actually it is wide and varied. Recently a situation emerged when “fighters” who learned one or two forms (TAO) with weapon or without it started to talk about some school, some style passed down to them by tutor. Nonsense! The little that is widely

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### **Editor’s notes:**

<sup>10</sup> **Meng-Tse, teacher Meng, Mencius, Meng Ke, Zi Yu, Chinese thinker, the second after Confucius (“The Next after the Perfect Wise” – YA SHENG), one of the founders of Confucianism and forerunner of Neoconfucianism, author of the classic treatise of the same name, MENG-TSE, included into “the Thirteen Canons” (SHI SAN JING) and “The Four Books” (SI SHU) at the beginning of the II millennium B.C. (during the dynasty of Song).**



taught does not include secrets of family WU SHU styles closed to strangers. And if you look through the fence, they look like “Yelang imagining itself a great state” [A legend of the Han epoch narrates how an Emperor’s ambassador came from the capital to the principality of Yelang that was situated on the south of China and the local ruler arrogantly asked the ambassador: “Do you really think that China is bigger than my principality?”]. A connoisseur laughs at such stupidity but at present it is a rare thing, indeed.

Earlier I wrote the following books: SHAOLIN JINGANG QUAN (“Diamond Fist of Shaolin”), WUDANG BAGUA QUAN (“The Style of Eight Trigrams from Wudang”), YUE FEI QUAN (“The Style of Marshal Yue Fei”), FO JIA QUAN (“The Style of Buddhistic Family”), CHUN YANG JIAN (CHUN YANG’s Sword”), MEI HUA DAO (“Broadsword of Plum Blossom”), LIU HE GUN (“Pole of Six Correspondences”) and some others. Being limited by my modest knowledge, I barely touched upon some aspects of martial arts in those books and included into them only small part of the problem. At present<sup>11</sup> many secret aspects of WU SHU are becoming public. Several magazines on martial arts are issued, books are published. Thanks to those publications many famous schools of WU SHU have become well-known both in China and abroad and their heritage is not lost for devotees of WU SHU. Here I expressed my humble opinion about great achievements.

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**Editor’s notes:**

<sup>11</sup> The date of the first publication of the book is unknown. It is supposed to be the 40-th of XX century.

# Chapter I.

## **WAI GONG and NEI GONG**

### **Differentiation between “Internal” and “External” Mastery.**

There is a widespread view that TAI CHI QUAN is “inner mastery” (NEI GONG) and SHAOLIN QUAN “external mastery” (WAI GONG). It is absolutely farfetched differentiation; besides, it contradicts to known facts of history. If we turn to historical records, we shall find that Zhang San Feng, the legendary founder of the style TAI CHI QUAN, at first took lessons at Shaolin and received his knowledge there. According to written sources master Zhang left Shaolin for the mountains of WUDANG in the south at the end of the dynasty of SONG<sup>12</sup>. He brought with him five orthodox styles of Shaolin called “Dragon” (LONG), “Snake” (SHE), “Crane” (HE), “Tiger” (HU), and “Leopard” (BAO). Later those styles were transformed and supplemented with esoteric Taoist methods aimed at training spirit (SHEN), muscles (JIN), breathing (QI), motion (DONG), bones (GU). So came into being the art of TAI CHI, later the style of BA GUA sprang up on its base, those styles were passed on from generation to generation and reached our days. “Softness” prevails in the movements of those styles but in itself it is not “internal mastery” yet. On the contrary, the movements in Shaolin styles of WU SHU are hard and fierce but it does not mean that the Shaolin school gives attention only to “external mastery”.

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#### **Editor’s notes:**

<sup>12</sup> **SONG, a dynasty and empire in China (960 – 1279).**

At the time of its flourishing the Shaolin monastery passed on knowledge to a lot of disciples (among laymen) and Buddhist monks, and that teaching was widespread outside the monastery. That's why styles of the Shaolin school were called WAI JIA, "Outer family". TAO (Taoist styles) were practiced in the mountains of WUDANG, this knowledge was carefully hidden from outsiders and on those grounds Taoist styles were named NEI JIA, "Inner family". In such a way differentiation between "internal" and "external" styles has arisen. As far as "internal mastery" is concerned, all traditional styles, whether they are NEI JIA or WAI JIA, attach great importance to it. Let's take as an example the method "Swords cut, axes slash but can not harm" (DAO PI FU KAN ER BUNG EN RU). It undoubtedly is a method of "internal" training which improves "internal mastery". However, from methodological point of view it belongs to the section YING GONG ("Mastery in hardness"), as it aims at the improvement of body ability to bear heavy blows with cold steel. It proves that both "hard" and "soft" methods can be available in "external" and "internal" training and the opinion that only "softness" is available in "internal" training and only "hardness" in "external" training is erroneous...

## see full version:

### **Section 1. NEI GONG. Internal mastery.**

- (1) Persistence and carefulness**
- (2) Concentration**
- (3) Training QI**
- (4) Rearing QI**
  - (a) Method of transformation of "emptiness" into "fullness"**
  - (b) Method regulating fullness**
- (5) Streamlining QI breath**

## Section 2.

### WAI GONG

#### External Mastery.

Comprehension of “external mastery” will be a relatively simple target for a man who has acquired “internal mastery”. By developing the ability to move QI throughout the entire body and concentrate effort in four limbs with the aid of “internal” exercises, it is possible to fill in muscles and bones with real strength. At the same time skin coats<sup>13</sup> can be made stronger and thicker and muscle mass developed through training “external skills”. Such exercises as “lifting weight”, “throwing up a stone padlock”, “rotating an iron yoke”, “striking a sand bag”, “attacking a wooden dummy”, “rolling a tube filled with sand”, and many others – all that is training “external mastery”, its basic methods. At present exercises “lifting weight”, “throwing up a stone padlock”, “rotating an iron yoke” and other similar methods of GONG FU enjoy the most popularity. Those exercises are relatively simple and can be done everywhere. Exercises “striking a sand bag”, “attacking a wooden dummy”, “rolling a tube filled with sand” make up another group. They are mobile training methods and at present those exercises are practiced much more seldom. However, it is with the aid of those methods that is possible to strengthen “five tops”<sup>14</sup> and considerably improve “six coordinations”<sup>15</sup>. It is a very important chain in training a martial skill which must not be lost for

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#### Editor’s notes:

<sup>13</sup> “Skin coat” in Chinese medicine is understood not only as the skin itself but as a layer of muscles under the skin as well.

<sup>14</sup> “Five tops” mean head, arms and legs.

<sup>15</sup> “Six coordinations” in the tradition of Chinese martial arts implies the coordination of the back and shoulders, shoulders and elbows, elbows and hands, waist and hip joints, hip joints and knees, knees and feet.

future generations. These effective training methods of GONG FU are described below.

## see full version:

- (A) DA SHA DAI. Striking at a Sand Bag.**
- (B) JI MU REN. Attacking a Wooden Dummy.**
- (C) GUN SHA TONG. Rolling a Tube with Sand.**

# Chapter II.

## YING GONG

### Mastery of Hardness.

There is a great variety of YING GONG techniques and names and similar techniques can have different names in different styles of WU SHU. However, in spite of dissimilarities in appearance, the essence and the orientation of those techniques are common. Besides, their level of complexity is not the same; they must be acquired in some sequence. For instance, the exercise ROU DAO – “Massaging and rubbing” must be acquired first followed by the method QIAO DA – “Tapping”. The sequence of such kind improves QI circulation in the body, makes muscles tougher, skin thicker and stronger, internal organs stronger and less sensitive to shocks. The “external techniques” will be improved by it and mastery will increase by many times. Progress in learning the martial art will be evident; the learner will be able to exercise more intensively and in more rigid conditions. Skills that the learner will acquire by that time will seem to a detached onlooker to be deadly, learner’s movements will be powerful, fast and strong and the learner will look like a master.

In order to acquire YING GONG, the “Mastery of Hardness”, there is no need of a sword or any other weapon, no need to raise heavy stones or use some mechanical aids. This art has no mystic in it.

Below we shall give the description of exercises.

**see full version:**

(A) ROU DAO FA. Technique of Massage and Rubbing.

(B) QIAO DA FA. Technique of Tapping.

# Chapter III.

## QING GONG

### Mastery of Lightness.

QING GONG holds a very important place in teaching WU SHU, especially for those who learn dramatic art. It is better to start training oneself in young years when muscles are elastic and joints flexible. It is necessary to start from simple basic movements, for example, somersaults. Your skills can be improved so that you will become as deft as a monkey. As far as dodging and jumping are concerned, they can be acquired in the course of learning WU SHU. But there are special techniques, namely ZONG YUE FAN TENG – “Moving by jumps and somersaults” or FEI YANG ZOU BI – “Flying up to a roof ridge and run up the wall”. To acquire them, special and serious training is needed<sup>16</sup>.

Below we shall tell about three training methods. They are ZHUANG DING ZOU BI – “Grasping nails and climbing up a wall”, ZOU SUO – “Walking on a rope” and YUE ZHUANG – “Jumping from one pole to onto another”.

see full version:

- (A) ZHUANG DING ZOU BI. Grasping Nails and Climbing up a Wall.
- (B) ZOU SUO. Walking on a Rope.
- (C) YUE ZHUANG. Jumping from one Pole to Another.

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#### Editor's notes:

<sup>16</sup> Those methods are among 72 arts of Shaolin, they are described in detail in the book by Jing Zhong “Training Methods of 72 Arts of Shaolin”. [See details >>](#)

# Chapter IV.

## MEI HUA ZHUANG

### Poles of Plum Blossom.

MEI HUA ZHUANG is one of fundamental methods with profound and inmost sense of the Martial Art. The source of this technique is hardly to be traced, as it has come down to us from ancient days in the form of legends and tales and has a long history. There are many astonishing things in the Celestial<sup>17</sup> and the training method MEI HUA ZHUANG is one of them.

The very first steps in learning the technique MEI HUA ZHUANG requires deep comprehension of everything you do, you must go into all smallest details. The base and essence of the method lies in the skill of motion, or “arts of steps”. Since ancient times the skill has been divided into two large sections, namely TIAN PANG ZHUANG –“Celestial poles” and DI PAN ZHUANG – “Terrestrial poles”. The first section mainly deals with static positions and various methods of steps and motion. Therefore, besides the name “Celestial poles” it has another name MA BU ZHUANG<sup>18</sup>. The second section mainly deals with techniques and continuous series of leg methods, so beside the name “Terrestrial poles” the section is also called LIAN HUAN ZHUANG<sup>19</sup>.

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#### Editor's notes:

<sup>17</sup> The Celestial Empire is the ancient name of China.

<sup>18</sup> MA BU ZHUANG, “Rider stance on poles”.

<sup>19</sup> LIAN HUAN ZHUANG, “Poles of continuous (circular, cyclic) training”.



The first section, "Celestial poles", includes five separate techniques: DU LI ZHUANG, "Single pole"; ER LONG ZHUANG, "Poles of two dragons"; SAN XING ZHUANG, "Poles of three stars"; SI MEN ZHUANG, "Poles of four gates"; and MEI HUA ZHUANG proper, "Poles of plum blossom". All of the above techniques serve as a base, a kind of foundation for learners of Chinese martial arts; they allow improving individual mastery in several areas at the same time. Certainly, the first stage is the acquisition of stances, first of all, "Rider stance" (MA BU) and then the skill of motion ("steps"). The first section, "Celestial poles", deals with it. The second section, "Terrestrial poles", allows to significantly improving the execution of all leg methods and techniques; northern styles of WU SHU and their southern branches are especially rich in leg methods and techniques. Ancient masters teach us that arms and legs must be a single whole and move in coordination; it is necessary to hit the enemy continuously with both arms and legs. By practicing the exercises described in this book you yourselves will find that they are of tremendous importance.

## see full version:

### **Section 1. TIAN PAN ZHUANG. Celestial Poles.**

- (A) DU LI ZHUANG. Single Pole.**
- (B) ER LONG ZHUANG. Poles of Two Dragons.**
- (C) SAN XING ZHUANG. Poles of Three Stars.**
- (D) SI MEN ZHUANG. Poles of Four Gates.**
- (E) MEI HUA ZHUANG. Poles of Plum Blossom.**

### **Section 2. DI PAN ZHUANG. Terrestrial Poles.**

- (1) SHUN SAO TANG. Sweeping with Front Undercut.**
- (2) FAN SAO TANG. Sweeping with Back Undercut.**
- (3) DAO GUA. Hooking from Behind.**
- (4) YU GOU LIAN. Right Hooking with the Shin.**
- (5) ZUO GOU LIAN. Left Hooking with the Shin.**

- (6) FENG GUAN. Closing Gate.**
- (7) JIAO JIAN. Cutting with Scissors.**
- (8) BA GEN. Uprooting.**
- (9) GUI XI. Squatting on One Knee.**

# Chapter V.

## LONG HU YI QI GONG

### QI GONG of Dragon and Tiger.

QI GONG practice has come down from great antiquity and basically has natural source. The practice is aimed at the improvement of the man and serves for the regulation of the human body; besides, it has a great health-improving effect. From the very beginning those methods and techniques were united under common name SHOU GONG, which means “The art of reaching longevity”. This name came from the epoch of Late HAN (25–220 AD); to say more correctly, it originates from treatises of healer Hua Tuo<sup>20</sup> where he describes methods of reaching immortality. Exercises from QI GONG I describe in this chapter are an initial stage in acquiring knowledge that was left for us by Hua Tuo.

Books dated from the dynasty Sung (960-1279) mention master Zhao who was able to perfectly use QI GONG techniques. He belonged to the school of the YANG family art which founder lived during the dynasty Jin (265-420). That technique was developed on the basis of several widespread trends in QI GONG by means of their new interpretation and unification. Several exercises

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#### Editor's notes:

<sup>20</sup> Hua Tuo (141? - 208) is a famous physician and a follower of Taoism. Lived at the end of the dynasty Eastern Han. Was the first to do surgeries in cases when cauterization, acupuncture or medication gave no effect. Was the first physician to use narcosis and anaesthesia for surgery. Besides, he created a complex of "Plays of Five Animals" (WUQINXI) owing which through the imitation of movements of different animals - bear, tiger, deer, monkey, and crane the energy Qi properly circulates in a human organism and that cause effects of rejuvenation and invigoration.

from BA DUAN JIN<sup>21</sup> also underlie that technique. This chapter presents some exercises from that school of QI GONG.

Speaking on QI GONG, one has to realize that its development was far from being uniform; in the course of its history different schools and trends sprang up, that has led to a great variety of styles, techniques and methods. However, the general requirement was and remains to be as follows: in order QI GONG exercises to become genuine QI GONG exercises, one must do them from the early morning till late in night and start exercising, still lying in bed and doing those exercises several times during a day. Systematic training will result in filling four limbs with QI, muscle strengthening, improving health. It is an external effect of QI GONG practice. The internal effect consists in that QI fills the whole body and evenly circulates inside it, developing the system of breathing and strengthening internal organs. Health-improving and restorative effect of QI GONG practice is much higher than that one of various potions. Thus, it may be said that QI GONG is the most effective system of body recovery and development.

**see full version:**

**(A) QIE LONG GONG. Exercises “Dragon Lying on its Side”.**

**(B) FU LONG GONG. Exercises “Dragon cuddles up to the Ground”.**

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**Editor’s notes:**

<sup>21</sup> BA DUAN JIN, “Eight pieces of brocade”, a complex of eight QI GONG exercises, originates from Shaolin.

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**Yuan Chu Cai.**

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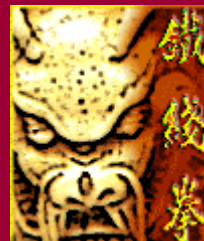
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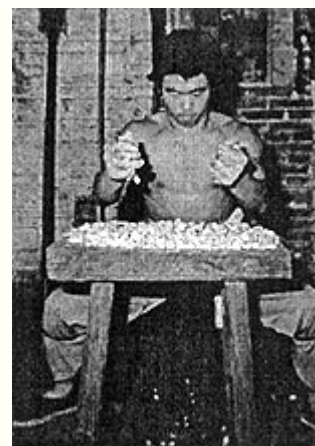
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**Lam Sai Wing**  
(1860-1943)

**"SINCE MY YOUNG YEARS TILL NOW,  
FOR 50 YEARS, I HAVE BEEN LEARNING  
FROM MASTERS.**

**I AM HAPPY THAT I HAVE EARNED THE  
LOVE OF MY TUTORS WHO PASSED ON  
ME THE SHAOLIN MASTERY..."**

Lam Sai Wing was one of the best fighters of his time, an outstanding master of Southern Shaolin Hung Gar Kung Fu and a disciple of the legendary Wong Fei Hung. At the beginning of twentieth century, supposedly in 1917-1923, when Lam Sai Wing was the Chief Instructor in hand-to-hand fight in the armed forces of Fujian province, he wrote three books on traditional Shaolin methods of the achievement of the highest mastership. In those books he scrutinized COMBAT TECHNIQUES of TIGER and CRANE styles, as well as the OLD SHAOLIN METHOD of developing the "INTERNAL" and "EXTERNAL" force. The books are illustrated with a great number of fine drawings showing the author demonstrate his wonderful techniques. Until now the books of Master Lam Sai Wing serve as a basic textbook for those who seriously practices Hung Gar in China.

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