

ZHAO DAOXIN

THEORY OF FIST ART



YIQUAN ACADEMY, 2009

Zhao Daoxin

(Zhao Enqing)

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Translated from chinese by **Andrzej Kalisz**

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ZHAN ZHUANG METHOD

From translator: *most chinese edition of Zhao Daoxin's work lack this chapter. Some inconsistency between it at further chapters can suggest that it was written in earlier period than the rest.*

Zhan zhuang method is most basic practical movement, it embodies any activity.

Through zhan zhuang, gradually on various levels you get knowledge of internal aspect of body training. Knowledge which is gained this way cannot be achieved if you get rid of this method.

Zhan zhuang is learned step by step, from low to high level, from shallow view to deep understanding, from superficial and one sided to multidimensional.

Zhan zhuang is about seeking and finding principles. It is very important stage in the whole training process – stage of getting knowledge about principles inside, when you gradually gain understanding of the essence of martial art, understanding the principles of development, hence understanding of connection of all aspects related to whole body or detached from this whole.

So zhan zhuang is basic practice, preparing stage. Whether we are talking about cultivating health, strengthening body or practical use in life, it has deep meaning.

When you learn something, you need to take care that the preparatory stage is correct, there shouldn't be wrong points, as it will affect further progress. You need to understand clearly the means used at each stage – postures, mind activity, qi movement.

First postures. They are created by changes in position of shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees, ankles, neck, spine, waist, which is effect of shrinking and stretching muscles.

But you shouldn't allow joints to become too much bent, creating dead angles, because it would limit movement possibility, affecting the functions of straightening and bending and the flow of blood and qi.

In other word, right postures are favourable for the free flow of blood and qi in whole body,

providing nutrition to muscles, tendons and bones, changing clumsiness into agility, a quality change is gradually achieved.

Channels in whole body are paths for the flow of blood and qi. All organs are connected, all channels support unity. So blood and qi moving up and down, toward surface and toward inside, can nourish and defend whole body.

The process of quality change needs relatively long time. Distinctive results cannot be achieved in just 2-3 days. But you should not intentionally try to make it long. The progress should be steady, based on stable practice, only then the achieved results will be valuable.

Postures are result of changes of joints positions in their range of movement. Postures which people assume when doing all kinds of activities don't go beyond this range. And those postures which we need and choose have some meaning, which is related to the point of support, movement agility, profit for further development.

Focusing mind is very important. No matter what you are doing, if you are not focused on it, but instead thinking about something else, you will be able to do it really good. If you focus on what you are doing, you will gradually understand this better. In zhan zhuang you are checking your body, improving its attributes – this is not only matter of learning principles.

There is saying that you should focus inside, which means that your mind should not be wandering far away. If you are impatient, nervous, thinking about many things, you will not do well what you are supposed to do.

So during training you should be focused, breath should flow naturally, don't think about other things, but concentrate on observing what you are doing.

Mind activity not always obeys your intention, and often can manipulate you. This selfactivity is dynamic, sometimes increasing, sometimes decreasing. You should check this while practicing. If you notice that you started thinking about some other matters, instead being focused on exercise, just shift your main attention back to what you were supposed to do.

Awareness is embracing whole body inside and outside. When you notice mistake, you should correct it, allow free flow of blood and qi, nourishing internal and external.

Using awareness makes vibration appear in whole body, there is pulsating which is following the rhythm of breath. If it is watched from outside, limbs don't move, but inside mind creates harmonious stimulation, enhancing all functions of body.

Using qi – when awareness is embracing and affecting whole body, you don't think about not real, but you are based in reality, for sure you will achieve some results, if talking about body condition.

As for breath method, first you should concentrate on qihai. When you get the feeling of qi full in you abdomen and waist, feeling of warmth reaching spine and shoulders (which means feeling of connecting the du mai and ren mai channels), mind is leading this feeling to the limbs.

Mind focused on one point, gradually embraces whole body. Where mind is focused, blood and qi flow.

The changes of pulsating and relax stimulate function of all cells, stimulating flow of blood and qi in whole bod, improving nourishing functions. Many functions are positively stimulated. There is no more lack of substances which nourish cells, condition of body improves.

Inhalation calm, subtle, deep, long. Exhalation short, sudden, pressing. Inhale a lot, exale little. When you inhale, mind is leading it. When you exhale your chest and abdomen press the air out, shortly and suddenly, there is shrinking in whole body. After exhaling you immediately return to the state of relax and calmness. Inhaling should be as full as possible. Exhaling should stop at the moment when there is still some surplus. There should be feeling of some pulsating between subtle emptiness and thickness. Other breathing method will not be described here.

From the point of view of whole, there is emptiness inside and relax outside. When there is emptiness inside, all internal organs are comfortably relaxed, mind calm, breath stable, intention subtle. This is basis of emptiness and callmness. When outside is relax, tendons and muscles are relaxed, blood and qi flow and pulsate, awareness is acute, this is basis for springy reaction.

When inside there is emptiness and outside relax, tension is removed, spirit and will are alive and free, movements of limbs comfortable. When inside there is emptiness and callmness, mind can be focused. When outside there is relax, you cna react acutely, reaction is fast and agile. This what form and awareness are connected, movement and stillness are not opposite then.

Keep stillness in movement, and movement in stillness. Changes of form are supported by awareness. The impuls of awareness is expessed and body movement and face mimics. They are mutually their cause and result, creating each other, being an unity. This is necessary principle in martial art training.

This principle of unifying opposites is most basic in martial art training. You should not reject it. Gradually you make progress, getting experience, summarizing and systemazing what is conforming with reality, achieving quality and quantity changes, enriching what is true. This is deepening the knowledge of martial art.

TRAINING

We can often see some mistakes and shortcomings in training, for example when body is not unified and coordinated, so the connected, concentrated force cannot be developed. When movement is not supported by intention and there is lack of awareness of opponent, it is just some empty movements.

Such way of practice is not good for increasing technical level. Intention is not supporting the strategy of attack and defense. This affects use of technical means, reaction, changing directions, changing speed, swift start, turnings etc. As for strategy, it affects possibility of changes between moving forward and backward, between empty and full, between separating and concentrating. You should have right knowledge about this.

The main thing in training should be developing of the whole. You need strict attitude and clear principles: how to seek technical subtleness, how to increase attributes necessary for employing strategy, how to keep summarizing experience and thanks to this get solid basis.

There must be improving bones, muscles and central nervous system. Nervous system is especially important for developing ability of sharp, agile and right reaction.

To overcome passiveness, to strengthen awareness of time, to create numerous means which can be used in practice, organically linking technique and strategy with the aspect of intention and awareness, so body attributes and technique can achieve all sided development.

TRAINING METHODS

The basic goal of martial art training is increasing fighting ability. But many young people spend a lot of time on training, without much effect. In fight they are not able to cope with someone strong or someone who is used to fierce fighting. It is because they are walking on a windy path, which is not leading to the goal.

Of course those who only look for shortcuts and don't think about hard training will not become successful. But hard work alone is not enough, if you are not using efficient methods.

Scientific system of training methods is necessary if you want to increase fighting abilities with small effort in short time.

Training must be directly related to fighting. Tradition and innovation are both important. You need to fully develop your abilities needed for fighting.

The proper view of the subject of martial art is important for efficient training. You should not be prone to believing in value of some incredible methods. You should not be seduced by wonderful stories and beautiful demonstrations. You should not be superstitious and blindly worshipping. The biggest mistake some people make is that they don't recognize their own mistakes, thinking that their views and skills are perfect. They are not able to accept any criticism. They maintain that Chinese martial arts are superior to those of other countries, and that nothing can be compared to their own style. We should oppose such attitudes. Mastering martial art doesn't depend on number of techniques or on complexity. You should know that high level of skill is based on perfect use of simple methods. This is training of very common methods which is leading to really wonderful skill.

How should we work on increasing fighting abilities? It should be based on improving functions of nervous system, body attributes and movement skills. So the scientific training system must include mental training, training of body attributes and technical training.

We divide our training into: basic training, training of explosive power, training of absorbing attacks and fighting training.

Basic training includes: zhan zhuang, running, stretching, rope jumping. You should also learn the simplest, most basic movements of attack and defense. Strength training is supplemental, and is especially important for those who lack strength in some parts of body – but relaxing shoulders and hips should be always stressed.

After the first period of basic training, you should concentrate on training of explosive power and fighting training, with training of absorbing attacks as supplement. But basic training should not be neglected or abandoned.

Training of explosive power is main form of developing technical power. Usually we use repetitions of springy and abrupt movements. The movements are done at different angles. Sudden stopping is very important, as it helps to increase power in opposite direction.

Very efficient method of developing explosive power is shaking a pole. We shake waxwood pole in various directions, trying to transfer power to the tip of pole, as if body and pole were one.

Training of hitting objects is training of explosive power and of attacking techniques at the same time. There is hitting speedbag – developing speed, hitting heavy bag – developing power, and light ball – improving coordination. There is also free training with pads, which enables improving agility. You can also use any valuable methods of other martial arts and various sports disciplines.

Body cannot absorb attacks of sabre or spear. Absorbing hits is supplemental part of training. To survive fierce fight and win, you need strong will and also ability of absorbing punches. To develop this ability we usually use heavy ball or hard wooden stick, pressing or rolling on abdomen or limbs. Objects hard inside but soft outside can be used to hit some parts of body. Appropriately adjusting breathing is important. Don't use too hard objects and remember that hitting some parts of body is dangerous and should be avoided.

Seeing fighting training as something extremely difficult and dangerous and making it only part of most advanced practice is wrong. After short period of basic training, we should see fighting practice as „everyday rice”. But for safety use boxing gloves, don't wear hard and heavy shoes, or any objects which could be dangerous for training partner. Put some attention to the safety of the training place.

At beginning single attacks can be used, and actions of attack and defense can be repeated many times.

After achieving some fluency, the attacks and defense actions can be done with full power. In this kind of training the person on defense will be hit quite frequently, and this should be accepted as normal.

When you move to the proper fighting training, at beginning you should avoid engaging in fierce fight with opponent with higher skill. Only when practitioner is able to keep total awareness with some relax, free techniques and hard hitting can be allowed.

You should see fighting as a great opportunity for learning. You should practice with partners fighting in various ways and you should not be afraid of losing. Fighting with more opponents one after another or fighting with several opponents simultaneously are methods which help to further increase fighting abilities.

People often ask: what is better, straight or circular movement? Slow or fast? Soft or hard? Should we focus on breathing? On which leg weight should be put?

The answer is: in circular there should be straight and in straight there should be curve, there should be changes between slow and fast, soft and hard should supplement each other, breathing should be half conscious, half unconscious, position of center of weight should be changing.

Summarizing, you need to avoid extremes. You should seek the balance between opposites in order to achieve best results. „If using small amount, you will achieve the goal, if using too much, the effect will be opposite”. In training you should seek simple agility. You should know that unnumerable beautiful tunes are made of only a few sounds. In fighting simple techniques can be mixed, creating ever changing unlimitable possibilities.

Flowery and unusual is good for nothing more than demonstrations and impressing audience, while only simple can be freely used in fighting. Whether some technique can become your good weapons doesn't depend on if it is traditional and pronounced proper, but if you can use it efficiently and naturally in fighting. Each persons technique can be different, you don't need stick to some fixed pattern.

„There is no training without becoming tired”. The training method, which will bring fast effects demands that practitioner achieves point of being extremely tired during each training session. Training sessions don't need to be everyday, but amount and intensity of training should be sufficient. Also resting after training and proper nutrition are necessary.

To become great master of martial art is not like it seems to be in dreams of those who have not started training yet. Hard training can cause disappointment, losing interest and „taste” for martial art. When you start fighting, at beginning it will turn out that you are not able to do much and mostly it will be you, who will be beaten, and you will need to learn to accept being hit regularly. And if you will not keeping hard training, your skill will decrease again. Only with strong will and using scientific training methods you can move through the hardships or martial art training.

DEVELOPING PERFORMANCE ATTRIBUTES

Performance attributes determine man's movement abilities. A big part of training in any sport is spent on developing those abilities. In martial arts developing performance attributes is called „to practice gongfu” or „to develop gongli”. Only if you have necessary attributes you can use technique efficiently. Technique is a way of employing attributes.

In modern sports theory basic physical attributes are: strength, speed, endurance, flexibility, agility. Although each of those attributes has its own characteristics, they are all interrelated. Improving level of one of them has positive influence on developing other. And insufficient level of one of them limits possibility of developing other.

Strength

Strength is ability of overcoming resistance in movement. Various sports put a lot of stress on developing strength. In order to increase strength, you need to train muscles and improve functioning of nervous system. This is because muscles contraction is the source of power. Bigger size of a muscle means bigger strength. And in result of improvement of functioning of nervous system those muscles which you want to use in coordinated way are shrinking, while antagonistic muscles become loose to a great degree.

Speed

Speed means ability of fast execution of movement. It is often expressed in form of fast or slow reaction, time of executing some movement, frequency of repetition of movement, or in speed of whole body movement. Effective speed is result of speed of reaction and speed of muscle contraction. Of course in case of running, additionally length of step affects speed. Speed of reaction of nervous system is usually seen as time from receiving stimulus to starting movement. The more sensitive feeling, the higher level of alertness, the better mastered technique, the faster is reaction. Speed of muscles contraction depends on kind of fibres, muscles strength, level of excitement of muscles groups and degree of developing conditioned reactions. The bigger number of fast fibres (explosive movement muscles), the bigger their strength, the faster contraction.

Endurance

Endurance is ability of long continuing movement/activity. There is close relation between endurance and breathing. The more oxygen you can absorb, the bigger consumption of oxygen during movement you can stand, the bigger is your endurance. So endurance depends on how much burden you can put on breathing system, heart, blood circulation system and muscles.

Flexibility

Is determined by range of movement and level of relaxation. Depends on range of movement of joints, size of structures around joints, elasticity of muscles, tendons, ligaments and skin, and on harmonious controlling muscles by nervous system.

Agility

Agility means ability of making changes in changing situation. It is global expression of all attributes, ability of reacting in space and time according to changes.

Above we listed the basic performance attributes. If you sum them up and apply them in martial art, the result can be called: ability of conducting fight – we should put stress on developing this.

Explosiveness

Explosiveness is most important attribute in fighting. It comes from strength and speed together. Increasing strength helps to increase speed. Speed helps to increase power of hitting. This attribute depends on congenital factors and on training. Generally, people with long tendons and elastic muscles have congenital attributes on which explosiveness is based. But training can increase the explosive power to a level much higher than average.

Jumping ability

Jumping ability is one of expressions of explosiveness. Those who have extraordinary jumping ability can develop great explosiveness. In fighting the jumping ability can help you to defend against opponent's attacks and to maintain body balance.

Coordination

Coordination is important attribute in fighting. It is summing up flexibility and agility. Thanks to coordination between various parts of body and coordination between movements you can make the movement beautiful, precise, focused. You can also prevent exhaustion. In developing coordination most important is improving movement functions and aiming toward technical perfection.

Tolerating negative stimuli

This means ability of adapting to hard situations in fierce fighting. You cannot neglect this attribute in fighting. It is dependend on endurance, ability of taking blows, strong will, courage. In a long lasting severe fight or a fight in difficult situation, or when during the fight opponents forces you into difficult situation, this attribute is necessary in order to be able to win.

This is only a preliminary sketch on this issue, which should help practitioners to understand better what should be goals of training and to plan their training according to their own situation, so they can focus on what is most important in their case. Only this way they will be able to increase their level of ability of conducting fight efficiently.

UNDERSTANDING FORCES

I have noticed that some friends exaggerate while praising my martial art, especially if talking about jinfa – methods of using force, and this way creating impression that it is something superhuman. Actually such power, often used in martial arts and terrifying opponent is not something supernatural. The power which I have achieved is effect of my study on the way of generating and transferring force and of training which is based on a system of effective methods. Of course it was very important for increasing my practical fighting abilities.

The research on force is crucial part of practical martial art. When people are fighting, this is always about mutual relation of forces. All martial art, from technique to strategy, is about how to use force better. Martial arts experts talk about 2 kinds of forces: jin and li. This is to explain that there is difference between jin, which is result of martial art training and typical, unrefined force – li. But in fact the concept of jin is included in the term li. Analyzing and studying forces, together with fighting practice, we can have solid basis for science, training and using the martial art. Then we can see difference between true and false, finding the best way toward high level of skill.

1. Nature of force in martial art

What does force mean in martial art? You don't see it, but you can feel it. It is expressed inside a body and between bodies. It is transferring energy from hitting part to the part being hit. Man's force is result of muscles contraction, effect of transforming chemical energy into mechanical energy. Force can change object's shape or dislocate it.

In a fight effect of using force can be expressed as:

- Damage. For example breaking bone, breaking tissues or internal organs, concussion or other external and internal damages,
- Change of speed of objects movement. For example, projecting, overthrowing,
- Mix of above effects.

In real fighting it can cause being thrown down, being projected, being injured, fainting or even death. Effect of using force depends not only on its size, but also direction and point where force is applied (three attributes of force). In more complex situation, also time of applying force, speed of changes of force and effect of mixing forces should be taken into account.

2. Analyzing force in martial art

The change of state of body on which works depends on the speed of issuing force by another body. Usually, the bigger speed, the bigger change of state of body which is absorbing force. When speed is bigger, the damage is also bigger, but relocation of the body absorbing force is smaller. When hitting is slower, damage is smaller and relocation bigger. Of course this is related also to the amount of force and durability of object. This must be in accordance with Newton's laws of mechanics. Force of fast punch is called hitting force. Slow force is called continuous force. Force which is something between, which causes fast relocation of object, is called throwing force.

- **Continuous/slow/static force.** This is related to a situation during fight, when opponents are moving slowly or when they are in static situation. This happens often when there is pushing and pulling, lifting and pressing, resisting and squeezing. Both bodies are moving with similar speed in the same direction. Apart from instances of breaking or twisting the structures which absorb force, otherwise this kind of force doesn't create damage.

According to Newton's second law of physics: **active force – resisting force = mass of the body on which force is working x its acceleration.**

So we can see, that only when your force is bigger than opponent's force of resistance, you can move his body in direction in which you apply force. And the smaller is the force of resistance, the easier you can move him, and the smaller force absorbed inside his body, the smaller chance for damage.

For example when you use a qinna technique, twisting opponent's hand, the force of resistance, in result of limitation of body, cannot be bigger than the twisting force. When the resisting force is small you could cause opponent falling down. When this force is big, it can easily create damage in the joint. In such situation opponent rather follows force, because he prefers to fall down, then become injured.

- **Hitting force.** The explosive force is a basis for hitting force. Usually you can see it in hitting, kicking, bumping etc. This is kind of force most often used in fighting. Although it doesn't move opponent's body, it creates damage.

We can say that: **Effect of hitting is proportional to the weight of object which is hitting and it's speed at the moment of hit, and adversely proportional to the time of applying force and size of surface on which force is applied.**

If pressure is bigger than durability of object, it will be damaged. How can we increase this pressure, so hitting could become more effective?

- Increasing weight of the object which is hitting. Usually hitting with knee or elbow is more dangerous than hitting with fist or foot. This is because elbow or knee are heavier than fist or foot. Often used method of increasing mass, is tensing body in the moment of impact, so it works as one object.
- Increasing speed at the moment of impact. Without speed there is no hitting. Although shoulder or hip are strong, it is difficult to use them as extremely dangerous weapon, because it's difficult to move them very fast. Some very big man sometimes cannot win in fighting, because he is too slow. When hitting in the right way, the maximum speed should be achieved in the moment of impact. Tensing too much can prevent this. So before the actual hit muscles should be appropriately relaxed and coordinated.
- Decreasing time of applying force. Time of applying force means time from making contact with object, to completing action. It is not just immediately moving your hand back, because it would be only tapping – touching, and not really hitting. The idea is that when you use relatively hard surface to hit relatively soft target, you don't allow the target enough time to amortization.
- Decreasing size of surface. The thinner knife, the sharper blade of a spear, the smaller surface on which force works, the more dangerous they become when used. In empty hand fighting you use fists, palms, fingers, feet, knees, elbows, head and other parts of body in which there are edges of bones, so you can make the hitting surface smaller and this way increase pressure of impact.

For example, when using straight punch, you need primarily to increase speed and explosive force.

- In order to achieve maximum speed, body, and especially hands, should be relaxed. Back foot is pressing on ground, body is turning, so each part of body can achieve maximum speed. The more coordinated and relaxed is body, the better.

- When you almost hit opponent, front foot is pressing ground, forward movement is stopped, force is directed upward and concentrated in the hitting hand, in result fist is even more accelerated.
 - When fist hits, in whole body, especially in upper limbs there appears contraction of muscles, this way body makes one unit, hitting with bigger mass. Additionally there is clenching fist, bending wrist and forearm rotation, which increase power and help to keep direction.
- **Projecting force.** The goal is to make opponent move back at some distance. The speed is smaller than with hitting force, but bigger than with continuous force. Size of this force depends on weight of opponent's body. Speed is such that time of contact is long. In order to develop skill of using this force, you need a lot of experience gained through long time practice.

The higher speed, the further opponent will be projected. The starting speed of projecting movement is proportional to the difference between applied force and force of resistance, and to the time of applying force, and adversely proportional to the weight of opponent's body. So you can see, that the bigger force and time of applying it, the better will be effect of projecting action. And the bigger is opponent's resisting force, the more stable is his body, the more difficult will be projecting him. So short, but solidly built and strong people have advantage.

When a fight occurs, weight of bodies of both opponents is constant. The ways to increase efficiency of projecting:

- Increasing force: in order to have big projecting force, you need to have big basic general force an explosive force, you need to use whole body to release force. While releasing force, center should be low, movements small. One foot is pressing ground in the back, the other is stopping body movemen in the front.
- Decreasing opponent's resisting force: by using a series of technical skills, destroying opponent's balance. For example: using abrupt pulling, before projecting, disturbing opponent's defense, using a series of continuous attacks, forcing opponent to move back, using sudden changes of forces, using force which is lifting opponent, so he cannot put his foot firmly on the ground etc.

- Increasing time of applying force: this is crucial in projecting. When we have two people with the same strength, but one of them is able to project opponent further, this is probably, because he is applying force for longer time. When you can use appropriate amount of force, then you need to focus on the question of time. This time, means time of contact with opponent's body. During this time the applied force must be bigger than resisting force, so you can accelerate opponents body. Also the distance on which force is applied should be as big as possible, so his body can achieve maximum speed.

Above was a preliminary analysis of three kinds of forces used in fighting. In fact the essence of those three kinds of forces is the same, only the effect of using them is different. In real fight using hitting force is obviously more dangerous. Mastering projecting skill will increase your level of fighting ability. But without mastering hitting force, it is difficult to defend against dangerous opponent.

3. Differentiating forces in martial art

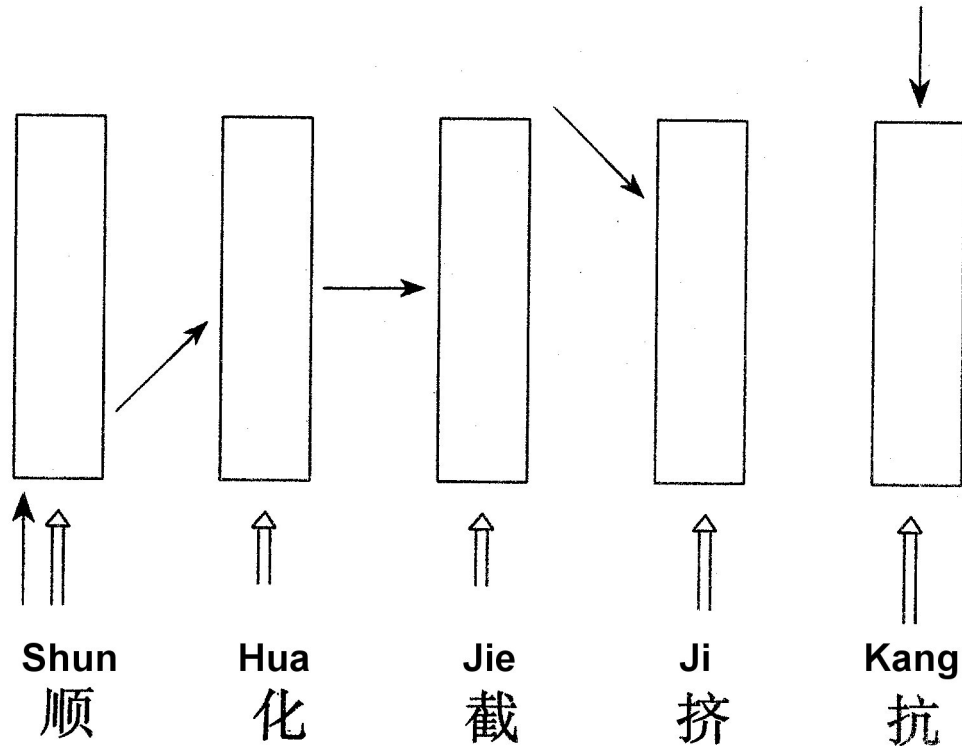
Hard force – soft force: softness and hardness in martial art cannot be separated. Hardness doesn't mean stiff, clumsy force. Softness doesn't mean soft, loose force. Elastic force, hard but in which there is softness, we call hard force. Springy force, soft, but in which there is hardness, we call soft force. You cannot tell which is better. When you have both, you can make changes according to situation, only then you can achieve understanding of forces.

Listening force – moving force: listening force doesn't mean listening with ears, but means feeling path of opponents force by using contact. This needs relaxing muscles and focusing attention – only then you can develop sensitivity of feeling. Moving force means preparing nervous system and muscles, just before releasing force. Usually it is expressed by activation of nervous system and some stretching of muscles, pulse rate increases, breathing becomes faster.

Straight force – spiral force: force with one direction is straight force. It can be big, is related to speed, is easy to use – these are advantages. But there are also shortcomings – it is difficult to change its direction, opponent can easily neutralize it. Force, which direction can change at any moment is curved force. If the curve makes a circle, this is whirling force. Such forces can change easily, but they are not straight enough. But when you mix straight force with whirling force, you

achieve spiral force. It has advantages of both straight and whirling forces. It's easy to master it's direction, easy to use it against opponent's force and easy to drill into opponent's action.

Borrowing force – neutralizing force. Borrowing force and neutralizing force are issues related to adding forces and to speed. Like on this diagram (thick line means opponent's force. Thin line means direction of my force):



When my force is directed opposite to opponents force, we call this **kang** (resisting).

When we have obtuse angle between vectors of my force and opponents force, this is called **ji** (squeezing).

When we have right angle, this is called **jie** (interception).

When we have acute angle, this is called **hua** (neutralizing)

When both forces have the same vector, this is called **shun** (following the same direction).

In martial art the hua and shun forces are often described with term jie (borrowing). It's clear that by using shun you can spare effort. Then there is hua and jie. Ji need big effort and kang biggest.

All those kinds of forces are used in fighting. In order to defeat hard by using softness, control big by using small, you need to master those methods which allow to spare effort, and try to borrow force. But if you would only stress „redirecting thousand pounds with four ounces”, neglecting developing body's strength and other ways of using force, it would be very superficial and dangerous attitude.

Centrifugal force – centripetal force: When during fight opponents do rotative movements, there appear centripetal and centrifugal forces. When one of opponents make the other's body rotate, through his own body centripetal force is transfered, while through the others body – centrifugal force. After breaking contact, the thrown body is moving on line tangential to the circle. The bigger speed and bigger circle, the further away he will be thrown. Speed is most important.

Empty force - force field: so called empty force (kong jin) means transmitting force to opponents body from dystance, without contact. It's like magnetic field. Hence the talk about "hitting from one hundred yards", 'killing ox from behind a mountain', "light body skill". Human body probably has some functions and hidden possibilities which we don't know yet. But possibility of using "supernatural skills" in fighting was never proved in reality. The only force field which people are able to use in fighting so far is earth gravitation.

Differentiating forces means analyzis and differentiating forces in martial art. It's not about practitioner mechanically using such and such forces, but about how to develop scientific, efficient training system. Moreover this is first step on the path of linking martial art experience with theory of mechanics.

ABOUT EXPLOSIVE RELEASING POWER

Martial art means actual fighting. And fighting is about mutual relation of forces. So using force is crucial issue in martial art.

In fight, the one who is bigger and stronger usually wins, but instances of softness defeating hardness also occur frequently. This is because efficiency of using force doesn't depend solely on normal body strength, but is related to many factors, like direction of force, changes of force, point where force is applied, speed etc. We can say that efficiency of practical use of force is mix of all those factors.

Strong will to win helps to overcome problems in attack and defense. So the strategy of fast attack and various changes, active changing position, changing between real and fake was developed, in order to cause opponent feel lost and make mistakes, and at the same time not to use any opportunity, to defeat opponent with this natural, sharp ability of attacking. It is clear, that technical proficiency, improving performance attributes and subjective perception of being able to act freely will improve efficiency of using force.

The last stage of hitting is usually explosive using force. This kind of force is frightening, most efficient, causing most serious effects. „Incredible force” of ancient and present masters means this kind of explosive force of the highest quality.

Explosivity is mix of strength and speed. Big force, issued in short time we call explosive force (it is also called surprising force, force of a bullet). Strength and speed result in efficiency, this is the high level of expression of ability of human body. So increasing the explosive force depends on increasing strength and speed.

Speed depends on fastness of reaction of nervous system and speed of muscles contraction. Increasing speed increases effective force. And developing strength helps to increase speed. Usually we use strength training in order to improve explosive power. We choose typical movement of issuing force and we repeat them many times, developing those groups of muscles which are often used, and through fighting training we can increase ability of reaction of nervous system. This is short path toward improving. Apart from dynamic exercises, static exercises should be used supplementally. You need to develop endurance too.

This is also important, that those muscles which take part in certain movement of issuing power work in coordinated way, and those who don't take part in this movement stay relaxed. Because any issuing of power occurs with using many sections of body, if there is some problem in some part, the effective force is not bigger than force of the weakest part. For example, when hitting with palm, this is actually a movement in which arm, shoulder, torso, waist, hips, legs together transmit the movement. If there is big force generated in arms, but there is lack of strength elsewhere, force will affect your own body, instead of opponent's body.

Thanks to the training the movements of issuing force become coordinated, precise and linked, breathing is in order with movement, whole body is as if one muscle, full of springy strength. This „muscle” normally is soft and sensitive, but guided by impuls of mind, can contract maximally in a moment.

In fighting ability of resolute, continuous and repetitious issuing of power is very important. Because big power is issued in short time, opponent have no chance to be prepared. This way not only his physical defence will be destroyed, but also his mind intention and ability of reacting will be affected.

There should be no fixed pattern or rythm in using explosive power, but the aim should be clear. In any case of issuing power you should be relaxed, so you can increase speed of attack. At the moment of contact with target there occurs sudden contraction of muscles, focusing power, which penetrates the target. Immediately after this you move to starting situation – relax, and in your mind there is readiness to make next attack. It should be like lightening and thunder at the sime time – there is not time to close eyes, there is no time to put palms on your ears.

Of course effectiveness of using explosive force depends on actual situation, opponent's skill and some possible additional factors.

It should also be noted, than only people healthy and at right age can conduct training of explosive power. Only those who are ready to practice patiently and see small results step by step, can finally success. And even then, not each of those who train actively can achieve high level.

MINDSET IN FIGHTING

In fight and at training the situation that someone who is technically proficient becomes distracted, careless, his movements are not connected, muscles become stiff, is quite often. There is no awareness of fighting and situation of fighting. If someone just likes to play with beautiful techniques, he is not able to achieve the ability of using opportunity in fighting. Such person will not be able to conduct continuous attacking. The source of such problems is in lack of right mental attitude, which is necessary for fighting.

Intention, awareness, mental attitude – there is nothing mysterious and unusual in it. It is just kind of abstractive, but strong tendention toward some clear goal. For example when someone is pressing your head under water, you will feel your own intention of upward movement. This intention in martial art is called intention of attacking. This is not thinking activity, but some trend, aim to defeat opponent, without thinking about means, without thinking about cost. If there is not such intention during training, it's just empty movements – this seriously limits possibility of improving technically. If you lose this intention in fight, someone at lower technical skill will defeat you easily.

If intention in fight is not sufficient, nervous system will not be alert enough, reaction will be delayed. The time between receiving stimulus and contraction of muscles or between noticing opportunity for attack and actually making this attack will be relatively long. There might appear moments of hesitation, of doubt. Speed and force will be low. Your actions will not be efficient or even opponent will be able to use them against you.

But if intention is too strong and violent, the ability of fast reacting, force, speed and agility can become limited. And opponent can easier notice your aim, attention is too much focused on one, and not noticing the rest, you become tired very soon.

The right use of intention in martial art should be based on using mainly medium intensity during training or fighting and swift changes according to actual needs, in the state „between intention and no intention”. In real fight, your mind should not be occupied with matters of life or death, you just need to do your best. But this is not just something which is result of systematic training, when your level is gradually increasing with time of practice. At some point you need to enter the state which can be described as „being in harmony with outside world”, or „being one with outside world”.

Developing intention needed in fighting is closely related to personality and will power of practitioner. Those who are resolute, energetic, when it comes to fighting will attack actively, not hesitating, easily going through hard moments. Those clever, smart are able to keep calm and counter-attack sharply. But those who are acting hastily, but are not persistent, or those good-hearted, but who are afraid of problems, will hardly maintain right intention for longer time. Actually personality is something complex. In case of many people it is difficult to understand their personality and character. Martial art training can help in improving personality, changing weak character into strong, changing slow witted into smart. So intention training is necessary element of mental training in martial art.

MOVEMENT MISTAKES AND WHAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED IN FIGHTING

34 examples of mistakes in position and movement

1. Inclining to one side – body is not balanced and stable
2. Inclining head
3. Soft top – lack of upward force
4. Goggling eyes – unnatural expression of anger
5. Openin mouth
6. Raising shoulders
7. Excessive pulling in of chest
8. Hunching back
9. Excessive leaning forward
10. Leaning backward
11. Bending and excessive twisting waist
12. „Detached elbows” - „floating elbows” - „extremes” (hands) detached from „roots” (upper arms)
13. Excessive bending wrists
14. Clenching fists – fists permanently clenched
15. Excessive separating fingers
16. Inclining hips
17. Excessive bending knees – excessive sitting down
18. Opening crotch
19. Standing with legs completely straight
20. Too long steps, making swift changing position impossible
21. Soft legs – lack of coordination in legs
22. Lack of relax
23. Not using waist
24. Attacking with both hands simultaneously
25. Not moving back after attack
26. Attacking chaotically
27. Forced breath and forced strength
28. Not distinguishing subtle and solid
29. Lack of continuity

30. Fear
31. Empty movements
32. Disruption between spirit and force
33. Trying to make everything fast and violent.
34. Movement reaching maximum limits.

What should be avoided when facing an enemy

1. Fearing your opponent: being in fear because of opponent's fame, being nervous and tense when meeting opponent, losing the will to fight.
2. Underestimating your enemy: not being prepared mentally and technically, recklessly attacking and advancing in fight.
3. Being reckless in trials: being fond of trial fights with people, forgetting about right defense intention.
4. Fighting after drinking alcohol: comparing skills with other while being drunk or not being in good mental condition.
5. Not recognizing enemy's intention: not observing opponent, not trying to get his intention, not understanding him.
6. Not evaluating the location: not considering the influences of environment, neglecting the effect of time, location, other people etc.
7. Not considering strong and weak points: not observing the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent, not being able to use strategy appropriate for various opponents.
8. Not attacking when there is opportunity: shrinking, being passive, losing opportunities for attacking.
9. Not having a solid strength: only seeking to impress viewers, not seeking real efficiency.
10. Fiercely attacking with not solid power: being too anxious, hysterical, confused, acting blindly.
11. Having too compassionate heart and soft hands: weak intention of attack, being too cautious, not being focused, pulling punches.
12. Using fixed forms: imitating orthodox techniques, without adapting to situation, without creativity.
13. Not being ready for next action: thinking only about one action, not having force and not being ready for next action.

ATTACK

During all history of martial arts cases of winning just by using defensive actions were rare and exceptional. You cannot count only on opponent's mistakes. You cannot hope that your defense will be so solid as a wall is rain-tight – protecting against rain and wind. If you want to win, you must be active, you must attack.

Attacking is active using relatively hard parts of your body in contact with relatively fragile parts of opponent's body. Some energy is transferred with use of some „form” of strength, affecting opponent's psychology and injuring his body. The goal of training of attacking and the study of attacking is to increase number of efficient attacks during real fight.

Number of efficient attacks = number of attacks x attacking efficiency

In order of increasing number of efficient attacks in fight, you need to make as many attacks as possible, but even more important is increasing attacking efficiency. This is the main object of the study of attacking. Attacking efficiency is depending on hitting efficiency and efficiency rate.

Hitting efficiency = number of hits/number of attacks

Efficiency rate = number of efficient hits/number of hits

If you make an attack, but you don't hit target, there is no efficiency we could speak about. So the principle „when you attack, do it such, that you will hit opponent” is basic demand of attacking. But hitting is not enough yet. If you hit opponent, but it doesn't even cause bigger pain, this is not efficient hit. So you cannot neglect the principle „hit should bring effect”.

Attacking efficiency rate = hitting efficiency x efficiency rate

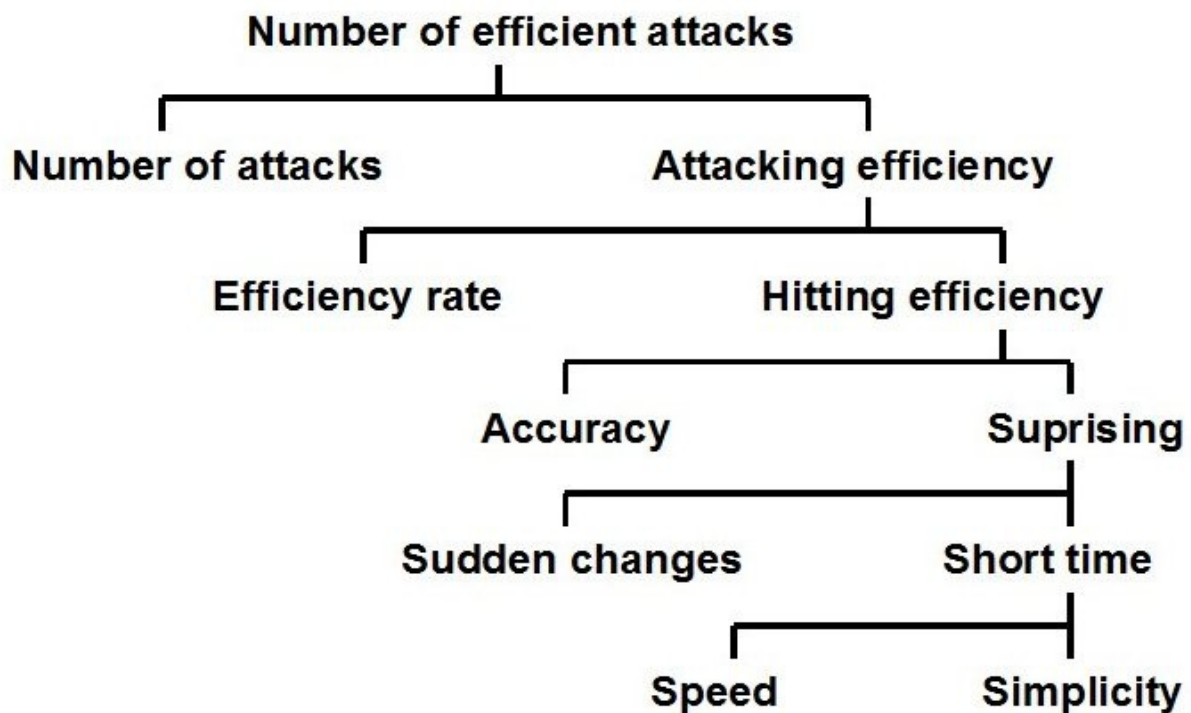
How to increase hitting efficiency and efficiency rate? There are two ways:

- attacking in a way which is surprising, so opponent cannot predict attack and cannot react in time
- increasing accuracy of attacks in fast movement.

So the method of increasing the efficiency rate is about using relatively big energy at relatively fragile place of opponent's body. Knowing such places, during fight you should try to increase power and penetration at the moment of contact.

How to make the attack surprising? Firstly – you should make the time of attack short. Secondly – you should make the attacks changing suddenly. Time of attack is time from noticing opportunity to completing the action. In order to make this time short, the attacks must be fast and simple. Fast means that relatively long movement should be made in relatively short time. Simple means to make movements less complicated, eliminating unnecessary movements, making the path of attack shorter. Suddenly changing attacks is expressed by sudden starting and stopping movement, sudden changes of direction and sudden changing to other movements. So, while working on increasing speed, you should also take care that there is no predictable rhythm and pattern in your movement.

To make it easier to understand we will summarize it this way:



Summarizing, in order to increase quality of attack, during training and during fight you need try to attack fast, simple, accurately and all the time changing ways of attack. You need to increase penetration and power of hitting, make it hard, make the surface of contact small, being clear about which part you hit. When you have basis which is some guarantee of attacking efficiency, you need to attack a lot. But while trying to increase number of attacks, you should not cause decrease of efficiency rate.

All relatively hard parts of body, which can be moved with relatively big speed, can be used as weapons for attacking. The more of the basic ways of hitting you master, the better will be your fighting technique. Although some masters used just one or two methods as their main weapon, real master should have more complete command of technique. In free full contact fighting the main forms of attack include hitting, throwing, intercepting and projecting. Hitting is most important. Usually there is hitting with hand, which can be used in multiple agile ways; kicks, which are powerful; hitting with knees and elbows, which are used in closer distance.

There are various types of attacks. Generally we can divide them into: fake, fast, strong and counters. Each of them has their own character and advantages. In fighting they are mixed and supplemented by each other. None of them can replace any other.

Fake attack is usually used before actual attack. It allows you to get to know your opponent better. It could also be used in order to mislead opponent. When you make fake attack, at the same time you keep strong defense. After the fake attack, fast attack or strong attack is already waiting. The advantage of fake attack is that opponent doesn't know whether it is fake or real. Using fake attack and fake intention you create image of reality. But if you repeat fake attack many times, without following with real attack, it is big mistake.

In order to make fast attack, you must grasp opportunity. When you make sudden attack, opponent is not able to react with defensive action in time. This is using small to control big, using skill to defeat force. This is very wide subject, which would need more discussion.

When you are standing in front of an opponent who is prepared for a fight, you need to break his defense by using strong attack. Strong attack means comparing strength, comparing physical attributes. You need strong will of fighting, resolute decision and dangerous techniques. But when you make strong attack, your defense is weak, and your opponent can use this against you. So you

cannot be too reckless while using strong attacks. We prefer to use strong attack when opponent is in unfavorable situation and cannot counter too easily.

In defense you need to be ready to make counter-attack. As we said, the stronger opponent's attack, the weaker his defense. So if you will be able to defend against opponent's strong attack, you can easily counter-attack. There is a lot of similarity between counter-attack and fast attack. Counter attack could be seen as defense mixed with fast attack.

There are fighters who attack actively, and those who are more passive in attacking. Those attacking actively tend to attack a lot. Those more passive don't neglect attacking, but they care more about efficiency of attacking. Short person should use short position, and try to make distance shorter. Someone tall should attack from distance. Generally, using attack and strategy of attack depends on specific person, place and situation.

DEFENSE

People, when attacked, are doing some kind of defensive action automatically. Defense in martial art means developing and improving this natural ability. To be able to make appropriate defensive action when attacked, you need to use reasonable defensive technique.

In traditional martial art, because of wrong understanding of the principle „treating movement with calm, controlling opponent with attack which starts later”, many people avoid attacking actively. They stress clear recognizing opponents path of force, and only then reacting accordingly. And they even seek for the ideal of defense: „I don't want to hurt opponent, I only don't allow him to hurt me”. But those who have experience of real fighting know: if you don't attack and you don't counterattack, no matter how well you defend yourself, actually you will be in passive position and getting hit. So the most dangerous mistake in defense is thinking that you will be able to defeat opponent limiting yourself to defense. The key to efficient defense is making opponent continuously fear your attacks.

Defense is much more difficult than attacking, because attack is action which you want to do yourself, and defense must be in accordance with what opponent wants to do. So we advice putting stress on attacking. But it doesn't mean that attack is better than defense, or that attacking can replace defense. In some situations someone proficient in attacking can be defeated by someone proficient in defense. There was such situation in our training group. The attacker skill was ripe, the attacks dangerous. The defender was blocking and dodging, waiting for opportunity and hitting then. The attacker planned to win fast, attacking fiercely, but the defender provoked him to extend attack, putting him in inconvenient position, and using it against him.

Thanks to analyzis of that situation we can summarize several functions of right defense in fighting.:

- You can better feel rythm, pattern in opponent's attacks.
- You can achieve that your own methods of attack are „not revealed', are difficult to feel and predict by opponent.
- You can provoke opponent to become careless
- You can make opponent's defense „empty”.
- You can make opponent feel tired or feel psychological pression

Defensive actions should be natural, spontaneous actions based on speed, sensitivity of feeling (predicting) and awareness of the moment. There is no time „to check seats numbers and then sit down”. If some way of defense is not working in many various situations, you can use it in some kind of situations, but you will be hopeless in many other situations.

There are many methods of defense. There is deflecting, which redirects opponents attack. There is dodging. There is blocking possibility of making movement by opponent, before he actually starts it. There is working with distance, e.g. by „sticking” to opponent. And in relatively difficult situation you can take hits with relatively strong parts of your body, using bending, diagonal position, shrinking, to decrease possibility or eliminate injuries of you own body. No matter which method of defense, important rules are: speed, small movement, mixing defense with attack and counter-attack. Defense is not just about retreating and escaping.

At the moment when you are attacking, the possibility of defending yourself is most limited, so developing ability of defending while attacking is important. When you make an attack, make it efficient. You shouldn't just attack blindly and chaotically. And it shouldn't be just touching opponent.

Learning to defend yourself needs special training. You must put effort into improving footwork, body work, hands work – intercepting, leading into empty, neutralizing opponent's force etc. You need to develop feeling of distance, direction, time, force. You need to remember that being defeated should not discourage you, but should become opportunity to collecting and summarizing experience, so you can become winner in the future.

STRATEGY OF FAST ATTACK

Fighting on high level is comparing strength, but even more it's comparing wisdom, intelligence. Actually all people have some natural abilities of attack and defense. People want to learn martial art in order to be able to defend opponent with higher level of skill than they possess themselves at the moment. No one is perfect. Higher skill doesn't mean being invincible. You should try to understand the factors which make opponent better than you, and at the same time you need to seek those aspects in which you are better than him. In this way you should create a system of methods which help to develop your advantages and eliminate shortcomings. Fighting in wise way means using your advantages against opponent's disadvantages, and preventing him from using his own advantages.

Someone big and strong will probably be not so fast and agile. This is place for using the strategy of fast attack. This is most active strategy of fighting.

While strong attack makes it hard for opponent to defend himself, fast attack makes him unable to react. This is sudden, unexpected attack, used in situation, when opponent's defense is not strong, when his attack didn't bring result, or when he didn't manage to retreat. It is expressed by sudden change or sudden attack, leading to surprising victory. Actions are fast, simple, swift and surprising.

Although fast attack is one unity, if you analyze it, you can divide it into three stages: intention, action, completion.

The stage of intention is the time of preparing fast attack. Most important is grasping occasion. Occasion means situation, when opponent is not able to defend some part of his body. Grasping this occasion is necessary condition for making fast attack. When it is grasped, you can make fast attack. If you lose it, you can still rely on strong attack. To grasp occasion you need to discover it. This needs some control over your mental state, so you keep strong attacking intention, calm mind and feeling of comfort. Only then you can focus, only then you can keep sensitive feeling, being able to notice opponent's weak points in constantly changing situation of fighting. You cannot only wait for occasion, counting for happy coincidence. You need to create occasions and fight for creating them. Creating occasions needs keeping strong intention of counter-attacking during attack and defense, especially during defense. It depends on developing and being able to maintain some feeling of being ready and able to act.

Stage of action is speeding up the action of fast attack. Grasping occasion is still not the same as actually using it. To use occasion, you need to make action and complete it before opponent moves back to defense, dodging or counter-attacking. So the speed is most important. This is expressed in the name of fast attack. Fast attack needs the highest level of speed and changes of speed.

Appearing of occasions should be almost the same as making action. So fast attack is based on most simple, most comfortable movements, in which you can achieve the highest speed. You need to achieve the level of full proficiency and automation of those movements, without need of thinking about them.

Completion is actually hitting opponent. Occasion means grasping the right moment. Action means using favourable situation. After developing the feeling of time and space, you need to focus on appropriate using of force, energy. Favourable situation appears only for a moment, after which great danger can come. Using dangerous action in favourable situation, means changing temporal occasion into final victory. It need hitting opponent hard during the stage of completion.

Compassion or doubt will result in losing at this stage everything which was achieved earlier.

Of course fast attack doesn't guarantee victory. So just reaching opponent's body with your hit shouldn't be seen as the end of the fight, but you should immediately move to position of being ready to fight, take care of your defense and be ready for next attack.

THEORY OF ATTACKING SPECIFIC POINTS

In martial art there is a theory of attacking specific vital points – **dian xue**. For dozens of years I used only to hear about it, but never met anyone who would be able to use it in fighting. And in 1920s and 1930s everybody was repeating those words: dian xue, dian xue!

As they describe it and do it, it is about poking with tips of two fingers various points on body, depending on time of day, this way causing someone being not able to move, not able to control himself, so you can play with him like with a puppet. You can cause some light or serious effects, including death. They say about 360 such points. Generally they are divided in some categories. Acting on some of them can cause death or cause crying, laughing, numbing, stuttering, coming back to consciousness etc. Incredible effects in result of light poking.

I didn't learn dian xue, I don't know secrets of this art, so I don't dare to discuss it blindly. But the fact that nobody was able to demonstrate it, results in some doubts.

After dozens of years of practicing martial art, I'm not able to hit opponent each time I want. Even if I hit him, it is not sure if I will actually injure him, because opponent is in movement and is making changes all the time, attack and defense seem to appear clearly for a moment, but then seem to be unfathomable again, there is no fixed pattern – in such situation achieving intended goal of attack is not easy.

And they suggest that when you master dianxue, you can use it easily. You just poke some point, right for given time of the day, and opponent will immediately lose ability of controlling himself, you can make him move as you wish – this is something close to fantasy.

In the theory about attacking points according to time of the day, it is said about „alive, moving substance”, which is circulating through body, at some time reaching some place. Attack must come exactly at that place, otherwise the intended effect will not be achieved.

I don't really know. If two dianxue experts meet each other, and both know, where are those points, right for attacking at the time, so they both will defend them closely, what then?

For dozens of years we heard a lot, we've seen a lot. But how did it happen that in so many fights, it just didn't happen that someone accidentally hit such point, making opponent losing control and

starting doing strange movements and taking strange positions about which they talk? So many people, so long time, and there was not one situation which would prove that theory. This theory not only doesn't have any scientific basis, but even what I wrote so far is enough to completely deny it.

In chinese medicine there are methods of therapy by using massage, pressing some points. According to writings, original method was using kind of stone needles. Later both stone and metal needles were used. Then moxibution appeared. During Ming dynasty acupuncture and moxibution achieved the highest peak in its development. Classical texts say about points and their various functions – activating, controlling, relaxing etc.

In inscription on Wang Zhengnan's tomb, authored by Huang Baijia, and in texts of other internal systems it is said about brass model with some points: sixue, yaxue, yunxue, kexue, hama, yuantiao, quchi, suohou, jieyi, hegu, neiguan, san li etc. Some of those points cannot be indentified now. In case of some other names are being used presently. In some cases they just indicate weak points of human body. I'm afraid the concept of dianxue could be just result of exaggerating this information.

Not all points and channels on the brass model have real meaning and use even in medicine. Using it in martial art doesn't make sense. Hitting many of those points doesn't bring and special effect at all. We could say that the dianxue concept was artificially made up to satisfy hopes of those who seek for superhuman abilities and methods which don't need effort.

But human body has many weak places. Hitting them can affect brain, nervous system, internal organs. So weak places should be seen as some principles in martial art. Hitting such places with two fingers, or with all fingers can have practical meaning.

The advantage of fingers poking is long range and small surface of contact. But they are weak, because fingers are not too strong. So it should be used when attacking soft parts of opponent's body and should be mixed with other hitting methods. This is the true meaning of dianxue in practice.

WEAPONS

Weapons (meaning cold weapons) appeared even earlier than the art of fist fighting. Already primeval man understood, that animal or human enemy can be easier defeated by using stone or stick than just bare hands. With development of civilization stone was replaced by bronze and then by iron. Gradually weapons improved, there appeared bigger variety and efficiency increased.

In ancient times instruments were used in soldiers training. Till present time exercises with sword and spear are used. To decrease number of cases of injuries and deaths during training, bare hand training was used as kind of preliminary preparation for training with weapons. Sometimes training with weapons was omitted, and only bare hand fighting was practiced. Presently mainly taolu forms with weapons are popular, and we can seldom see practical methods of using weapons.

As we are learning this, we should precisely know meaning and value of training with weapons.

There are many kinds of weapons. There was a saying about eighteen kinds. But actually they are not limited to this number. Usually we divide weapons for long (spear, staff), short (sabre, sword), very short (dagger), soft (whip), used for attacking from distance (bow and arrows) etc. But generally we can talk about two kinds: with metal element sharp on side or top, placed on long stick or handle and wooden weapons. So if you master one or two kinds of weapons, others will seem similar.

Weapon is more dangerous than hands and legs, as it can be used from longer range, is hard, the surface of contact with target is small. And thanks to leverage the top of weapon can achieve big speed.

But weapons have some disadvantages comparing to hands. Weapon is something outside of your body, it is difficult to use it such naturally as hands. So training and using of weapons is much more difficult. Also in short range some weapons can be difficult to use.

Main methods of using weapons are: piercing, cutting, deflecting, connecting. Not talking about complex method, even those simple methods need hard training. It is important that spirit and force are transmitted through weapon, as if it was one with your body, as if extension of your arms, so you achieve the state, when hands as if forget about weapon, weapons as if forget about hands, as if there was not such differentiating.

Improving the level of skill of bare hand fighting helps with improving skill of using weapons. At the same time progress in training with weapon can be of great help for increasing skill of bare hand fighting.

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