

Short Hitting v. Long Boxing

Roots of Taijiquan and 'Internal Boxing' in the late Ming

2. Pirate Raiders on the South China Coast

- The Ming government policy of prohibiting overseas travel and trade (*jinhai*) created an environment in which locals connived with Japanese pirates (Wokou) in an *de facto* war with law enforcement, culminating in the mid-sixteenth century.
- Earlier a civilian commander, Wang Yangming (alias Shouren) had
- invented a new Confucianism by equating knowledge with action (*zhi-xing*), prioritising action over contemplation.
- Wang proved his empirical theories by successful military campaigns to pacify aboriginal peoples of the mountainous southwest (Yunnan, Jiangxi) where conventional militarists had failed.

3. Tang Shunzhi, polymath and martial pioneer

- Following in Wang's philosophy of hands-on engagement with physical reality, Tang Shunzi personally led troops into victorious battles against the pirates, developing new tactics and weaponry, including firearms, compiling a great military compendium (*Wubian*) only published after his death in 1560.
- Along with details of every facet of warfare, Tang was the first to include a section on 'boxing' (*quan*). He thus led the way to General Qi Jiguang's famous illustrated set of 32 moves with accompanying verses, many of which form the basis of received *taijiquan* forms. (pace Douglas Wile 1999, 10-12, 14-16)
- Yet weaponry was their main concern.

4. A newly invented 'Divine Shield', deployable in shield walls (*Wubian* 406-408).



5. In use against spear and Japanese sabre

	
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6. Tang Shunzhi teaches Qi Jinguang

- Inspector General (*xúnfū*) Sir Táng Jingchuan [Shùnzhì] at Xixing River Hall (Zhejiang) personally grasped a spear to teach me. I, [Qi] Jìguang enquired of him: “Every time I see other men using a spear, their circling (*quanchuan*) is as big as five feet. You, a master of arms, just circle one foot. Why is this?”
- Old master Jing (Tang Shunzhi) said: “The human body sideways is just seven to eight inches. If the spear circle deflects his spear one foot, so it will not reach my body and upper arm, it is alright. If I try to deflect his spear more greatly, so that it is far from my body, there is no advantage to me, and my force will be exhausted. This theory is of the ultimate essence.”
- I again enquired: “This one circling work, how is it?” Old master Jing replied: “It is the gongfu (training) of ten years.” One art’s essence is as difficult as this. (*Jìxiào Xīnshū* x: 30)

7. Short Hitting (duan-da)

- The above example from spear of tight circling's efficacy illustrates economy of movement at short range. The same principle applies in boxing, exemplified by the Wing Chun style of Canton (Guangdong). Qi records another personal encounter:
 - At Boat Mountain (Zhoushan archipelago, Zhejiang) Commandry I got, from Captain Liu's thatched hall boxing, the meaning of:
 - “If you make the error of blocking and parrying, you'll get ten blows.” (*Fanle zhaojia, bianshi shi-xia*) This most wonderful, it is stick-fighting's ‘continuous strikes and continuous thrusts’ (*gun-zhong zhi lianda lianchuo*).

8. Short and Long Boxing

- Short Hitting (Duanda) and Long Boxing (Changquan)
- anticipate the later parting into hard and soft,
- external and internal, Buddhist 'Shaolin'
- or Daoist 'Wudang'.
- Tang and Qi each emphasise the need for both,
- according to situation. Tang warns:
- "Boxers should not be obsessed with 'inside or outside the
- circle', 'long and short hitting' theories.
- They need a comprehensive understanding to be competent practitioners."

9. Qi Jiguang's 32 moves

- Qi Jiguang assembled 32 boxing moves, with illustrations and poems, in a fixed sequence of opposed pairs.
- It was soon echoed in fiction by fight scenes of 24 lines between Monkey versus Demon King (*Xiyouji* LI, 1592), and 32 moves of door guards turned, by Zhang Sanfeng, against each other in the dark (*Xiyangji* LVII, 1594).
- Long Boxing mostly uses legs. High Reach Horse feints to the head followed by a kick, as in the taiji-quan form sequence.

10. Reach Horse versus Reverse Single Whip; Suspend Leg Feint versus Qiu Liu/ Reach Horse

懸脚虛餌彼輕進二
換腿決不饒趕上
一掌滿天星誰敢再
來比並
丘劉勢左搬右掌劈
來脚入步連心挪更
拳法探馬均打人一
着命盡



三才圖會

卷八

七

七星拳手足相顧挨
步逼上下提籠饒若
手快脚如風我自有
攪衝劈重

到騎龍詐輪伴走勝
迫入遂我回衝恁伊
力猛硬家攻志當我
連珠炮動



11. Reach for Horse (*Tan-ma*)

- Qi expands on this couplet in his preface to the Boxing Classic, whose third move ‘Reach for Horse’ (*Tan-ma*, or ‘spy horse’), ‘High Reach Horse’ (*Gao Tan-ma*) as in Tang Shunzhi and *taiji-quan*:
 “**Reach for Horse** is transmitted from Taizu.
 All actions may be derived or changed from it.
 Advance to attack, retire to dodge: weak begets strong.
 It connect to **Short Boxing**’s most excellent.”
- Taizu, ‘Grand Ancestor’, refers to General Zhao Kuangyin (927-976), founding Emperor of the Song dynasty. Zhao was born to a military clan at Luoyang (Henan), near Shaolin Buddhist monastery with which his style is traditionally linked.

12. Boxing Tactics and Feints

Qi shows only one high kick, in a feint for Qiu Liu and Reach Horse.

Tang describes High Reach Horse with feints and kicks:

- “Right leg sweep-foot feint, right hand cutting hand.
- left hand flying fist up to the face,
- connects with right hand fist and altogether again shoot.
- place foot, advance step, *High Reach Horse*.”

13. Punches and Kicks

- “Left fist feint to face, Right leg low,
- Spring left leg, right fist flying fist up to the face,
- Topple body one stamp-kick,
- Topple plant banner *High Reach Horse*,
- concentratedly hit *High Reach Horse*.
-
- “Right leg surprise left leg, Left leg upward stamp.
- *Jade Girl Threads Needle*,
- *High Reach Horse* transforms into *One Line Whip*.”

14. Training Kicks, progress from light to heavy

- In all learning legs, first empty learn.
- Kick open the legs, then by laws practise *Drill Leg*.
- Empty learning *Stamp Leg*, hang a rice sack or mat to learn.
- Sidekick, empty learning, use suspension from pillar legs.
- Use a pillar to learn heel legs,
- Empty kick, then use pillar style.
- Spring kicks (tántuî) use three-foot long bench, vertically stood.
- Alternatively use a stone tub on level ground to learn.

15. Kick Training

- “Untoppling Body Standing Law: feet point straight.
- Back turned, leg rising like a horse kick, is *Stamping*.
- Level kicking is *Springing Leg*.
- “To practise *Springing Leg* until nimble and fast.
- Use a bench to put your foot up.
- Vertically to the ground, *Spring* kicking as you go:
- Take level walking, and not toppling, as criterion.
- To practise *Springing Leg* force,
- use a pillar-base stone to kick afar as criterion.”

16. Stamping Kick training

- “Practise *Stamping Leg* as empty legs.
- Use a rice sack suspended from a beam.
- *Stamping Leg* high kicking to and fro.
- All of hip force make the main criterion.
- To practise *Stamping Kick* with solid legs, use a pillar.
- With *Stamping Leg* kicking the pillar, full force is the criterion.
- Hook legs, point fists and legs to bend towards the inside:
- Practising stamp legs then has force.”

17. Wen School Short Hitting

- “Lyû’s *Short Hitting* in six sets, and Zhao Grand Ancestor’s *Long Boxing* Long and Short Hitting in six sets, are in Shandong exclusively practiced. South of the Yangtse they are also much practiced.
- Among the Three Schools of Short Hitting, Zhèjiang (Yuè 鉞= 越?) is particularly able. **Wen** (溫) School Boxing is in Zhejiang (Yuè) exclusively practiced.”
- *** Zhejiang province and the port of **Wenzhou** were at the heart of the anti-piracy campaigns.
- *** It has an outstanding martial tradition and is famed for its close-range ‘Boat Boxing’, renamed ‘South Boxing’ (Chuanquan, Nanquan).

18. Spirituality and Creeds

- Daoist-Buddhist, Wudang-Shaolin, Three-in-One
- Qiu Chuzhi, Zhang Sanfeng, Bodhidharma, Lin Zhao-en incarnated as Maitreya Buddha, received visitations by Zhang Sanfeng (in 1578-1579. Dean 1998: 81-83), in 1562 sponsored temple to Qi Jiguang (Dean 77, 107).
- Worshipped Tiandu, Grand Marshal Tian (Field, Tian Da Yuanshuai), also god of theatre.
- Gojuryu Okinawa worshipped same god.
- *Xingchi Zuqi-fa* (*Wubian* 397) practise austerities to cultivate 'breath-energy' (*qi*) in order to write magic spells (*zhou*).