



Question and Answer Series

CHIN-NA

by Grandmaster Wong Kiew Kit

Question 1

You mentioned that Chin-Na is one of the three ultimates of Shaolin, the other being Dim Mark and Nei Kung. Could you explain why these three Arts are ultimate and what particularly does Chin-Na contribute to being among the others? Also what is meant by Nei Kung in this context? And finally what is the essence of Chin Na and how does the mastery of Chin-Na become visible?

Sifu Anton Schmick

Answer

The three ultimates of Shaolin Kungfu are chin-na, dim mark and nei kung. They should not be confused with the three ultimates of martial arts, which are One-Finger Zen, Strike-Across-Space Palm and Marvelous Fist.

The use of Chinese words in Romanized letters can be problematic. "Chin-na" is in Mandarin Chinese, but in Romanized spelling it is spelt as "qin-na". "Q" in Romanized Chinese is pronounced like the English "ch". We use "chin-na" and not "qin-na" to maintain uniformity and to avoid mispronunciation, just as we use "chi kung" and not "qigong", and "Tao" and not "Dao". The same two words pronounced as "chin-na" in Mandarin are pronounced as "kam-na" in Cantonese.

Chin-na, dim mark and nei kung are considered the ultimates of Shaolin because of the following reasons:

1. These three ultimates demand very high-level skills.
2. It needs much time to develop the required skills, at least 10 years, probably 20. Please note that if a practitioner is prepared to train for 20 years, it does not mean he can develop the required skills.
3. The arts are very rare, though many people may like to acquire them.
4. The arts are highly valuables. Chin-na and dim mark, for example, are compassionate and effective ways of fighting; nei kung contributes to good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance, mental clarity and spiritual achievement.

There are two aspects in "chin-na", which are "chin" and "na". "Chin" means "hold", and "na" means "grip". But the two actions are performed in fast succession that they appear as one action.

Chin-na is often executed using the tiger-claw, the eagle-claw or the dragon-claw.

“Nei kung” means “internal arts”, and is in Mandarin pronunciation. In Romanized Chinese it is written as “neigong”. We use “nei kung”, which is also widely used in kungfu literature, instead of “neigong” to avoid mispronunciation. The Romanized Chinese “g” and “o” are pronounced like the English “k” and “u”, but many people may mispronounce them as the English “g” and “o”.

In contrast to “nei kung” is “wai kung”, or “noi kung” and “ngoi kung” in Cantonese.

One must be aware that kungfu terms and chi kung terms are unlike scientific terms. Kungfu terms and chi kung terms are used for convenience, and are not definitive, which actually means restricting. In the context here, “nei kung” refers to internal arts for internal force or for health, and not for external fighting. Here, “nei kung” refers to such practices like Sineu Metamorphosis and sitting meditation. When you use chin-na or dim mark for fighting, even when you use internal force, it is considered “wai kung” or external arts.

“Dim mark” is in Cantonese, and it means “dotting meridians”. Many masters of Southern Shaolin Kungfu speak Cantonese. Cantonese is not only the prominent Chinese dialect in south China, but also in most areas when overseas Chinese have settled, like Southeast Asia, Australia, Europe and North America. So many kungfu terms are in Cantonese pronunciation. It was also in Cantonese that I learned most of the kungfu terms.

In Mandarin, dim mark is “dian xue”. “Dian” means “dot”, and “xue” means “energy-points”. So, there is a slight difference in meaning, represented in “mark” and “xue”. In Cantonese, the concept is dotting meridians; in Mandarin it is dotting energy points.

Both concepts are correct. Although an expert usually dots an energy point, if he dots a meridian, he will also disable an opponent from further fighting.

Dim mark is wrongly translated as a “touch of death”. It is actually a compassionate way of fighting. Although a victim of dim mark may eventually die if he is foolish enough not to relieve himself of his suffering, a dim mark injury is reversible. A dim mark victim can seek another kungfu master or competent Chinese trained doctor to restore his energy flow in his meridian and be healthy again. Western trained doctors may not be of much help because clearing energy blockage is not part of their medical training.

It was simply incredible that course participants at my Special Dragon Strength Course learned dim mark in just five days, besides learning many other things. If a master could learn dim mark in five years, he would consider himself very, very lucky. Course participants at my Special Dragon Strength Course needed prior kungfu experience, but masters too needed many years of experience before they could become masters.

The essence of chin-na is to disable an opponent so that he cannot continue to fight but without causing him irreversible injury. There are three main ways in chin-na to disable an opponent, which are:

Separating tendons
Wronging joints
Gripping vital points

When a chin-na expert separates an opponent's tendons, dislocates his joints or grips his vital points, he disables the opponent from further fighting. Hence, chin-na is different from locks. When you release a lock on an opponent, he can fight you again, but not in chin-na.

Chin-na is a compassionate way of fighting. The injury, while disabling at the time, is reversible. The opponent can later seek another master or competent Chinese trained doctor to eliminate his injury and regain his normal function.

Nevertheless, when my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, taught me chin-na, he asked me to apply wronging joints very carefully, or not at all, because if an opponent moves when a chin-na expert applies wronging joints, bits of bones at the joints may be broken off, and it will be difficult to repair the tiny fractures. By comparison, a fracture at the main bone can be repaired more easily.

The mastery of chin-na becomes visible when it is obvious the chin-na expert has accomplished his objective, i.e. the opponent cannot fight further but his injury can be relieved later.

Among the three methods of subduing an opponent, namely separating tendons, wronging joints, and gripping vital points, the most frequently used is gripping vital points. It is similar to dim mark, except that in dim mark an exponent strikes a vital point, whereas in chin-na he grips one or more vital points.

Technically, chin-na is more advanced than dim mark. To apply a dim mark successfully, which is a strike, only one movement is needed, whereas in

chin-na four movements are needed. In a kick two movements are needed, and in a felling attack three movements.

You need to make only one movement in a strike. To apply a kick, you need to balance yourself, then kick. To fell an opponent, you need to cover an opponent, secure a leverage advantage, then apply a felling technique. To apply chin-na, you need to move in, cover an opponent to hold him, then grip his vital point

In the coming Chin-Na Course, we shall learn how to make four movements effectively before an opponent can make one. Tactics and strategies will also be used. Chin-na is not only a compassionate way of fighting, it also requires high-level skills.

Question 2

Could you please elaborate on the various levels of Chin-na, e.g. the physical, energy and mind levels? How and when can we use these and the benefits from training Chin-na in our everyday lives?

Finally, how long would a typical Shaolin Wahnam student need to train this art until he or she can confidently and safely use Chin-na in sparring with practitioners from other martial arts? How about in sparring with other Shaolin Wahnam students?

Steffen

Answer

Most people think of only one level of chin-na, though it usually consists of two levels, namely physical and energy, just as they think of only one level of dim mark, but it actually consists of the physical level and the energy level.

In other words, when people talk about chin-na and dim mark, they refer to only chin-na and dim mark in general, without differentiating into the physical, energy and mind levels.. When chin-na masters and dim mark masters apply chin-na or dim mark, they just apply chin-na and dim mark, without differentiating the three levels.

When untrained people apply chin-na and dim mark techniques on opponents, presuming that their techniques are correct, they do so at the physical level. The damage is minimal. When chin-na experts and dim mark experts apply chin-na and dim mark techniques on opponents, because of their training, they do so at the physical and the energy levels, although they do not consciously think of these two levels. The damage is substantial.

I discovered the three levels of chin-na and dim mark accidentally. As I applied chin-na techniques on some people, I used my mind, and it worked! (As this answer will be in public, I shall not go into details.) I also tried the mind level with dim mark, and it worked too.

The mind level greatly increases the effects of chin-na and dim mark. I believed masters in the past also employed the mind level, but they might not be aware of it. The three levels – physical, energy and mind – will be taught at the Chin-Na Course in China.

When we apply chin-na techniques, we do not normally think of the three levels. There are three categories of attack in chin-na, namely separating tendons, wronging joints and gripping energy points. For the first two categories of attack, which are separating tendons and wronging joints, for practitioners trained in tiger claw, eagle claw or dragon claw, severe damage can be caused even at the physical level. The energy level and the mind level will add to the damage.

The most frequently used category of attack in chin-na is the third, which is gripping energy points. The nature of the attack is such that it involves the energy level even if practitioners are not trained in internal arts and use only the physical level. It is because the practitioners physically grip energy points, which will cause energy blockage. It is the blockage of energy flow that results in the disability of opponents to continue fighting.

Nevertheless, if practitioners are trained in internal arts, and apply the energy level and the mind level, the damage is much increased. On the other hand, they can also regulate the amount of force, energy flow and mind power to minimize the injury on their opponents.

How and when a chin-na practitioner applies his chin-na techniques on opponents involve skills, and not just knowledge, although knowledge will enhance the skills as well as shorten the time to acquire them. In other words, even if some people have the knowledge of how and when to apply chin-na techniques at the physical, energy and mind levels, they will be unable to do so if they do not have the necessary skills. These skills will be taught at the coming Chin-Na Course.

For most other people, the benefit of training chin-na is compassionate fighting, which will also make them compassionate in daily life. For those who attend the coming Chin-Na Course, because they will learn the skills associated with the energy level and the mind level, they will have better results in whatever they do. This is indeed fantastic.

If a typical Shaolin Wahnam student attending the Chin-Na Course trains everyday for three months, he will be able to use chin-na in sparring confidently, safely and effectively against opponents of his level. Other people may not like to hear this, but three months for our typical Shaolin Wahnam students are like three years for other students.

It is because we are incredibly cost-effective. Our students attending the Chin-Na Course are taught the necessary techniques, skills and philosophy in just a few days, whereas other students may take years to scavenge them.

For example, our students will be taught to trick opponents to make certain moves so that they can apply their selected chin-na sequence on them. If their opponents escape the chin-na techniques the first time, which is unlikely, they will apply the same chin-na techniques on their opponents the second time before their opponents know what is happening. If the opponents escape again, the same techniques will be applied the third time.

From my own sparring and fighting experience, the first times using chin-na techniques were successful. The second times and the third times were for preparation; they were not needed in actual sparring or fighting.

Even other Shaolin Wahnam students of similar kungfu levels who have not attended the Chin-Na Course, may not escape the chin-na techniques in sparring, especially if these techniques are applied a second time or a third time. It is not just the chin-na techniques but also the tactics and the strategies.

Question 3

Would Shaolin Chin-na be suitable for handling multiple opponents?

If so, which sequences would be most suitable? And how would the tactics and strategies be different from Choy Lee Fut, an art known for fighting multiple opponents?

FJ

Answer

Would Shaolin chin-na be suitable for handling multiple opponents? The answer is yes and no, depending on various factors.

If the exponent is highly skillful, chin-na is effective for handling multiple opponents. If he is not skillful, chin-na techniques are not suitable in multiple-opponent fighting.

Chin-na requires high-level skills. A chin-na master has to make four moves before his opponents can make one. However, a skillful master can do so readily, and the required factor is not just speed.

If a chin-na master wishes to show compassion in his fighting against multiple opponents, he can apply a suitable chin-na technique on an opponent and use him as a shield against other opponents so that they cannot attack him. If he wants to escape from multiple opponents, or hurt them seriously, without worrying about being compassionate, using strikes instead of chin-na is more effective. A less skillful exponent would not have such choices, and using chin-na would not be suitable for handling multiple opponents.

Any one of the 72 chin-na sequences is suitable, though some sequences may be more appropriate for certain situations. For example, if a nearly opponent kicks at a chin-na master, the master can exploit his kick and apply the sequence "White Ape Ascends Tree". However, if the master does not know this sequence, or does not want to use this sequence, he can use any other sequence he likes.

The tactics and strategies of chin-na are different from those of Choy-Li-Fatt, which is well known for fighting multiple opponents. A chin-na master is highly skillful, and he usually fights against opponents who are less skillful. He has control over his opponents and therefore he can afford to fight

compassionately. If an opponent is more skillful than him, the strategy would be different, and his strategy is to escape without being injured.

The strategy is the same whether he fights against one opponent or many opponents. This strategy is not suitable for a practitioner who is not skillful.

The strategy of a Choy-Li-Fatt master is different. The strategy is to injure his opponents seriously or to escape unhurt if he is able to defeat them. The nature of Choy-Li-Fatt techniques is such that a Choy-Li-Fatt practitioner has to be destructive. There are not many techniques in Choy-Li-Fatt to enable a practitioner to be compassionate, unlike in chin-na.

This does not mean that a Choy-Li-Fatt master cannot be compassionate in his fighting. If he wants to be compassionate, he avoids hitting his opponents, i.e. he stops short of target when applying his Choy-Li-Fatt techniques. If he does not control his strikes and allows the strikes to hit his opponents, they can be seriously injured. It defeats the purpose of Choy-Li-Fatt if its techniques do not injure opponents seriously.

The tactics of chin-na are to tempt opponents move in certain ways that it is easy for the chin-na master to apply chin-na techniques on them. For example, the master may purposely leaves an opening for his opponents to strike or kick, so that he can apply chin-na techniques on the striking arms or kicking legs.

The tactics of Choy-Li-Fatt are different. A Choy-Li-Fatt exponent has no time to "play" with his opponents. When opponents strike and kick, he hits their arms and legs. If they are hesitant or retreat, he hits their body. His arms are like two pieces of iron rods.

If the Choy-Li-Fatt exponent is confident of defeating his opponents, he strikes them down decisively, like breaking their arms and legs or causing them serious internal injury. If he finds his opponents overwhelming, he opens a way with his arms like iron rods, and escapes.

Question 4

Your good self have stated that in the hands of someone with adequate internal force and "shen", a Dim-Mak strike will still be effective even if the vital point is not dotted accurately. Is this also true of a Chin-Na grip-hold?

Assuming all combat efficiency factors (technique , skills, internal force, shen, etc) are equal in two warriors A & B who apply chin-na against an average blackbelter, except B does not have detailed knowledge of physical anatomy (eg joints, tendon-muscles positions-attachments) and energy anatomy (eg vital point positions, point & meridian correlation to organs) , how would both A & B compare to each other in chin-na combat application success in approximate percentages?

Dr Damian Kiskey

Answer

Yes, when a master with much internal force and shen, or mind power, applies a chin-na grip on an opponent, even if the master misses the respective energy points, the chin-na grip is effective. An analogy is that when an able-bodied adult, who may not know chin-na, grips a small child, the grip will be effective. Ignoring the difference in age but by raising the level of force, it is similar to a master and an ordinary opponent.

If the master grips on respective energy points, the same grip will produce more serious result. A master trained in chin-na will know the energy points.

Presuming all other factors being equal, except that one knows energy network and the other does not, the knowledgeable exponent will cause more serious damage and have better control..

If an opponent tries to free himself from the grip, he may succeed with the unknowledgeable exponent. But with knowledgeable exponent, the more the opponent struggles, the deeper will be the grip even without the exponent using extra force. In other words, the grip is such that the struggling movements will make the grip deeper.

In some courses, for example, I demonstrated that if an opponent tried to pull himself away from a properly applied chin-na grip, like on the throat or the wrist, the pulling movement may tear away the relevant parts of the opponent's body. The opponent had to reach for the exponent's fingers to

release the grip, or to use suitable counter techniques.

The success of a knowledgeable exponent compared to an unknowledgeable exponent in chin-na application with regard to knowing energy network is 6:4. But more important than knowing energy network in chin-na application, is the use of tactics and strategies. The success in appropriate percentage between a chin-na master who knows tactics and strategies as well as energy network compared to an unknowledgeable exponent is 8:2.

In my opinion, a black-belt practitioner has no chance to escape the chin-na techniques of a master. Even students who have successfully learnt the tactics and strategies as well as the energy network of chin-na in the coming Chin-Na Course in China, will have more than 80% chance of applying their chin-na techniques on black-belt opponents if their combat efficiency level is similar.

Question 5

Can Sifu please elaborate on the three points of time in countering a chin-na attack that are incorporated in each of the 72 chin-na sequences?

Also, is the point of time when the grip/hold is already applied usually too late for countering, unless the responder has at least as much internal force (for protection) as the initiator?

Sifu Leonard Lackinger

Answer

It may be helpful to make a difference between countering and defending. In defending, we just defend against an attack without countering. In countering, we counter-attack an opponent with or without defending.

Let us take a simple example of "Black Tiger Steals Heart" as an attack, and "Single Tiger Emerges from Cave" as a defence as well as a counter.

The three points of time in defending and in countering any attack are when the attack is at an initial stage, at an intermediate stage, and at a final stage.

As soon as an opponent initiates his attack, we ward it off using "Single Tiger Emerges from Cave". This defence is at the initial stage. Or we may let the attack proceed a short time before we ward it off. This defence is at the intermediate stage. We may also let the attack complete its course, and then ward it off. This defence is at the final stage.

Please note that the attack cannot reach us even when we allow it to continue to its end because we have sunk back to a False-Leg Stance as we make our concluding defence.

We may also use "Single Tiger Emerges from Cave" as a counter instead of just a defence. As we ward off the attack, we simultaneously or immediately grip the opponent's energy points. We can counter at the initial stage, intermediate stage or final stage.

We can grip the opponent's energy points at any place on his attacking arm, but it will be effective to grip at his upper arm at the initial stage, his elbow at the intermediate stage, and at his wrist at the final stage.

Let us now take “Single Tiger Emerges from Cave” as a chin-na attack. If an opponent uses this chin-na technique on us, irrespective of whether it is a counter-attack against our initial punch or an independent attack by itself, we can counter at three points of time.

As soon as an opponent reaches out his hand to grip us, we strike his hand using a hanging fist, like “Reverse Hanging of Golden Lotus”. This is an initial counter.

Or we may let his attack proceed for a short time, then grip his elbow from below, using “White Tiger Presents Claws”. This is an intermediate counter.

We may move back to a False-Leg Stance and allow the attack to conclude, then we grip his fingers and bend them, using “Jade Girl Plucks Flower”.

Kungfu terms are used provisionally for convenience. They are not definitive like scientific terms. Hence, we may interpret the three points of time in countering in another way.

We shall begin the interpretation of the opponent’s attack, like “Single Tiger Emerges from Cave”, when it is about to grip our upper arm, elbow, wrist or any part of our body. In this case, the initial stage is when the attack is about to reach us, the intermediate stage is when it makes contact, and the final stage is when the grip is applied. This is probably the interpretation you mean.

To simply examples, let us presume that an opponent uses his right tiger claw to grip our right wrist. At the initial stage, we can use a circular hand to escape or to counter-grip his tiger claw. We can also use the circular hand to escape or counter-grip at the initial stage.

At the final stage, if we are very powerful or the opponent is just beginning to apply his grip, we can still use the circular hand. But if we are not powerful enough, or his grip has deepened into our wrist, the circular hand technique will not be suitable. It may result in more damage to our wrist.

But we can still counter it. Use your left thumb to press on the “tiger-mouth” of his grip. The “tiger-mouth” is located at a small triangular piece at the base between the thumb and the index finger. Pressing at his “tiger-mouth” will cause his some pain. If it is not feasible to press on his “tiger-mouth”, kick at his shin with your toes if you are wearing shoes, or kick at his lower leg with your foot, or pretend to jab into his eyes. Immediately grip any of his fingers and bend it backward. This will cause him to release his tiger-claw grip.

Even at the final stage, when the grip is already applied, and when the responder is not as powerful as the initiator, the responder can still counter – if he knows how. This is one of the beauties of Shaolin Kungfu. There are no attacks that cannot be overcome!

If an opponent has twisted your arm to your back, for example, you can counter with “Dong Pin Draws Sword”. If he has gripped your leg, you can counter with “Fierce Tiger Springs Claws”. If he has gripped your head to tear it off, you can counter with “Big Boss Removes Helmet”.

Question 6

I've always been curious about the role of qin na in Baguazhang. My personal experience practicing Baguazhang and other martial arts has impressed upon me the immense usefulness of qin na, despite some translations of the Methods of Baguazhang deriding it, saying things such as:

Baguazhang does not emphasize joint-locking or grabbing,
My skill is not superior if I grab a person.
Grabbing is not appropriate to deal with multiple opponents,
It is best to employ a direct attack and directly withdraw.

I am curious to know how Sifu came to choose the various qin na techniques for our Swimming Dragon set and, if Sifu is also willing to share, if there are any skills and force training methods that Sifu feels would most benefit the qin na skills of a practitioner of our Baguazhang, or other styles that may or may not be particularly well known for qin na.

Fred Chu

Answer

Baguazhang is well known for its footwork, like getting to the back of an opponent to attack him. It is not noted for chin-na. It is also not known for its felling technique, because while footwork is important in felling, it is different from that in Baguazhang. More than 90% of Baguazhang attack deals with strikes, primarily with the palm.

Nevertheless, in my opinion, if you use chin-na effectively, it will enhance your specialization of Baguazhang. You should also take note that the nature of Baguazhang techniques are not particularly favorable for chin-na, but if you can add chin-na into your Baguazhang, you can surprise many opponents in combat.

Before answering your fundamental question as to how I chose chin-na techniques in the Swimming Dragon Baguazhang Set, I would like to comment on the statements made by some Baguazhang practitioners deriding chin-na as mentioned by you.

“Baguazhang does not emphasize joint-locking or grabbing.”

It may be a matter of translation, but chin-na is not just joint-locking and grabbing. If you lock an opponent's joint, or grab him, you yourself are also immobilized during combat. When you let go of the lock or grab, your opponent can continue to fight you. But if you release your chin-na technique, he cannot fight further because your chin-na would have disabled him from further fighting.

“My skill is not superior if I grab a person.”

That may be true of most Baguazhang practitioners because Baguazhang is not made for chin-na. But if you are already good at Baguazhang and add chin-na to it, without distracting from its combat efficiency, you will be more combat efficient.

As an analogy, most Western trained doctors would find their treatment of patients compromised if they try to treat their patients according to traditional Chinese medicine, which is very different from the way they have been trained in Western medicine. But if you are well trained in chi kung healing, which is part of traditional Chinese medicine, and apply it without affecting your Western medical training, you will be more efficient in treating your patients.

Not many Western trained doctors have a chance to learn chi kung healing well. Similarly not many Baguazhang practitioners have a chance to learn chin-na well.

“Grabbing is not appropriate to deal with multiple opponents.”

This statement is only true for those who are not well trained in combat application in general and in chin-na in particular. And most martial artists are poorly trained in combat application and in chin-na. This is evident from the facts that many martial artists accept being punched and kicked for granted during sparring, and that chin-na is rarely taught. But if you are well trained in combat application and in chin-na, you can use chin-na to effectively deal with multiple opponents.

“It is best to employ a direct attack and directly withdraw.”

This statement is true for some times, but not true for other times. If your opponents are highly skillful, it may not be good to use direct attack or withdraw directly. It is better to use tactics and strategies to trick them to fight the way you want, and attack them when situations are favorable.

When you have applied chin-na techniques on them, it is unwise to withdraw directly. It is better to deepen your chin-na techniques on them until they concede defeat.

Moreover, you can use chin-na to attack directly and withdraw directly if the combat situation warrants it. In fact, many chin-na students who do not have the opportunities to learn tactics and strategies as well as combat philosophy, often attack and withdraw directly. In the coming Chin-Na Course, participants will have the opportunity to learn tactics, strategies and combat philosophy.

My choice of chin-na techniques for our Swimming Dragon Baguazhang Set was made unconsciously. I did not consciously think of combat principles when choosing them for the set. But this does not mean that I chose them haphazardly. My choice, though unconscious at the time, was based on my understanding of kungfu philosophy and my experience of sparring and fighting. I felt that the chin-na techniques as well as all other techniques were the best for their particular combat situations.

There are not many chin-na techniques in the Swimming Dragon Baguazhang Set. One chin-na technique is "Smooth Hand Lead Away" in Sequence 2, which uses one hand to hold and grip an opponent's horizontal sweep

Another is "Leisurely Grab Goat", which is found in Sequence 3, and is similar to "Old Eagle Catches Snake" in Shaolin Kungfu and Taijiquan. This pattern is also found in other sequences of the Swimming Dragon Baguzhang Set. Here two hands are used to hold and grip an opponent's striking arm.

As chin-na is not important in Baguazhang, there are no special force training techniques or methods to train chin-na skills. The usual methods to develop internal force in Baguazhang are stance training, especially the pattern "Green Dragon Tests Claw", and the eight mother palms, like what we did during the Baguazhang course at the UK Summer Camp many years ago. When practitioners have developed substantial internal force in Baguazhang, they will be forceful in chin-na techniques as well as all other techniques.

As there are many force training methods in our school, any relevant methods will do. But "Fierce Tiger Cleanses Claws", which I shall teach at the coming Chin-Na Course, is particularly effective.

When our students have developed substantial internal force with any of our force training methods, like the consolidate method of Triple Stretch, or the flow method of Taijiquan, they can apply their internal force to chin-na techniques or any other techniques effectively. Indeed, our students with internal force may be more forceful in chin-na than chin-na students who practice jabbing their hands into beans or gripping Y-shaped branches.

More importantly, besides effective chin-na application, internal force contributes to good health, vitality and longevity, whereas jabbing into beans and gripping Y-shaped branches only contribute to chin-na efficiency.

Question 7

To expand on Sipak Damian's question, would you be willing to share with us some of the best anatomical locations for separating tendons, gripping vital points, and wronging joints, and how to best go about accomplishing each of these three aspects of chin na gripping in application?

David

Answer

The frequently used positions for separating tendons in chin-na are

1. the throat
2. the collar bones in front of the body
3. the collar bones at the back of the body
4. the upper arms
5. the sides of the waist
6. the back of the leg above the knees
7. the calve muscles

For gripping energy points, the frequently used points are

1. at the shoulders near the armpits
2. at the armpits
3. at the collar bones at the back
4. at the elbows
5. at the wrists
6. at the sides of the ribs
7. at the knees
8. at the shins
9. at the ankles
10. at the bottom of the feet

For wrong points, the frequently used locations are

1. at the neck
2. at the shoulders
3. at the elbows
4. at the fingers
5. at the knees
6. at the angles

To apply these chin-na techniques successfully, an exponent should use tactics and strategies to trick opponents to fight in a way suitable for the technique application. He should also have sufficient force in the training of the tiger claw, eagle claw or dragon claw.

Question 8

As Chin-Na is one of the 3 ultimates in Shaolin Kungfu, the other 2 being Dim Mak and Nei Kung, could you elaborate on the differences between the 3 ultimates?

More specifically, how are the effects, applications and philosophy different between Chin-Na and Dim-Mak?

Would there be a reason why an exponent would use Chin-Na over Dim-Mak in certain situations, or vice-versa?

FJ

Answer

Chin-na is disabling opponents by gripping their energy points, wrong their tendons or dislocating their joints. Of the three ways of attack in chin-na, gripping energy points is most frequently used.

Dim mark is dotting energy points to stop energy flow along a certain meridian. Both chin-na and dim mark are combat ending. When energy points are gripped in chin-na, or dotted in dim mark, energy stops flowing along that meridian or meridians or those parts of the opponents' body, resulting in the opponents being unable to continue fighting.

The other two main ways of subduing opponents in chin-na are separating tendons and dislocating joints. When tendons are torn, they fail to move muscles, and when joints are dislocated, the respective limbs are disabled. Both result in opponents not being able to continue fighting.

The injury of both chin-na and dim mark, however, is reversible. The victims can consult competent masters or Chinese trained doctors to restore their energy flow, repair their tendons and fix their joints.

There are countless ways of attack, but these countless ways can be classified into four categories, namely striking, kicking, felling and chin-na. Chin-na, therefore, is a category by itself. dim mark is one of a sub-category of striking. The main sub-category of striking is hitting with the hand. Strikes can also be executed with the shoulders, elbows, head, hips, buttock, and fingers as in the case of dim mark.

Both chin-na and dim mark use the fingers, but chin-na employs gripping whereas dim mark employs dotting. Chin-na is more physical, and dim mark is energetic. It does not need much muscular strength or hard internal force in dim mark. The dotting is usually gentle, whereas much muscular strength or hard internal force is used in chin-na, though chin-na masters of a high level may use energy or mind instead of physical force in chin-na.

In this context, nei kung, which means internal art, refers to internal cultivation, as opposed to external movements, or wai kung, especially in combat. Hence, although chin-na and dim mark are highly internal, as it is the internal energy flow of the exponents that distort the energy network of the opponents, they are considered wai kung in this context.

As a rough guide, whatever that is meant for combat and involves movement, is considered wai kung, or external art. Whatever that is meant for internal force and involves health, is considered nei kung. Some examples of nei kung in this context are Sinew Metamorphosis, Abdominal Breathing, and Zen meditation.

While chin-na and dim mark are considered nei kung here, as they are meant for combat and involve movement, they are considered wai kung in another context because its training is through essence, energy and mind.

It should be noted that kungfu and chi kung terms are meant for convenience, and are not definitive like scientific terms.

Hence, the external arts, which in this case are chin-na and dim mark, involve external movements for combat, whereas the internal arts, like Sinew Metamorphosis, Abdominal Breathing and Zen meditation, involve cultivation of essence, energy and mind, and are for health.

The effects of chin-na and dim mark are similar. Both involve stopping of energy flow, which distort the energy network of opponents, resulting in their becoming sick and inability to continue fighting. If the effects are not taken care of, the damage can be very serious. But in kungfu culture in the past, victims were aware of the danger of such injury, and they would seek treatment from other masters or competent therapists.

Generally, the effects of dim mark are more serious than those of chin-na. Unless the energy blockage is released, victims of dim mark may die, but victims of chin-na suffer from permanent disability. Dim mark injuries usually concern the body, whereas chin-na injuries usually concern the limbs.

In both chin-na and dim mark, application is on energy points. In chin-na the injury is due to pressure applied on energy points, often by muscular strength though internal force is used by high-level masters, which stops the energy flow at those points. Hence, the force applied in chin-na is hard.

In dim mark the injury is due to energy flowing from the exponent to the opponent to distort the latter's energy network. The force applied in dim mark is soft. In some cases the dotting may stop the opponent's energy flow at the relevant energy points.

The philosophy of chin-na and the philosophy of dim mark are similar. Both chin-na and dim mark stop the natural energy flow of opponents causing them to lose their combat ability, or to be seriously sick if the energy blockage is not released. Both philosophies are based on compassion, enabling the victims to seek remedy later on. Calling dim mark the touch of death, which is often described as such, is incorrect. It is true that the victims may die if they do not seek treatment, but the concept behind its application is born of compassion, which is to disable opponents from further fighting but enable them to recover fully later on, instead of breaking their skulls or damaging their internal organs to stop further combat.

The ways chin-na and dim mark are applied, are quite different. The application of chin-na is gripping, whereas that of dim mark is dotting. One is hard, the other is soft. Chin-na is usually applied on limbs, whereas dim mark on the body.

Both chin-na and dim mark are very advanced arts. Not many people, including masters, have a chance to learn either one. Indeed, these arts are considered lost. It is incredible that both these arts are available in our school.

The main reason why an exponent would use chin-na over dim mark, or vice versa, is that he is trained in only one of these two arts, if he is very, very lucky besides having put in a lot of dedicated practice. However, if a rare master knows both arts, his choice of using one over the other is often due to circumstances and not preference.

If the combat circumstance is such that chin-na is favorable, he would use chin-na, if dim mark is favorable, he would use dim mark. It is the same as other combat techniques. If the circumstance is favorable for him to use a palm strike, he would use a palm strike. If the circumstance is favorable for him to use a felling technique, he would use a felling technique. A master who has the very rare opportunity and ability to be trained in both chin-na and dim mark will be spontaneous and versatile. He does not have to be

limited to some preferred techniques, which may apply to lesser practitioners.

I am very fortunate to be trained in both chin-na and dim mark. Looking over my sparring and fighting experience, I used chin-na more often than dim mark. In fact, I had not used dim mark at all in sparring or fighting, except when during demonstration I felt my energy accidentally penetrated into students which was similar to dim mark. I asked the students to perform "Lifting the Sky" or similar exercises to generate an energy flow to clear away any possible injury.

I used chin-na more often because during the time I had a lot of sparring with other martial artists, I was trained in chin-na. I also had better control at chin-na, subduing opponents but not hurting them. Dim mark injury had to be more serious before opponents conceded defeat.

Even then, I did not have to use chin-na often when compared to striking (apart from dim mark), kicking and felling. I reserved chin-na for difficult opponents, or when the circumstances arose, but I usually could defeat opponents using simpler techniques.

Question 9

A key aspect of our Dim Mark training was first to learn how to remedy any ill effects of the applied skill/technique. As manipulation of energy is included in Chin Na, how important is knowledge of remedy to Chin Na training? Does such knowledge also extend to the more physical damage that can be caused, e.g. dit da?

As a follow up, if I may, can Chin Na be used for healing?

Sifu Andrew Barnett

Answer

A good training of dim mark will include remedying the injury caused. This is because dim mark injury is usually serious, sometimes causing death and often causing permanent disability if left unattended.

In our Dragon Strength course where dim mark was taught, our remedial methods by taking out the injury with our hands, like a crane beak, followed by energy flow, are every effective. Because the remedy was applied immediately, all "victims" recovered within half an hour.

It would take a longer time for most other people. It would also take a longer time for the victims to seek proper treatment. The usual remedies are herbal medicine, die da (pronounced like "thiet da") or kungfu medicine, an-mo or massage therapy, and tui na which is also massage therapy. Such remedies may take about three months.

All our Shaolin Wahnam family members, including those who may not have learned chin-na or dim mark, are indeed very lucky – probably luckier than they realize. We have energy flow. Not only it can overcome chin-na and dim mark injuries speedier, as well as all other forms of illness, more importantly it gives us good health, vitality and longevity.

Remedy work is normally not included in chin-na training. This is because while chin-na will also disable opponents from further combat, chin-na injuries are usually not as serious as those of dim mark. But high-level chin-na masters can inflict more serious injury than dim mark, and in such cases these masters usually know remedial work.

Remedial work in chin-na and dim mark is limited to chin-na and dim mark injuries. A knowledge of such remedial work enables him to treat chin-na and dim mark injuries competently but does not extend to treatment of other injuries, including those caused by physical damage, like those injuries in “die da” or kungfu medicine.

A kungfu medicine doctor is a professional. He is comprehensively trained in traditional Chinese medicine in general, and in injuries caused by falling or being hit in particular. A chin-na or dim mark master who knows remedial work on chin-na or dim mark injuries is not comprehensively trained in traditional Chinese medicine; he only knows treatment of chin-na or dim mark injuries caused by him.

However, many kungfu medicine practitioners today are not comprehensively trained in traditional Chinese medicine, but some of them are very good at their work, better in treating injuries than comprehensively trained Chinese doctors, who generally treat illness, not injury.

In Chinese medical philosophy, a distinction is made between illness and injury. Treating an injury as an illness, or vice versa, may be detrimental. In the same way, although chin-na or dim mark masters with knowledge and practice of remedial work may not be as widely trained in treatment of injuries as “die da” practitioners, the masters’ treatment of chin-na or dim mark injuries may be better than that of “die da” practitioners.

Chin-na is not used for healing. But if all other things were equal, a chin-na practitioner who has knowledge and practice of remedial work and if he also has studied healing, will be a better healer than other healers. He has at least some knowledge of energy network, and forceful hands to manipulate in his healing if necessary. However, he must make sure that if he uses his hands for manipulation work in healing, he must not use them as if he were applying chin-na techniques.

Question 10

The Brazilian variant of Jiu-Jitsu is now a popular and respected martial art worldwide.

Please can you discuss the similarities and differences between Shaolin Chin-na and modern Jiu-Jitsu.

Sifu Andy Cusick

Answer

According to Chinese sources, a Shaolin chin-na master, Chen Yun Pin, went to Japan and taught Japanese warriors. This art evolved to become jujitsu, which means "the art of softness". Jujitsu sources, as far as I know and I am not sure of its validity, do not mention this Chinese origin.

Japanese jujitsu was an effective fighting art. At the end of the 19th century, jujitsu evolved into judo, which means "the way of softness", when the founder of judo, Kano Igoro, removed all dangerous techniques of jujitsu and made it into a sport.

In the 20th century, Carlos Gracie developed the art which is now popularly called Brazilian jujitsu. Carlos Gracie, who himself was a world champion, learned from the great Japanese champion, Maeda Mitsuyo, who in turn learned from Kana Igoro.

I do not know enough of jujitsu to give a fair comment on it. Hence my comparison with chin-na is based on my limited knowledge of jujitsu.

Although jujitsu was reputed to originate from chin-na according to Chinese sources, there are more differences than similarities between Shaolin chin-na and modern jujitsu.

A major similarity is that both chin-na and jujitsu employ extensively what may be called gripping. But the similarity is superficial. Gripping in chin-na is on energy points. Gripping in jujitsu, which is actually holding in chin-na terminology, is holding opponents in locks.

In chin-na, a distinction is made between holding and gripping. Holding is keeping in a particular position, whereas gripping is pressing into energy points. Chin-na actually means "holding and gripping". A chin-na practitioner first holds a part of an opponent's body, like a limb, then he grips into the

opponent's energy points. Jujitsu, I believe, does not make this distinction between holding and gripping. What is applied by a jujitsu practitioner on an opponent, like keeping the opponent in a lock, is holding.

Another similarity is that both are "soft" arts. (Here the term "arts" is used loosely. Modern jujitsu, protected by safety rules, is more of a martial sport than a martial art.) But chin-na is relatively "harder" than jujitsu.

Again, the similarity is superficial. Shaolin chin-na is an internal art, whereas modern jujitsu is external. In Shaolin chin-na training, much emphasis is placed on essence, energy and mind, whereas in modern jujitsu training, emphasis is placed on external physical movements.

Like the distinction between holding and gripping in chin-na but not in jujitsu, the Chinese master who taught chin-na to his Japanese students probably taught only external forms, leaving out gripping energy points and training of essence, energy and mind.

Basically Shaolin chin-na is a martial art where there are no rules in actual fighting, whereas modern jujitsu is a marital sport protected by safety rules. In Shaolin chin-na, a practitioner can grip an opponent's throat or genitals, but this is not allowed by safety rules in modern jujitsu.

Paradoxically, despite being a martial art where no rules abide, sparring in chin-na results in far less injuries than in jujitsu where safety rules disallow drastic techniques. A practitioner in chin-na has better control than a practitioner in jujitsu.

Not many people may realize that chin-na techniques, despite appearing to be simple but are actually profound, are combat ending, whereas jujitsu techniques are not, although they may look complicated. In other words, when a chin-na practitioner releases his chin-na techniques, his opponents cannot continue to fight, but a jujitsu practitioner himself is being immobilized when he applies his locks on his opponents.

This is because the chin-na techniques stop the energy flow, resulting in the opponents' inability to fight. When a jujitsu exponent applies his locks on his opponents, he has to hold on to the locks. When he releases the locks, the opponents are also released and can continue to fight.

There is a lot of ground fighting in modern jujitsu, like in Brazilian jujitsu, but ground fighting is infrequent in Shaolin chin-na. Being a sport, jujitsu practitioners are not allowed to strike their opponents when attempting to take the practitioners down to begin ground fighting. But in a fighting art

where there are no protective rules, opponents foolhardy enough to attempt taking practitioners down, will be seriously injured by chin-na practitioners.

Outwardly chin-na and jujitsu may appear similar. But deeper examination shows there are many differences.

Question 11

Could you discuss the benefits of Chin Na in daily life?

Situ Roeland Dijkema

Answer

It is worthy to note that transferring the benefits of kungfu training to daily living is a special feature of our school. As far as I know, it is unprecedented in all kungfu history. Some masters in the past might have benefited in their daily life as a result of their kungfu training, but, as far as I know, transferring the benefits of kungfu training to enrich our daily life, was never taught systematically and coherently as in our school.

An obvious benefit of chin-na training is having a firm grip. This benefit can be transferred to our daily life, not just physically but also intellectually. As a result of our chin-na training, we have a firm grip of any concepts, aspirations, planning and other aspects of our daily life.

Not many people realize that the use of tactics and strategies is important in chin-na. This use of tactics and strategies can enrich our daily life. As a result of our chin-na training, we do not merely perform our tasks haphazardly, but plan to complete our tasks well with tactics and strategies.

Chin-na is an internal art, as its training involves essence, energy and mind. Please note that kungfu terms are used for convenience. In another context, of the three ultimates of Shaolin, chin-na and dim mark are considered external as they relate to external movements for combat, whereas neikung is internal as its cultivation does not involve much external movement.

As an internal art, chin-na training contributes to good health, vitality and longevity. It is a good contrast to many martial arts which are detrimental to health.

Chin-na is a compassionate martial art. Instead of cracking an opponent's skull, breaking his bones or causing him serious internal injury so that he cannot continue fighting, chin-na disables an opponent from combat, but the opponent can later seek treatment to remedy the chin-na injury. Being compassionate enriches our daily life.