FOREWORD
By Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming

Dear Friends and Readers

After teaching for more than 35 years, I have come to realize now that in order to preserve the ancient martial arts, we must separate ourselves from today’s societal distractions. The reason I say this is because I’ve noticed over the past few years that some students often try to learn their martial arts without putting much effort into their practice.

Many years of hard, concentrated practice has taught me that no matter what the martial art is, you cannot progress without continual hard practice. It goes right back to that age old saying, “practice makes perfect.”

It has often been said, “A teacher will teach a student just one day, but it will take a student a whole year to remember what he or she was taught over that period of time and to put that knowledge to work when needed to become proficient at it.”

It is also said, “A teacher can only direct a student into a correct path. It is the student who must walk that path to experience and reach his or her goal.” However, it is not unusual these days to see a student who has only been practicing for a short period of time, and who lacks all the necessary skills already demanding to be taught something new. I consider this martial arts level of achievement in today’s society very low compared with the way I trained 40 years ago.

Before my teaching days are over, I have but one wish and that is to take a few committed students to a secluded, remote location and train there for ten years. If I can do this, I believe I will be able to preserve the martial arts at the same high level of quality that it was 40 years ago. To make this happen, I’ll need financial contributions so the committed students will be able to earn scholarships for tuition, room, and board. However, it is not easy to find sponsorship since there is no commercial value for any sponsoring party. I just wish I could find some affluent individuals or successful companies who’d be willing to donate to this worthwhile cause.

Time passes by quickly. The responsibility and obligation of preserving the arts of the ancient time is getting more and more difficult each day. It is harder to find a sincere and qualified teacher. At the same time, it is also more and more difficult to find a committed student who is willing to sacrifice his/her modern lifestyle.

The reason students must train hard is so they can reach the same level as martial artists did back in ancient times. If they work hard enough, there’s no question in my mind that they’ll reach that same level, and will have the same experience. Without reaching this level of expertise, they will not be able to feel and understand the meaning of the arts and how they use to be taught.

Book Review

Analysis of Shaolin Chin Na 2nd Ed.

By Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming


Any martial artist who has read Dr. Yang’s earlier books knows that they’re getting a classical and theoretical lesson in one of his most specialized arts; Chin Na. Romanized in pinyin as Qin Na, it’s the study of how to control an opponent using joint locks to limit mobility.

Dr. Yang’s book illustrates how to attack acupuncture cavities and other sensitive parts of the body with strikes, grabs, and other techniques. Seldom, if ever, will you study Chinese martial arts without finding some Qin Na mixed in; mainly because it’s part of the course of study in almost all Chinese martial styles. However, it can be a valuable addition to any other martial system that you care to pursue.

Chinese Qin Na is considered the root of the Japanese arts of Jujiitsu and Aikido. Practitioners often use the study of Qin Na to increase their understanding of the theory and principles of their own arts. Dr. Yang’s book can help broaden that knowledge since it outlines how to control an opponent through Qin Na, considered one of the highest measures of martial skill.

With over 150 Chin Na techniques photographed and explained, you can improve your skills with the many training methods, attacks, and counterattack techniques. This book is a valued training guide, one that will fit into any martial artist’s regimen.
Both Kay Whitney and Donna Lang swear by what they call their “Anti-Aging Exercise Program,” a fitness class they take in movement and gentle exercise, which integrates Tai Chi with Yoga movements. They agree that they have received many benefits from it, including staying physically active as they age, to socializing.

There are about 10 other enthusiastic Dedham women in the bi-weekly program, which is coordinated by the Dedham Council on Aging. It is held at the Church of the Good Shepherd, in Oakdale Square, on Monday and Thursday mornings, from 9:30 to 10:30.

“The exercises are adapted specifically for seniors, to improve balance and flexibility, to help stave off effects of arthritis, and to prevent falls,” said Whitney. “It helps us grow old gracefully.

“We stretch and limber up. When you watch us, it doesn’t look like we expend a lot of energy. It’s not cardiovascular exercise. What we do is based on an ancient martial art, a slow-motion discipline of movements that benefits us, body, mind, and spirit.”

Whitney said the newest member is 80 years-old. “When she first started she could only stay half a class, and now she feels so much better and can do so much more. She hates to miss a class.”

Whitney agrees with her.

“The thing is, if I didn’t do it, I would notice it. It keeps me feeling healthy. When I had surgery a while ago, they told me I was in really good physical shape and had great muscle tone. They said that helped my recovery.”

The class is taught by Ramel Rones, mind/body expert and world-renowned Tai Chi and Kung Fu instructor. He is a master in the field of eastern health and martial arts.

Rones came to Boston in 1983 after completing Israeli military service. He studied Chinese health and martial arts, and won a number of gold medals in martial arts competitions in North America (1991-1993) and China (1994). Then he became a teacher, training students in techniques of internal and external martial arts, translating and modifying the principles of Chi Kung, Tai Chi, Kung Fu, meditation, and yoga into a Mind/Body approach to deal with the challenges of facing the effects of aging and/or diseases, relieving stress, and improving the quality of life for people of all ages.

Rones’s achievements have earned him recognition, support, and state and federal grants from elder community centers, institutions and councils, and from children’s schools. In collaboration with the Dana Farber Institute in 1998, Rones received a grant to research quality of life and possible strengthening of the immune system in cancer patients through a Mind/Body approach.

Rones teaches one exercise class in Dedham each week, and Donna Lang takes over the second session, guiding and advising. She has taught for over ten years, and takes private lessons with Rones.

Lang said, “This class has helped me greatly. I’ve exercised all my life. I’ve jogged and played tennis, but it got to be too hard on my feet and knees. When I saw a notice about this program, I was desperate for some kind of activity to stay fit, so I signed up. Now I do active things with my granddaughter that I could never do before.”

She said, “No pain, no gain is not the watchword for the exercises we do.” They learn how to use the body in effortless ways, by stretching to increase range of motion in the joints, to lengthen the spine, and to increase lung capacity. There are some strength-training movements, too, to prevent osteoporosis.

Lang said that exercise, even begun late in life, can stave off disability that sometimes accompanies old age, and she pointed out there are psychological aspects of exercising regularly.

“It makes me feel better mentally to be doing something healthy for myself.”

She finds Rones, “a total inspiration.”

“He motivates us by bringing his huge wealth of knowledge into everything that he teaches. It’s a mind/body/spirit practice. I don’t want to put anybody off, because there’s nothing spooky about it, but we learn to meditate with the movements. It’s just learning to be mindful about your body. It’s calming.”

Lang is especially appreciative of the Dedham Council
on Aging for contracting with Rones to teach the class.

“He is a world-class resource, and to be able to have a teacher of his caliber work with us in our community and share his knowledge for our benefit is amazing to me,” she said.

She also is grateful to the Church of the Good Shepherd for the generous offer of allowing them to hold the class there. “They have been very welcoming to us.”

Members of the class have enjoyed socializing with each other, too, Lang said.

“A few of us have gone to some college classes at UMass-Boston that are free for seniors, and some go to the annual Flower Show together. We’ve also had a surprise birthday party for our 80 year-old member.”

Whitney and Lang are actively recruiting new members for the group.

“Originally the COA got a grant to pay for Rones to work with us, but that ran out.” Whitney said. “We need to add people to share the cost of our instructor.” The hope is that eight to ten will join. Class members pay $5 for the first lesson and $1 for the second lesson each week.

“That’s to get people to come back for the second session,” Whitney said. Those interested can find out more about the “Anti-Aging Exercise Program” by calling Kay Whitney (781)-326-1696, or Donna Lang, (781)326-0805. The COA’s number is (781) 326-1650.

They also want to spread the word that men are invited to attend.

Hana Janjigian Heald is the editor for the Dedham Times and has approved this article for reprint.
YMAA AROUND THE WORLD

Action star Jackie Chan and the late martial arts actor Bruce Lee are among Hong Kong’s entertainment elite honored in the territory’s new harbor-front Avenue of Stars. The tourist attraction, which opened last April, pays tribute to Hong Kong’s past and present stars by featuring their names and hand prints in a 440-meter long strip. Officials hope to boost tourism through interest in Hong Kong movies.

There’s a good reason why Santa Fe, New Mexico’s courthouse lobby glows with scented candles and soft music. A small group of violent offenders are practicing Tai Chi, followed by a Japanese tea ceremony then meditation. For crimes ranging from road rage to domestic violence, these offenders have chosen to pay $180 for this twelve week course in lieu of trash patrol and community service.

TAI CHI AND YOUR HEALTH

It’s well established that Tai Chi promotes balance control and reduces the risk of falls in elderly people, lowers blood pressure, and improves physical symptoms and quality of life in people with arthritis. (See related story on page 2.)

The latest research suggests that Tai Chi may benefit the heart as well. That’s what researchers at Tufts-New England Medical Center and McGill University found when they conducted a review of nearly 50 studies on Tai Chi published over the last 20 years.

About a third of the studies looked at Tai Chi’s effect on cardiovascular and respiratory function among various groups of people, including the elderly and those who had undergone coronary artery bypass surgery. Nearly all of the studies found that Tai Chi was associated with improved cardio-respiratory function. The possible mechanisms for the martial art’s benefits to heart health haven’t been worked out. But for someone who wants to exercise for better health yet still hasn’t found a window of opportunity, a beginner’s Tai Chi class, which is gentle on the body, might be just the thing.

A steady stream of research shows that antioxidant polyphenols in tea fight heart attack, stroke, some cancers, and even bad breath. If you still haven’t been converted to a tea drinker, there are a number of studies conducted by Taiwanese and Australian and USDA researchers that you might want to look into that show black tea to be a highly effective antioxidant.

If you get a stitch (a sharp cramp in the side) while exercising, try one of the following maneuvers described in a recent issue of Running and Fit News. Raise your arms overhead while taking a deep breath; then lower your arms as you forcefully exhale and tighten your abdominal muscles. Or try bending over as you breath in and exhale slowly through pursed lips. Or raise your knee on the side of the stitch and massage the painful area.

Dylan Gutheil, a nine year Headquarters YMAA student, won a gold medal in a tie at the 2004 Wushu meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa. Dylan came in first with staff in Er Mei Il Fut, delivering a clean, powerful sequence. Gutheil attributed his training to his teacher, George Dominguez, his trainer, “Doc,” and especially to Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming for his help and support over the years.

EDITOR’S NOTE: An attribution was accidentally left out of some of the Tai Chi background information printed in the June, 2004, YMAA Newsletter. This mistake was made on page 2 and should have attributed the martial arts portion, written and copyrighted in the article to Jim Keenan, and the Dao De Wuxue She. We regret making that error.
Although the Qin Na techniques from one Gongfu style may seem quite different from the techniques of another style, the theories and principles of application remain the same. These theories and principles form the root of all Qin Na techniques. If you adhere to these roots, your Qin Na will continue to grow and improve, but if you ignore these roots, your Qin Na will always remain undeveloped. This month we’ll review some previously published material and discuss these general theories and principles.

Before we discuss each Qin Na category, you should understand that there is no technique which is perfect for all situations. What you do depends upon what your opponent does, and since your opponent will not stand still and just let you control him you must be able to adapt your Qin Na to fit the circumstances. Like all other martial techniques, your Qin Na must respond to and follow the situation, and so it needs to be skillful, alive, fast, and powerful. You should furthermore understand that Qin Na must be done by surprise. In grabbing Qin Na you have to grasp your opponent’s body, and so if your opponent is aware of your intention it will be extremely difficult or you to successfully apply the technique. In such a case you may be obliged to use a cavity strike Qin Na instead of a grabbing technique.

It’s usually much easier to strike the opponent than to control him. Subduing an opponent through Qin Na control is a way to show mercy to someone you do not want to injure. To successfully apply a grabbing Qin Na, you often need to fake or strike the opponent first to set him up for your controlling technique. For example, you can use a punch to cause your opponent to block, and when he blocks, you quickly grab his hand and use Qin Na to control him. Alternatively, you might kick his shin first to draw his attention to his leg, and immediately grab his hand and control him.

As mentioned, there are five categories of Qin Na: 1. Fen Jin or Zhua Jin Fen (dividing the muscle/tendon or grabbing the muscle/tendon). 2. Cuo Cu (misplacing the bone). 3. Bi Qi (sealing the breath). 4. Dian Mai or Duan Mai (vein/artery press or sealing the vein/artery) 5. Dian Mai or Dian Xue (pressing primary Qi channel or cavity press). We will now discuss all of these categories in detail except the last two, which will be discussed only on an introductory level, because the subject requires an in-depth understanding of Qi circulation, acupuncture, and specialized training techniques.

One additional point needs to be mentioned here, and that is that very often Qin Na techniques make use of principles from several categories at once. For example, many techniques simultaneously use the principles of dividing the muscle/tendon and misplacing the bone.

1. **Fen Jin or Zhua Jin Fen** in Chinese means to divide, Zhua means to grab and Jin means tendon, sinew, or muscle. Fen Jin or Zhua Jin Qin Na refer to techniques that tear apart the opponent’s muscles or tendons. Muscles contain nerves and many Qi branch channels, so when you tear a muscle or tendon, not only do you cause sensations of pain to travel to the brain, you also directly or indirectly affect the Qi and interfere with the normal functioning of the organs. If the pain is great enough it can disturb the Qi and seriously damage the organs, and in extreme cases even cause death. For this reason, when you are in extreme pain your brain may give the order for you to pass out. Once you are unconscious, the Qi circulation will significantly decrease. This will limit damage to the organs and perhaps save your life.

Fen Jin Qin Na uses two main ways to divide the muscle/tendon. One is to twist the opponent’s joint and then bend. Twisting the joint also twists the muscles/tendons. If you bend the joint at the same time, you can tear the tendons off the bone. The other method is to split and tear the muscle/tendon apart without twisting. The most common place to do this is the fingers.

Zhua Jin (grabbing the muscle/tendon) relies upon the strength of the fingers to grab, and then pull the opponent’s large muscles or tendons. This causes pain by overextending the muscles and tendons. The shoulder muscles/tendons are a common target. Zhua Jin Qin Na is used particularly by the Eagle Claw and Tiger Claw styles. Although Zhua Jin is usually classified with Fen Jin Qin Na, many Chinese martial artists separate the two categories because the principle used to divide the muscle/tendon is different.

2. **Cao Gu**: Cao means wrong, disorder, or to place wrongly, and Cu means bone. Cao Cu therefore are Qin Na techniques that put bones in the wrong positions. These techniques are usually applied to the joints. If you examine the structure of a joint, you will see that the bones are connected to each other by ligaments, and that the muscles around and over the joints are connected to the bones by tendons. When a joint is bent backward or twisted and bent in the wrong direction, it can cause extreme pain, the ligaments can be torn off the bone, and the bones can be pulled apart. Strictly speaking, it is very difficult to use dividing the muscle/tendon and misplacing the bone techniques separately. When one is used, generally the other one is also more or less simultaneously applied.

3. **Bi Qi**: Bi in Chinese means to close, seal, or shut, and Qi (more specifically Kong Qi) means air. Bi Qi is the technique of preventing the opponent from inhaling, thereby causing him to pass out. There are three categories of Bi Qi, differing in the approach to sealing.

The first category is the direct sealing of the windpipe. You can grab your opponent’s throat with your fingers, or compress his throat with your arm, and prevent him from inhaling. Alternatively, you can use your fingers to press or strike the base of his throat to stop him from inhaling. Attacking this area causes the muscles around the windpipe to contract shutting off air to the lungs.
The second category of Bi Qi is striking the muscles that surround the lungs. Because of the protection which the ribs afford, it is very difficult to strike the muscles around the lungs directly. However, some of these muscles extend beyond the ribs. When they are attacked, they contract in pain and compress the lungs, preventing inhalation. Two muscle groups in the stomach are commonly used this way.

Finally, the last category of sealing the breath is cavity press or nerve ending strike. The principle of this category is very similar to that of the muscle strikes, the only difference being that cavities are struck rather than muscle groups. This category is normally much more difficult both in principle and technique. However, when done correctly, it is more effective than striking the muscles.

In order to cause contraction of the lungs you must strike particular acupuncture cavities or the ends of the nerves which emerge from the lung area underneath the ribs. Striking these cavities accurately and to the right depth will affect the Chi in the muscles around the lungs, causing them to contract. Alternatively, you can strike the nerve endings. This causes pain to penetrate the ribs and shock the internal muscles surrounding the lungs into contraction, thus密封ing the breath.

4. Dian Mai or Duan Mai: Dian Mai is also known as Dim Mak, which is simply the same words spoken in a different dialect. Dian in Chinese means to point or press with a finger. Mai means Qi channels (Qi Mai), or blood vessels (Xue Mai). Therefore, Dian Mai means to strike or press either the Qi channels or the veins/arteries. When it means to strike or press the vein/artery, it is also called Duan Mai (sealing the vein/artery). Duan means to break, seal, or stop. Sometimes it is also called Tian Xue (blood press), such as when the artery in the temple is struck and ruptured. When Dian Mai means to strike or press the cavities on the Qi channels, it is also called Dian Xue (cavity press). Here, we will discuss Duan Mai and leave the discussion of Dian Xue for later.

In principle, Duan Mai can be done either by striking or pressing. A striking Duan Mai Qin Na can rupture the blood vessel and stop the blood circulation, which usually causes death. For example, when the temple is struck, the muscles in that area will tighten up and rupture the artery. A pressing Duan Mai Qin Na can also stop or seal the blood circulation. For example, sealing the neck artery will stop the blood circulation to your head and thus cut down the oxygen supply to the brain. This will cause unconsciousness or even death. There are two major blood vessels, one on either side of your neck, which continuously supply oxygen to your brain. When either or both of these are struck or pressed, the flow of blood to the brain can be stopped. Sometimes the muscles on the side of the neck remain tensed. If you do not know how to revive the victim, he will die from the lack of oxygen. Therefore, you must be careful in using sealing the vein/artery techniques. If you are not sure how to revive the person, do not use these techniques.

5. Dian Mai or Dian Xue: As mentioned, the other type of Dian Mai strikes or presses cavities on Qi channels, and is also called Dian Xue (pressing cavity). Dian means to press with a finger and Xue refers to the acupuncture cavities. The human body has more than 800 Qi cavities, mostly on the paths of the eight vessels and twelve channels. Two of the eight vessels are called the Governing and Conception Vessels (Du Mai and Ren Mai). The Qi in these two vessels circulates in a 24 hour cycle. The other twelve Qi channels are related to the twelve internal organs. The flow of Qi in these twelve channels is also related to the time of the day, with the emphasis switching from one channel to the next gradually every two hours. Furthermore, these eight vessels and twelve channels also have seasonal and annual cycles. When the Qi circulation in these vessels and channels is stagnant or stopped, the person will sicken or die. Acupuncture is a way to readjust the Qi circulation and cure illnesses.

Cavity press is a method to disturb or affect the opponent’s Qi circulation. There are about 108 cavities which can be struck or pressed to affect the Qi flow. Among these 108 cavities, 36 can cause death and the other 72 can cause numbness or unconsciousness. In order to make a strike effective, you must know the time of the major Qi flow (Zi Wu Hu Zhu) in that channel, the appropriate striking technique, and the depth of the cavity. This is a very complicated subject, and it can be very dangerous for a person to learn without supervision. In traditional Chinese martial society, a master will usually not pass these secrets on until he feels he can really trust a student. However, some techniques can be taught without too much danger. These cavities will not cause death, and most are attacked through the method called Zhua Xue (grabbing the cavity).

For a more complete treatment of these and other Qin Na techniques, please refer to Analysis of Shaolin Chin Na, or Comprehensive Applications of Shaolin Chin Na, published by YMAA Publications Center.
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Despite the hot weather, Dr. Yang’s South African seminar was a huge success. YMAA students from all over the world attended and were treated to a rigorous and almost non-stop workshop covering much of YMAA’s curriculum. However, thanks to Corlius Birkill, it was not all work and no play. Birkill hosted many events including a tour of an animal game reserve that featured a few thrills. Anyone who’s not used to seeing 500 pound lions roaming free certainly would be surprised to see one looking them squarely in the eye. I might add however that a game warden or two kept a close eye on any lion who happened to get a little too frisky. Plus the lions are fenced off from spectators.

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YMAA Publication Center continues to seek manuscripts on Martial Arts and Qigong. If you’ve got a book to publicize, let us know.

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