



Question and Answer Series
Cosmos Palm
by Grandmaster Wong Kiew Kit

Question 1

I would consider both One Finger Shooting Zen and Cosmos Palm to be treasures of Shaolin Wahnam. These two arts also seem to share many similar qualities - build tremendous internal force, useful for both combat and healing, and ability to strike across space. Yet one art is taught to everyone at the beginning of their training, and the other seems to be reserved for more advanced practitioners and only taught selectively. Is there a specific difference between these two arts that has led to this?

Though I have yet to learn the techniques for training Cosmos Palm, I would assume that a casual observer would be able to differentiate between the techniques used to train and develop One Finger Shooting Zen and Cosmos Palm. But as we have regularly experienced, the techniques are only a small part of the equation and the specific skills are really what allows someone to develop a specific art. Can you please compare and contrast the specific skills trained and developed with One Finger Shooting Zen vs. those of Cosmos Palm?

Sifu Matt Fenton

Sifu's answer:

Indeed, both One-Finger Shooting Zen and Cosmos Palm are treasures of our school. Not only they contribute greatly to combat and healing, they also enrich our daily life.

The reason why One-finger Shooting Zen is taught to all Shaolin practitioners of our school at the start of their learning from us, whereas Cosmos Palm is reserved for more advanced practitioners, is mainly historical. My teaching follows closely that of my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam. One-Finger Shooting Zen was taught to all students who learned from my sifu, but Cosmos Palm was taught selectively. As far as I know I was the only one he taught Cosmos Palm.

There is an interesting story how I learned Cosmos Palm from my sifu. My sihengs were practicing Iron Palm during their leisure hours when they were not training the main kungfu material taught by my sifu. A long rectangular bag filled with iron fillings was used. My sihengs must have practiced Iron Palm for a long time because I could see that the bag was much seasoned. But it was the first time I saw them practicing Iron Palm. This was probably because I usually trained in the afternoons, whereas my sihengs usually trained at night. It was a night session then, and I joined the training

infrequently.

I asked one of my sihengs, Poh Lok, whether I could join in the training.

“Oh yes, go ahead,” he said.

I raised my palm above my head and hit the bag without any muscular tension, like what I did many years ago when I trained Iron Palm unsuccessfully from a book. There were two points of difference. The bag I used then was filled with black and green beans, but this bag was filled with iron fillings. I hit the bag 5 times each round – with my palm smashing down, with the edge of my palm chopping down, with the base of my palm stamping down, with the back of my palm hitting down in a reverse manner, and with my five fingers stamping down. My sihengs hit the bag 3 times each round – with their palm, the edge of their palm, and the base of their palm.

Much later I asked my sifu why my sihengs did not use the back of their palm and their fingers. He told me that there were nerve endings at these places, and doing so would harm the nerve endings.

But that night I knew enough kungfu etiquette to do what my sihengs did, and not tried to be smart hitting the bag 5 times. Yet, I saw from the corners of my eyes that my sifu was approaching. I thought he would scold me for trying to be smart, attempting to train what he did not teach me.

But to my surprise he said kindly. “You know how to hit a sandbag!”

“Show me your hands,” he continued.

I showed my sifu my hands.

“You have a lady’s hands. Iron Palm is not suitable for you.”

For a moment my heart sank. I thought I lost a chance to learn Iron Palm.

Then my sifu continued, “I’ll teach you Cosmos Palm”.

He took me to a side of the training hall. “Show me Pushing Mountain,” he said.

I showed my sifu Pushing Mountain which I had learned earlier.

“Very good,” he said. “Practice this every day.” Then he walked away.

A few months later during my afternoon training, my sifu asked me, "How is your progress in Pushing Mountain."

"Very good, sifu. I practice it every day."

"Show me."

I showed my sifu Pushing Mountain.

My sifu was impressed. "Now, follow me.." My sifu showed me the Forceful Big Windmill.

I can't remember whether my sifu called the exercise the Forceful Big Windmill. But I found out later that the external movement was similar to that of the Big Windmill in 18 Lohan Hands, but the Lohan exercise was performed gently, whereas the Cosmos Palm exercise was performed with internal force.

The obvious difference between One-Finger Shooting Zen and Cosmos Palm is that the former uses an index finger whereas the latter uses a palm. The difference, however, is not just external. Using a finger facilitates dotting energy points, whereas using a palm facilitates striking an opponent.

Both arts are internal. It is not the external striking point that damages an opponent, it is the internal force of the exponent damaging the opponent's energy network. In One-Finger Zen, the art that derives from the training of One-Finger Shooting Zen, the exponent's finger stops the energy flow of the opponent. In Cosmos Palm, the exponent's energy flows into and damages the opponent.

Hence, the operation of energy in these two arts is quite different. One stops the opponent's energy flow, the other damages the opponent's energy network.

But this difference did not lead to why One-Finger Shooting Zen was taught to all Shaolin students in our school, whereas Cosmos Palm was reserved for a selected few. The reason, as mentioned earlier, was historical.

I did not earlier investigate into why One-Finger Shooting Zen was taught to all, and Cosmos Palm was taught to a few. I believed it was a tradition of our lineage. But viewing the question with hindsight, I believe this is logical. One-finger Shooting Zen is excellent for developing internal force. It involves both flowing force and consolidating force. Only when one is proficient in flowing force and consolidating force, he should progress to Cosmos Palm,

where his force flows into an opponent to damage the opponent's energy.

I believe that our school is amongst a very few, if not the only one, that differentiate between skills and techniques. Almost all other practitioners, including masters, think that if they practice the techniques long enough they will acquire the art. To us, it is glaring that this is not so.

The techniques practiced by most other kungfu practitioners are genuine, yet even when they have practiced these techniques for a long time, they cannot apply these techniques for fighting. It is because they do not have the necessary skills.

The techniques practiced by most other chi kung practitioners are genuine, yet even when they have practiced these techniques for a long time, they do not derive chi kung benefits. It is because they do not have the necessary skills.

The techniques of One-Finger Shooting Zen are easily found in our webpages. Anyone can learn them. But unless he learns the necessary skills from a competent teacher, he will not develop internal force.

The techniques of Cosmos Palm are Pushing Mountain and Forceful Big Windmill, which can be found in our webpages. Anyone can learn them. But unless he learns the necessary skills from a competent teacher, he will not have internal force.

We are very generous with information. We are also very generous with deserving students who want to learn from us. But others who think otherwise, who believe they can learn techniques from books or videos and attain the art, or who think we are talking non-sense, it is their problem.

Basically, the specific skills trained and developed in One-Finger Shooting Zen are to generate flowing energy, and to consolidate this flowing energy into internal force. The specific skills trained and developed in Cosmos Palm is to channel this flowing force into an opponent to damage him, and at an advanced stage to channel this flowing force through layers of obstacles to damage an opponent but without harming these obstacles.

The specific skills are expressed clearly, without any play of words. But before acquiring these specific skills, a practitioner must have attained other more basic skills. For example, before channeling energy into an opponent, as in Cosmos Palm, one must be able to generate an energy flow. Before generating an energy flow, as in One-finger Shooting Zen, one must enter Zen, i.e. he must be relaxed and his mind free of thoughts.

More importantly, one must realize that these are skills, not knowledge that can be read from books or learnt from videos. Indeed, many people often confuse themselves with skills and knowledge. Many schools, for example, publicize that their training increases energy level, and enables their students to defend themselves. It is just shocking that instead of increasing their energy level, these students become more tired after their training, and instead of defending themselves, they expose themselves to a generous exchange of blows.

One-Finger Shooting Zen and Cosmos Palm are wonderful arts. Besides combat, they are also very useful for healing – provided, of course, that one is already a trained healer. One trained in Cosmos Palm may channel his energy into a deeper part of his patient to cure illness or injury without harming the outer parts. Many years ago, I used this skill to cure Wong Yin Tat, my early disciple who is well trained in Iron Shirt, of an internal injury.

Actually I was the one who inflicted this injury with Cosmos Palm. I demonstrated to a few students how internal force could pass from one shoulder to another without harming the person. Yin Tat tensed his muscles, and my internal force was logged in his chest, causing damage. There was nothing outwardly, but two days later, Yin Tat who is normally full of vitality, was pale and sickly. I used Cosmos Palm to relieve him of this injury.

More immediately, One-Finger Shooting Zen and Cosmos Palm enrich our daily life. Not only they give us good health, vitality and longevity, they also give us internal force and mental clarity, enabling us to attain peak performance in daily life.

Question 2

If I am not mistaken, I read that Cosmos Palm can be used not only for fighting but also for healing. Nowadays, we are very lucky as many of us won't ever have to engage in a real fight. Also, many of us are not healers. So my questions are:

How can learning Cosmos Palm enhance/enrich our daily lives and the lives of others? In other words, what would the daily applications of Cosmos Palm be when not being a healer or having to fight?

Would you please share with us how Cosmos Palm has benefited you and any "aha" experience that might have happened while using/practicing it?

Santiago

Sifu's answer:

Cosmos Palm is one of the treasures of all martial arts. Not many martial artists, even masters, have a chance to learn it. Not only it is excellent for combat, damaging opponents without leaving external marks, but it also enhances the results of a healer. I am very sure that my success in healing, especially in overcoming so-called incurable diseases, was much due to my training in Cosmos Palm.

However, as you have rightly said, we are fortunate to live in an age when fighting is rare, and not many of us are healers. Then, is Cosmos Palm useful to us? Certainly. Cosmos Palm enriches every day of our life.

Practicing any internal art will also enrich our daily life. But not many people have a chance to practice a genuine internal art. Even those who have a rare opportunity to practice a genuine internal art may not know how to use their internal art to enrich their life.

As a very rough but generous estimate, less than 0.0001% of people in the world have a chance to learn an internal art. This means 1 person out of 10,000 persons. The estimate is based on the total number of students in our school, which is estimated to be 60,000, and the total population of the world, which is estimated to be 7.4 billion.

Of course, there are also other people outside our school who practice internal arts. But most of them only perform the external forms of the internal arts, and not their essence. An estimate of those who obtain the

benefits of internal arts, i.e. those who practice genuine internal arts, and eventually become masters, is 10,000 persons.

But not many of these 10,000 masters consciously apply their internal arts to enrich their daily life. I believe ours is the only school that does so systematically and progressively. Even if we take 70,000 against 7.4 billion, we have less than 0.0001%.

Cosmos Palm is not just an internal art; it is a very high-level internal art. This means the benefits of Cosmos Palm to enrich our daily life are very much higher.

What are the benefits of an internal art that can enrich our daily life? Firstly, an internal art gives good health, vitality and longevity. Those who are sick in the first place, should practice a low-level internal art, like low-level chi kung, to overcome their sickness before attempting more advanced internal arts.

Many people outside our school may be surprised at my statement that low-level chi kung is more effective than a higher-level one to overcome illness, especially so-called incurable diseases. They believe that any chi kung that can overcome cancer or heart problems must be of a very high level. This is no surprise to us when we know that the types of chi kung they are usually exposed to are not genuine chi kung but gentle physical exercise.

Asking a sick person to perform high-level chi kung is like asking him to run a marathon or lift heavy weights. The tremendous amount of energy generated from high-level chi kung will be too much for his physical body to bear.

Besides enabling practitioners to have good health, be full of vitality and have longevity, an internal art also provides spiritual joys, like making them peaceful and happy. The result is intrinsic, i.e. practitioners will naturally be peaceful and happy when they practice internal arts, unless they channel the energy for other purposes, like for combat. Hence, some kungfu masters in the past, despite having a lot of internal force from their internal art training, were agitated and depressed.

Internal art training also gives practitioner a lot of energy and mental clarity, which they can employ to attain peak performance. It is helpful to know that a lot of energy and mental clarity are the ingredients, the skills; practitioners must also have the techniques and philosophies. If a practitioner wants to make his family or work place happier, for example, he must also know what to do and why he does so, besides having a lot of energy to carry out his activities, and mental clarity to see the necessity of what he does. It was

probably because of this lack of opportunities to gather the necessary techniques and philosophies that some past internal art masters were not happy.

But today, with the great advantage of the information age, techniques and philosophies can be learned from books, videos or the internet. Skills, like a lot of energy and mental clarity, still need to be learned from a competent teacher.

Besides these benefits that practicing any internal art will give, except that Cosmos Palm being very high-level will give more, what other special benefits that one may get from practicing Cosmos Palm in his daily application when he is not a healer or having to fight?

A special feature of Cosmos Palm is to channel energy to other persons, even through obstacles in between, to affect their energy flow. You may not be a professional healer, but you can use this ability to help other people. If a child falls and hurts himself, you can channel your energy to help him to relieve him of swelling, bruise and blood blockage. If an adult is depressed, you can channel your energy to help his energy flow to relieve him of his depression.

Many students told me that their chi flowed better when they attended a course with me. I believe this had to do with my training of the Cosmos Palm.

I haven't investigated into this , but I believe that those with Cosmos Palm training not only have better chi flow themselves, but also can influence others to have better chi flow, which will bring good health, vitality and longevity. This benefit is intrinsic. In other words, those with Cosmos Palm need not do anything special. By their presence, other people will also have better chi flow.

Will the Cosmos Palm practitioners be depleted of energy? No. As they are relaxed, another benefit of practicing any internal art, they will be recharged instantly from the Cosmos.

Cosmos Palm as well as other internal arts have benefitted me tremendously. I really cannot remember the last time I was sick. I am full of vitality, even after a trans-continental flight. As I am now way past 60, I can claim to have longevity. These are the unspoken, but sure, benefits of Cosmos Palm.

Here is a story which I seldom tell to other people. One night I returned

home to find a fish dead, or appeared to be dead, in a fish pond. I channeled chi to it. Then I left the fish pond and did not think much of it. Some time later I found the same fish swimming happily in the pond! It was an aha experience.

Another aha experience was when I broke a sugar cane supported on two eggs without breaking the eggs. Still another aha experience was later when I broke the bottom of two bricks, one on top of the other, without breaking the top brick

I gave a demonstration of breaking a sugar cane supported on two eggs without breaking the eggs at the University of Science, Penang, Malaysia . An office-bearer of the kungfu club that invited me for the demonstration, asked his adviser, a physics professor, how he would explain that in science. I remember the professor saying that according to science, that was impossible.

Question 3

As with many things, I assume there are multiple developmental levels of Cosmos Palm (rather than either one has achieved it or not). Could Sifu please describe the levels of development and attainment?

Sifu Andrew Barnett

Sifu's answer:

Yes, as you have rightly commented, there are different levels of development and attainment in Cosmos Palm, just as there are different levels in development and attainment in other aspects of life.

To be systematic, let us divide the answer into two main parts, namely development and attainment of Cosmos Palm.

Following the rule of three as suggested by Damian, development is subdivided into three stages, namely knowing the existence of Cosmos Palm, starting to train it, and attaining the Cosmos Palm. Attainment is also subdivided into three stages, namely elementary level, intermediate level and advanced level.

Not many people have heard of Cosmos Palm, and even those who have heard about it may not believe it. For this very large group of people, the development in the training of Cosmos Palm is irrelevant.

Amongst the very few people who have heard of Cosmos Palm, and they form the first group of the development of Cosmos Palm, are informed kungfu practitioners, not those who perform external kungfu forms but indulge in generous exchanges of blows. Some informed persons who have heard of Cosmos Palm may not practice kungfu, but they have heard of a very advanced art that makes use of Cosmic energy and may damage opponents without physical contact, even with obstacles in between.

The first group, i.e. those who have heard of Cosmos Palm, is small. The second group, i.e. those kungfu practitioners who have heard of Cosmos Palm and have a chance to train it, is smaller still. This group usually consists of masters who have practiced kungfu for at least 10 years, probably 20.

For a point of mental clarity, it does not mean that those who have practiced kungfu for at least 10 years will have a chance to learn Cosmos Palm, but amongst those who have practiced kungfu for at least 10 years, a very small

percentage, and who probably have reached a master's level, will have a chance to learn Cosmos Palm.

As a rough estimate, out of 1000 persons who practice kungfu and so-called kungfu, including kungfu forms for demonstration and free exchange of blows, about 400 would have continued to practice for at least 10 years. Out of these 400, 100 would have become "masters" by name, and 10 would have become genuine masters. Only 2 of these genuine masters would have a chance to learn Cosmos Palm.

The third stage of development is the attainment of Cosmos Palm. While the chance to learn Cosmos Palm is very low, the chance of attaining Cosmos Palm is very high, as high as 80%. Two reasons are that Cosmos Palm is taught only to those who have proven themselves to be reliable and of a high moral character, and those who have a chance to learn it greatly value it. Hence, out of 1000 persons who practice kungfu, probably 2 persons would have attained Cosmos Palm.

The attainment of Cosmos Palm normally takes many years, about 3 to 5. This is because both teachers and trainees do not differentiate between skills and techniques. They believe that if they know the techniques and train consistently and correctly, they would attain the art. Attaining Cosmos Palm in a 2-day course, as in New Hampshire, is simply ridiculous.

Strictly speaking, it is not attaining Cosmos Palm in 2 days. Those who attend the Cosmos Palm course are already kungfu practitioners, and they have to perform Pushing Mountain, one of the two major techniques in the way I developed Cosmos Palm, for a few months to have sufficient force. Because we differentiate between skills and techniques, our trainees will be able to acquire sufficient force in a few months what other trainees will need a few years. The other technique, Forceful Big Windmill, will be taught at the course. It is easy to perform Forceful Big Windmill wrongly.

For convenience, we can divide the attainment of Cosmos Palm into three levels. The elementary level is when practitioners have reasonable force to damage an ordinary opponent, yet their palms are still gentle.

The intermediate level is when they can channel their force through obstacles to hurt opponents without hurting the obstacles. This level can be demonstrated by breaking a sugar cane supported on two eggs without breaking the eggs, or breaking the bottom of two bricks one on top of the other without breaking the top brick.

The advanced level is when practitioners have progressed beyond the intermediate level, have a clear philosophy of Cosmos Palm, and be able to teach it successfully to others.

Needless to say, the classification of the development and attainment of Cosmos Palm into three levels each, as well as the estimates of success in these levels, are arbitrary and subjective. Nevertheless, they provide a clearer picture in answering the question.

Question 4

Can you talk about why someone would train Cosmos Palm over One Finger Shooting Zen?

Sifu Mark Harnett

Sifu's Answer:

Both Cosmos Palm and One-Finger Shooting Zen are highly valuable arts, and are rarely taught. In our school, as well as in the tradition of the Shaolin Monastery at Quanzhou during the time of the Venerable Jiang Nan, our Patriarch, One-Finger Shooting Zen was taught to all kungfu monks but Cosmos Palm was taught to only a selected few,

In the kungfu practiced today, where it is either a demonstration of form for show or a generous exchange of blows using Kick-Boxing or other martial techniques, to have a chance to learn either One-Finger Shooting Zen or Cosmos Palm is very rare indeed. It is an opportunity not to be missed. Hence, it is not a question of why a practitioner should choose one art over the other, but he should train any one art if he ever has the chance.

But our school is really funny. One-Finger Shooting Zen is taught to all Shaolin practitioners, and kungfu students can choose to attend the Cosmos Palm course or not. The funnier thing is that the Cosmos Palm course takes only two days, though course participants will still have to practice for a few months to attain the art. Normally it would take other practitioners, if they have the rare opportunity, to practice for many years before he has Cosmos Palm.

Why does it take a few years for other practitioners to attain Cosmos Palm, whereas our practitioners take only a few months, and the Cosmos Palm course takes only two days? It is because we understand the philosophy of Cosmos Palm, we differentiate between skills and techniques, and the necessary skills are transmitted from heart-to-heart to the participants at the course.

But for a philosophical answer, and presuming that he can choose one of these two high-level arts, why would a practitioner train Cosmos Palm over Once-Finger Shooting Zen?

Firstly, Cosmos Palm is rarer than One-Finger Shooting Zen. Both arts are very rare nowadays. Talking about the real arts, not just their outward forms, less than 5% of all those who practice kungfu, including form

demonstration and generous exchange of blows, have One-Finger Shooting Zen, and less than 1% have Cosmos Palm.

Their outward forms are common. All those who practice Hoong Ka in kungfu, and Nanquan (or Southern Fist) in wushu, use the One-Finger Shooting Zen hand-form. They shake their fingers on purpose, instead of their fingers shaking involuntarily due to internal force. The Cosmos Palm hand form is even more wide-spread. All those who use the palm, especially those who practice Taijiquan, Cotton Palm and other internal arts, use the Cosmos Palm hand form. But they only have the external hand form of Cosmos Palm, not its essence.

The second reason is flowing force. The internal force in Cosmos Palm is more flowing than the internal force in One-Finger Shooting Zen. This aspect of flowing force is very useful to those involved in genuine chi kung healing. A healer trained in One-Finger Shooting Zen is also more effective in his healing, but if all other things were equal, one trained in Cosmos Palm is more effective.

Another reason concerns good health, vitality and longevity. One-Finger Shooting Zen contributes greatly to good health, vitality and longevity, but if all other things were equal, Cosmos Palm contributes even more.

The fourth reason is relaxation. Training Cosmos Palm enables practitioners to be more relaxed than those training in One-Finger Shooting Zen. As relaxation is essential for good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance, and spiritual joys, it is an important consideration for choosing Cosmos Palm over One-Finger Shooting Zen.

Another reason is contribution towards internal arts. Both One-Finger Shooting Zen and Cosmos Palm develop internal force, which is an essential ingredient of any internal art. But the training in Cosmos Palm is more conducive. Even if a practitioner does not consciously apply his Cosmos Palm into his internal art, the fact that he has been trained in Cosmos Palm is more likely to develop internal force in his internal art movement than if he had been trained in One-Finger Shooting Zen.

In other words, had he been trained in One-Finger Shooting Zen, when he only performs his internal art movement, he may not develop any more internal force (other than the internal force he had earlier developed in his One-Finger Shooting Zen training.) But if he has been trained in Cosmos Palm, just performing his internal art movements can further develop internal force (besides the internal force he already has from his Cosmos Palm training.)

Hence, there are five good reasons why a practitioner would train Cosmos Palm over One-Finger Shooting Zen.

Question 5

Cosmos Palm is an advanced Art, just as Golden Bell. However it is not explicitly mentioned as one of the three ultimates of Shaolin (namely Dim Mark, Chin Na and Neigong).

Could you elaborate on similarities and differences of Cosmos Palm, Golden Bell, Dim Mark, Chin Na and Neigong in terms of skills, philosophy, martial, medical and daily life application and kung fu sets that enhance and complement most the respective skills?

Sifu Anton Schmick

Sifu's answer:

As there are 72 Shaolin arts, only three are singled out as the Shaolin ultimates, namely dim mark, chin-na and nei gong. Other Shaolin arts are also important or formidable, though some are more than others. Personal choice and opportunities may also decide why one art is chosen over another.

Personally I find Cosmos Palm and Golden Bell more important and formidable than arts like Iron Arm, Bamboo-Leave Hand, and Lizard Art. Iron Arm is self-explanatory. Bamboo-Leaf Hand is having flexible palms in attack, and Lizard Art is an ability to climb walls. Amongst other benefits, Cosmos Palm and Golden Bell contribute to good health, vitality and longevity, whereas the other two arts are for combat. There is not much practical use today for Lizard Art. I prefer to take an elevator, rather than climbing up walls.

One may like , for example, Cosmos Palm more than Iron Arm, but if he does not have the opportunity to learn Cosmos Palm, he may settle for Iron Arm. In this respect, we in Shaolin Wahnam are very lucky. We have a great range of arts to choose from.

Regarding the three Shaolin ultimates, it is worthwhile to remember that kungfu and chi kung terms are for convenience. They are unlike scientific terms which are definitive, and also restrictive. In this context, dim mark and chin-na are regarded as wai gong, or external arts, because their application is easily visible. Nei gong, or internal arts, concern training that is not visible, like Abdominal Breathing and Sinew Metamorphosis. Generally speaking, though it is not necessarily true all the time, wai gong training is for combat, whereas nei gong training is for health.

In another context, dim mark and chin-na are nei gong or internal arts. Almost all their training deals with the internal aspects of essence, energy and mind, or jing, qi and shen. For us today, the greatest value of their training in daily life is for our health, vitality and longevity as well as peak performance and spiritual joys. If we use dim mark or chin-na on others, we have to heal them. Without being boastful, we normally do not need to use dim mark or chin-na, we can normally push most attackers away. Yet, it is great to know these arts to preserve them for posterity.

Although Cosmos Palm is not listed as one of the three Shaolin ultimates, it is one of the three ultimates in kungfu in general, namely One-Finger Zen, Strike Across Space and Marvelous Fist. Cosmos Palm is an art for Striking Across Space.

There are many similarities as well as differences in the arts of Cosmos Palm, Golden Bell, dim mark, chin-na and nei gong. The training of all the five arts deal with the internal aspects of jing, qi and shen, or essence, energy and mind. It is a main reason, but unknown to most people, why in our school when we are good at one art, we can readily train the others. Even if other people know the reason, they cannot do it. They do not know how to train essence, energy and mind.

Let us look at the similarities and differences of these five arts in terms of skills, philosophy, martial, application medical application, and the kungfu sets that enhance and complement these skills.

In term of skills, Cosmos Palm can damage an opponent without leaving any external mark. At an advanced level, it can also damage an opponent from a distance. Golden Bell is an ability to take punches and kicks without sustaining injury. At an advanced level, it can enable a practitioner to take weapon attack. Dim mark and chin-na are skills to stop an opponent from further fighting by stopping his energy flow. Dim mark does so by dotting the opponent's vital point, and chin-na by gripping it or a few points. If the opponent does not take remedial treatment, the injury can be serious or fatal. Nei gong is a collection of internal arts to develop a practitioner's essence, energy and mind for good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance and spiritual joys. At the supreme level he attains Enlightenment or return to God the Holy Spirit.

In term of philosophy, all the five arts develop a practitioner's combat efficiency as well as good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance and spiritual joys to a very high level. There are, of course, very rare, and it is a golden opportunity even to train in any one of them. It is necessary to ensure the arts are, or any one of them is, genuine. An excellent way is to

access their results according to what their training is meant to give, If one is trained in dim mark, for example, he should be able to stop an opponent from further fighting by dotting his vital point. In our case, he is healthy, full of vitality, attains peak performance and has spiritual joys, though if he is young he may have to wait for many years to say he has longevity.

In term of martial application, these arts cause serious damage on opponents, including Golden Bell and nei gong because their training will greatly enhance practitioners' striking ability. If the practitioners are compassionate, and they usually are if they have the opportunity to train these arts, they can easily push away less skillful opponents without hurting them seriously. It is succinct to mention that when one is trained in any one of these arts, he will also be more powerful in other parts of his body other than that part his art is involved. For example, if he is trained in Cosmos Palm, his kicks will also be more powerful.

In term of medical application, the training in any one of these arts will help him to overcome his illness, any illness. This is because of chi flow, which is essential in the training. Not many people, however, know of this fact. Very, very few people have the opportunity to train in any one of these arts. If they ever have the opportunity, not only they are already healthy, but also they have trained in kungfu for many years. On the other hand, if a person is sick, it is more cost-effective for him to practice less powerful chi kung to overcome his sickness. These arts may be too powerful for him.

In term of daily life, these arts will give him good health and vitality, as well as longevity. He is able to do better in whatever he does! He is relaxed, peaceful and happy. These benefits are intrinsic. In other words, he does not need to know how these arts give him these wonderful benefits, or what he should do to have these benefits. Irrespective of whether he knows or does anything extra, because he practices these arts, or any one of them, he will have these wonderful benefits as a matter of course. Nevertheless, he may want to know. These arts greatly enhance his essence, energy and mind, and these three aspects are necessary in whatever he does in daily life.

So far we talk about the similarities in terms of philosophy, martial application, medical application and dialy life. The differences lie in the different ways of their application and their training. In Cosmos Palm, for example, a practitioner uses his palms to strike. In Golden Bell, he lets his energy radiate to protect himself from attack. In dim mark and chin-na he uses his fingers to dot or grip vital points. In nei gong he uses his trained essence, energy and mind for combat or daily living.

The training is different. In Cosmos Palm, he trains his palms. In Golden bell he trains his body. In dim mark and chin-na he trains his fingers. In nei gong he practices different methods according to the type of nei gong he trains in.

There are many kungfu sets that enhance and complement the respective skills in Cosmos Palm, Golden Bell, dim mark, chin-na and nei gong. Over their long history, different masters devised and developed different sets for this purpose. But I shall mention the one that I specially like, and perhaps also mention one or two other sets from our school.

For Cosmos Palm, of course the one I specially like is the Cosmos Palm Set I specially composed for the course in New Hampshire. It is an excellent set that includes the signature greeting from Sifu Ho Fatt Nam's lineage that starts energy flowing and the mind focuses, specific methods to train the skills and force of Cosmos Palm, and simple yet profound application that deals with all the four categories of attack. The Shaolin Pakua Set is also a complementary set, but in my opinion it is not as effective as the Cosmos Palm Set.

Golden Bridge is excellent for both the training and application of Golden Bell. Small Universe and Big Universe, both the phenomenal and the transcendental modes, are also useful. The kungfu sets that enhance and complement Golden Bell are Dragon Strength and Wudang Taijiquan.

For dim mark, the best training method is One-Finger Shooting Zen. Dragon Strength and Flower Set are also excellent. One-Finger Shoot Zen is for training, and Dragon Strength and Flower Set are for application, though any of the methods can be used for both training and application.

"Fierce Tiger Cleanses Claw" is excellent for chin-na. One-Finger Shooting Zen is also very good. The kungfu set that is most suitable for chin-na is the Tiger-Crane Set. Of the three versions I know, the one I like best is the 36-Pattern Tiger-Crane Set. "Fierce Tiger Cleanses Claws" or "One-Finger Shooting Zen" is for training, the 36-Pattern Tiger-Crane Set is for application.

Sinew Metamorphosis is an excellent nei gong set, especially that practiced in our school. Practicing the 12 exercises in the Sinew Metamorphosis set is too powerful. Students need to practice only one exercise. It is simply incredible how much internal force can be generated with just a few repetitions of the one exercise. Iron Wire and Siu Lin Tou are excellent kungfu sets for nei gong training. Students should progress in Iron Wire or Siu Lin Tou gradually.

Cosmos Palm, Golden Bell, dim mark, chin-na and nei gong are wonderful arts. It is just incredible that students in Shaolin Wahnam have an opportunity to practice them, or just any one.

Question 6

Several arts have been in kung fu literature as being useful for both healing as well as combat, especially One Finger Zen and Cosmos Palm. What is it about the force developed by Cosmos Palm that makes it so useful for healing and combat compared to the characteristic force developed by other arts such as Baguazhang, Taijiquan, Golden Bridge, Lifting Water, Golden Bell, or other arts? -

Fredrick Chu

Sifu's answer:

When we understand the philosophy of internal force and are able to use it, we can use the internal force of any arts, like Cosmos Palm, One-Finger Shooting Zen and Tiger-Claw, for combat and for healing. It is because internal force can be used for both – if we know how. Internal force can also be used for most other things, like attaining good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance and spiritual joys – again if we know how.

Let us take an analogy. If we have money, we can use it to have dinner at an expensive restaurant or to buy a new dress. We can also use it for most other things, like going to a cinema, attending a course, or donating it to charity. Of course, the money or the internal force must be sufficient. Also important, though some people may not realize it, we must know how to use the money or the internal force.

Most martial artists today may not know how to use their internal force for combat or for healing, though they have internal force. This may not be surprising for healing, but it may be surprising, especially for people outside our school, for combat. First of all, not many people outside our school have internal force. Amongst the few who have internal force, most of them do not know how to use it for combat. They merely exchange blows, and be punched and kicked themselves.

But this was not so in the past. Those trained in kungfu, would know how to use kungfu for combat, though most of them might not know how to use it for healing even if they had internal force. Amongst those who could not use their internal force for healing, some of them might know in theory that internal force could be used for healing, some didn't know.

Regarding healing, it is also important to know the amount of internal force transmitted to a patient. A healer who transmits too much internal force to a

patient might harm the patient. This is especially so for children and expecting mothers. An untrained person with internal force transmitting chi to an expecting mother, might harm her or her baby. A healer is like a father (or a mother). He must heal within his ability and confidence.

There are a few reasons why the force developed by Cosmos Palm is very useful for healing and combat. Firstly, the force is plentiful, compared to arts like Iron Palm and Iron Leg. Obviously, the more force one has, the more effective he is for healing and for combat.

Another reason is that the force is flowing. Flowing force is more effective for healing. Flowing force can be consolidated if needed for combat. A master with Iron Palm may have a lot of force, but it is usually consolidated and localized at his palm. It would be less effective for the Iron Palm master to transmit it to a patient for healing. It would also be less effective for him in many aspects of combat, like making quick decisions, moving about, and applying felling or kicking attack.

Thirdly, for want of better terms, the force of Cosmos Palm is proactive, whereas the force in some arts like Golden Bell, Iron Shirt and Thirteen Grand Guards is reactive. Proactive force is more effective in healing and combat. A Golden Bell master, for example, will know the effective of his force when he is hit. And usually he would ward off the attack even when he knows the hit would not harm him.

A fourth reason is that the force of Cosmos Palm is focused at the hands, and the hands are usually used in healing and combat. If the force is focused at the head, like in Iron Head, or at the legs, like in Iron Leg, it is not as effective for healing and combat.

Cosmos Palm is a special force or skill in Shaolin Kungfu where practitioners draw energy from the Cosmos to focus it at their palms. Other kungfu styles, like Baguazhang, Taijiquan and Xingyiquan, may have force and skills similar to Cosmos Palm, but these styles do not call it Cosmos Palm.

Golden Bridge and Golden Bell are also special types of force or skills in Shaolin Kungfu, but are different from Cosmos Palm. Other kungfu styles may also have similar types of force or skills, but again they do not call these arts Golden Bridge and Golden Bell.

Lifting Water is popular in Taijiquan, but it is also found in Shaolin Kungfu, though it is infrequently practiced. By practicing Lifting Water, practitioners can develop flowing force. If they can consolidate this flowing force, they have a force that is similar to Cosmos Palm. But not many Taijiquan

practitioners can do so. In fact, if they practice Cosmos Palm and Lifting Water at the same time, they may cancel out the force developed from each art. We in Shaolin Wahnam are special. We enhance both arts.

Cosmos Palm is an excellent art for combat and healing. But practitioners must learn combat and healing first, before they can use the force of Cosmos Palm to enhance them.

Question 7

Is Cosmos Palm closely related to the arts of Strike-Across-Space Palm, "Kak San Ta Ngow" or 'Hitting a Buffalo through a mountain,' and Diamond Palm; and if so are these natural progressions from the development of skills in training our palms or do they require specific separate training? Aside from these arts/progressions, what is the ultimate potential for training Cosmos Palm in martial and healing application for a master who specializes in it over many, many years?

Also, if Sifu would be willing, could you share an experience or two of how Sigung Ho taught you this art or how Sitaigung Yang Fatt Khun taught him?

Thank you Sifu, for absolutely every incredible opportunity and generous teaching!! I very much look forward to both the exciting answers to the questions here and, of course, the experiential answers that will come with the courses in October!

Kristian

Sifu's answer:

It is useful to realize that kungfu terms are for convenience. They are different from scientific terms which are definitive and restrictive. Hydrogen dioxide, for example, is always hydrogen dioxide, though it may appear in its usual liquid form as water, vapour form as steam, and solid form as ice.

It is definitive as it defines that it is composed of an atom of hydrogen and two atoms of oxygen. Hydrogen dioxide, or water, is restrictive as other things, like sodium chloride, which is common salt, or ferrum, which is iron, are not water.

But Cosmos Palm is not definitive or restrictive. It does not define what exactly it is made of. Other types of force or skills can be quite similar to Cosmos Palm. There are different ways to train Cosmos Palm, and it can be used differently. Indeed, the term, Cosmos Palm, is particular to our school. In other schools, it is often called Red Sand Palm.

Why, then, is it called Cosmos Palm? In what ways are Cosmos Palm different from other types of palms, like Iron Palm and Cotton Palm.

We call it Cosmos Palm because we derive energy from the Cosmos and focus it in our palms. But don't we also derive energy from the Cosmos and

focus it in our palms in Iron Palm and Cotton Pam? Ultimately, yes, but the training and application are different. As mentioned earlier, kungfu terms are for convenience.

In Iron Palm training, practitioners usually hit a bag of sand, beans or iron-filing. When applied on opponents, the damage is usually external and visible. In Cotton Palm training, practitioners perform various movements to generate powerful flow of energy. When applied on opponents, the damage is always internal and not visible.

In Cosmos Palm training in our school, we perform Pushing Mountain to generate energy flow, then we perform Forceful Big Windmill to consolidate the flowing energy. Other schools may use different training methods.

If we take Iron Palm, Cotton Palm and Cosmos Palm as examples, Iron Palm is "hard", Cotton Palm is "soft", and Cosmos Palm is both "hard" and "soft". This is a usual generalization.

At a very advanced level, Iron Palm can be very soft, and Cotton Palm can be very hard. When Sifu Gu Ru Zhang, a famous Iron Palm master, struck a horse, which a foreign master brought in to humiliate kungfu, he gave it a gentle tap without leaving any external mark. The horse collapsed and died immediately. His Iron Palm, which is very "hard", had become Cotton Palm, which is very "soft".

With this background understanding, the answer to your question becomes meaningful.

The answer to the question whether Cosmos Palm is related to the arts of "Strike-Across-Space Palm", "Hitting a Buffalo Behind a Mountain", and Diamond Palm is "yes" and "no". The meaning of "Strike-Across-Space Palm" is literal, though the distance may vary from a few inches to many feet.

The strike by Piti (Sifu Piti Parra Duque) on Dr Juan on the Blue Mountain some years ago was an example of "Strike-Across-Space Palm". Piti stopped his punch a few inches away, but his internal force fractured Dr Juan's ribs. On another occasion, my "dim mark" on Piti was another example of "Strike-Across Space Palm". I stopped my sword-finger a few inches in front of Piti's throat, but it choked PIti and made him dizzy. He had to perform "Lifting the Sky" to relieve the damage.

It is interesting to note that Piti used his vertical fist, and I used my sword-finger. We didn't use our palms. Were those examples of "Strike-Across-Space Palm"? The answer can be "yes" or "no", depending on ones'

perspective. Kungfu terms are for convenience. But personally, I would consider Piti's strike as an example of Marvelous Fist, and my strike as an example of One-Finger Zen. One-Finger Zen, Strike-Across-Space Palm, and Marvelous Fist are regarded as the three ultimate arts of kungfu.

The meaning of "Hitting a Buffalo Behind a Mountain" is figurative. It is not really a buffalo behind a mountain. The art refers to striking opponents behind some objects. Again the distance may vary, but it is almost never in terms of miles.

I could think of two examples at random.

Many years ago a few of my disciples and I were invited by the Moral Uplifting Society in Taiping, Malaysia to demonstrate dispersing clouds in the sky. When we were asked about chi, we gave an impromptu demonstration before the main cloud dispersing to the public. Office bearers of the Society were invited into a room. Lim, one of our chi kung instructors, went into an adjacent room and transmitted chi to them, causing them to have a chi flow. Having a chi flow was a first to all of the office bearers. Having chi transmitted to them across a wall was another first.

Was this "Strike-Across-Space Palm"? The answer can be "yes" or "no". Chi kung terms, like kungfu terms, are for convenience.

Was the experiment on dispersing clouds successful? Of course, it was. We are scholar-warriors. We do things when we know we can be successful. You can read about cloud dispersing in my autobiography, "The Way of the Master".

The next example of "Strike-Across-Space Palm" was more like striking, but it was with One-Finger Zen, and not with the palm. It was in Portugal. I lined up 7 volunteers, and told the class that I would shoot chi pass 5 volunteers to hit the sixth. I stood a few feet in front of the line and aimed my One-Finger Zen at the volunteers. The sixth person sprang a few feet away. He happened to be Luis (Sifu Luis Morgado), our expert in intelligent robots. He did "Lifting the Sky" to generate a chi flow to remove the injury.

After the chi flow, Luis told us that he felt like a sharp knife piercing into his heart. You can ask Dr Riccardo Salvatore or Luis to tell you the details. Or you can read about the feat in my autobiography, "The Way of the Master".

Diamond Palm is sometimes called Vajra Palm, or "jing gang zhang" in Chinese. In Vajrayana Buddhist philosophy, "vajra" is considered the hardest substance. Thus, Vajra Palm is called Diamond Palm in English.

Vajra Palm is a secretive art. Its hard, external training is similar to that of Iron Palm, but it also consists of a lot of internal training. Some high level Lama Kungfu masters have Vajra Palm.

Cosmos Palm refers to a special type of training. Although there may be different methods, the general principles are similar. The principles involve generating powerful energy flow and consolidating the energy. The palms of Cosmos Palm masters are soft and gentle.

Strike-Across-Space Palm and Hitting a Buffalo Behind Mountain refer to application. In Strike-Across-Space Palm, a master can injure an opponent without physical contact, and from a distance. In Hitting a Buffalo Behind a Mountain, a master can injure an opponent with obstacles in between, usually without harming the obstacles. These two applications are similar, but not the same.

One may use Cosmos Palm for Striking-Across-Space Palm or Hitting a Buffalo Behind Mountain, or one may use other arts. On the other hand, he may not use his Cosmos Palm for Striking-Across-Space Palm or for Hitting a Buffalo Behind Mountain. We may use his Cosmos Palm on physical contact, and directly without any obstacles in between,

We have an analogy in Eighteen Lohan Hands and Bone-Marrow Cleansing.. Is Eighteen Lohan Hands related to Bone-Marrow Cleansing? The answer is "yes" and "no". We can use any technique from Eighteen Lohan Hands to attain any level of Bone-Marrow Cleansing – if we know how. On the other hand, we can use any technique in Eighteen Lohan Hand for other purposes other than Bone-Marrow Cleansing. We may, for example, use Carrying the Moon, which is a technique from Eighteen lohan Hands, for Cosmic Shower.

Generally, it is a matter of progression. At an early stage, a practitioner may perform Eighteen Lohan Hands to generate an energy flow. At an advanced level, he may use Eighteen Lohan Hands for Bone-Marrow Cleansing. At an early stage, a practitioner may use Cosmos Palm to injure an opponent on physical contact. An an advanced stage, he may injure an opponent from a distance, or with obstacles in between, as in Striking-Across-Space Palm and Hitting a Buffalo Behind Mountain.

But this profession is not always so. At an advanced stage, a Cosmos Palm master may not use his Cosmos Palm to injure opponents at a distance or behind obstacles. Most probably he did not know the methods. But sometimes even when he knows the methods, he prefers not to.

Hence, it requires special methods to do so, besides being advanced in the art. It is simply incredible that at the Cosmos Palm course in New Hampshire in October 2016, course participants not only learned the rare skills of Cosmos Palm but also the methods to “hit a buffalo behind mountain”. Due to the short time available, they might not be very skillful yet. But if they keep practicing, they will be successful. More importantly, Cosmos Palm gives them good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance and spiritual joys.

All internal force training also gives us good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance and spiritual joys. But most other internal arts do not give as much benefit in all these respects as Cosmos Palm.

I would take this opportunity to mention a very important point. These benefits of good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance and spiritual joys are wonderful, and naturally many people would like to train internal force to have these wonderful benefits. But internal force has to be learnt from a master, at least a competent instructor. If one learns internal force from books or videos, it is likely to bring harm rather than benefit.

There is also another important point many people may not realize. Some schools or teachers may claim to teach internal force. But are the schools and teachers genuine? Is the internal force genuine? An excellent test is to access the result of the internal force training with what internal force training is supposed to give. If it takes 3 years to produce desirable result, a smart student may not spend the three years in training. He can observe other students who have trained for 3 years.

I don't know how my sigung taught my sifu Cosmos Palm, but the story of how my sifu taught me Cosmos Palm is quite well known by now amongst many in our Shaolin Wahnam Family.

My sihengs, or senior classmates, were training Iron Palm, which was a secretive art, though now we call it a buffalo's art. I trained Iron Palm on my own from a book for about 2 years, yet could not break a brick though the book mentioned that the training would enable a practitioner to break a brick in 100 days. I believe this claim was true because real masters never lied, and the author of this book was a well known real master.

So I asked my sihengs whether I could join them. I did quite well in hitting a bag of iron-filing, but from a corner of my eyes I saw my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, approaching. I thought I would get a scolding from my sifu. I didn't ask his permission, I only asked my sihengs. But my sifu smiled and nodded. Then he asked me to show him my hands.

"You have a lady's hands," he said.

My heart sank. I thought I had lost an opportunity to train Iron Palm.

Then my sifu continued, "I'll teach you Cosmos Palm."

He led me aside from my sihengs, and asked me to perform Pushing Mountain.

After a few repetitions, my sifu said, "That's good. Now practice this every day." Then he walked away.

I was a good student. I practiced Pushing Mountain every day, always without my sifu watching.

After some time, my sifu asked me, "How is your Pushing Mountain?"

"I practice it every day as Sifu has instructed," I answered. I showed him Pushing Mountain.

"Very good," my sifu said. "Now, I'll teach you the next step." He taught me Forceful Big Windmill,

It was not called Forceful Big Windmill then. I gave it a name because the movement resembled a pattern from the Eighteen Lohan Hands called the Big Windmill, which is performed gently. The movement my sifu showed me was performed with internal force.

"Practice it every day," my sifu said. Then he walked away.

Question 8

Does the training of Marvelous Fist, or any of the other specialized arts available in our school (from One Finger Shooting Zen, to Golden Bridge, Lifting water, Triple Stretch, Iron Wire, Dragon Strength, etc...) develop or enhance the power of Cosmos Palm?

If so, more specifically, is there a way to add to the Marvelous Fist training some methods by which to develop both Marvelous Fist and Cosmos Palm?"

Karol

Sifu's answer:

Yes, in our school the training of Marvelous Fist or any of the other specialized arts develops and enhances Cosmos Palm. But it may not be so in other schools. In tother schools, these two arts may contradict each other.

The training of all these specialized arts involves internal training, i.e. the training of jing, shen and qi, or essence, mind and energy. We understand the philosophy of the training. Hence, we are able to transfer the training gained in any one art to both the development and enhancement of another art.

In other schools, because they do not understand the underlying philosophy, and do not have the skills to make the transfer, the training of any one art may contradict that of another art. Hence, practitioners are advised by their masters to train only one art at one time. This, in fact, is the norm. We in Shaolin Wahnam are the exception.

Let us take an analogy. If a person plays tennis, his skills in playing tennis may unfavorably affect him in playing football, because the skills in playing tennis and playing football are different. But if you understand the philosophy of skills, and are able to make the transfer, your playing tennis will both develop and enhance your playing football, and vice versa. But most other people do not understand the philosophy and do not know the transfer.

Let us take an example of Marvelous Fist and Cosmos Palm. Both are very advanced arts. At a very advanced level, both these arts are regarded as two of the three ultimate arts in kungfu. The other art is One-Finger Zen.

When you train Marvelous Fist, you learn how to relax, focus your mind and generate an energy flow. These three factors are the basics of any internal force training. Not only you and other practitioners in our school know the philosophy, but I make sure that all practitioners are relaxed, focused and have an energy flow. I also transmit the skills to do these basic requirements of force training.

Students in other schools may not have this advantage. They are taught the right techniques, and by practicing the techniques they develop the skills of being relaxed, focusing their mind and generating an energy flow. They may take many months to develop these basic skills, but our students can do so in one day.

So, when you and other students in our school practice Cosmos Palm, you do not have to start afresh. You already have the basic skills. But other practitioners will have to learn afresh. The techniques for Cosmos Palm are different from the techniques for Marvelous Fist. They will have to practice the techniques for many months before they can have the skills.

In Marvelous Fist training, practitioners in our school perform 30 Punches to generate an energy flow. Then they punch with stone-locks to increase the energy flow. In Cosmos Palm training, practitioner perform Pushing Mountain to generate an energy flow. Then they perform Forceful Big Windmill to consolidate their energy, but it is still flowing. For us in Shaolin Wahnam, the energy flow in Marvelous Fist will contribute and enhance the training in Cosmos Palm.

Reversely, the flowing energy and consolidated energy in Cosmos Palm will also contribute to the development and enhancement in Marvelous Fist. The consolidated energy, but still flowing, in Cosmos Palm is like punching with stone locks in Marvelous Fist.

Practitioner in other schools will not have this advantage. They only learn the respective techniques, thinking that the techniques are the ones that bring the effect of Marvelous Fist or Cosmos Palm. As the techniques of the two arts are different, they may contradict one another.

Even when we have the skills as well as the techniques, we must develop the necessary energy gradually. We must guard against over-training. But other practitioners will take years, whereas our practitioners only take months.

For us in Shaolin Wahnam, our concern is not to find a way to add to the development of both Marvelous Fist and Cosmos Palm. Even if there were a way, we should not use it. Our concern is to avoid over-training.

In the first place, it is a very rare opportunity to learn just Marvelous Fist or Cosmos Palm. Even when one has the rare opportunity, he takes years to develop Marvelous Fist or Cosmos Palm. It is simply ridiculous that we in Shaolin Wahnam have the opportunities to learn both Marvelous Fist and Cosmos Palm, though many students and instructors do not make good use of these very rare opportunities.

Other practitioners take years to develop Marvelous Fist or Cosmos Palm, and they will be very happy when they are finally successful. I myself also took years. Our students and instructors only take months. They still have to practice everyday for these few months.

The techniques passed down by past masters for Marvelous Fist and Cosmos Palm are the best. They are established techniques, which means that if practitioners practice these techniques correctly, and consistently, they will have Marvelous Fist or Cosmos Palm.

However, if I have to name just one technique or skill that will eventually develop Marvelous Fist or Cosmos Palm, or any specialized art, it is chi flow. Chi flow not only contributes to the development of Marvelous Art or Cosmos Palm, it also makes it safe for us to practice these arts. More importantly, it gives us good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance and spiritual joys.

Question 9

Has Cosmos Palm ever been taught in an exclusively Taijiquan setting previously?

Is it possible for Cosmos Palm to manifest over a period of time when training Taijiquan?

How would Cosmos Palm enhance a Taijiquan practitioners' skills in Pushing Hands?

Sifu Kevin Barry

Sifu's answer:

I am very glad that you ask this question for Taijiquan practitioners.

It is helpful to have some background knowledge so as to better understand the answer to this question. As I have often mentioned, kungfu terms and chi kung terms are for convenience. This realization is of particular importance to Westerners, because some Westerners often think of any terms as being definite, like scientific terms.

When we talk of Taijiquan setting, for example, we use the term "Taijiquan setting" for convenience. Different people from different times and places may have different concepts of what a Taijiquan setting is. A Chinese living at the time of Yang Lu Chan, for example, would think of Taijiquan as hard and fast, quite similar to Shaolin Kungfu we practice in our school. A European living in the present time would think of Taijiquan as slow and graceful, usually without combat application, like what is commonly practiced as Yang Style Taijiquan. Taijiquan setting to them would be the setting in which their concept of Taijiquan is being practiced.

When we use a scientific term, like a fish, we define it with certain conditions. Whatever that falls outside these conditions, we will not scientifically call it a fish. A whale, being a mammal, is scientifically not a fish. But many people, Westerners or otherwise, call a whale a fish, because actually many people use terms for convenience. Yet, it is helpful to be aware of possible different interpretation of terms, particularly in the answer to this question.

If we take Taijiquan setting as conceptualized by most people today, Cosmos Palm has never been taught in this setting. Many people today, including many Taiji practitioners, do not consider Taijiquan a martial art.

We in Shaolin Wahnam are in a minority. Not only we consider Taijiquan a martial art, our concept of Taijiquan is also quite different from that of others who also regard Taijiquan as a martial art. At the same time we apply the benefits of Taijiquan in non-martial aspects in our daily life.

Even when we take this concept, Cosmos Palm has never been taught in an exclusive Taijiquan setting. This does not mean that Cosmos Palm is not useful in Taijiquan. Cosmos Palm is very useful in Taijiquan for both combat and non-combat purposes. It just happens that Taijiquan masters do not, and Taijiquan masters in the past did not, practice Cosmos Palm. Cosmos Palm is a very secretive art. Even less secretive arts like Iron Palm and Iron Fist are not practiced in Taijiquan. We are indeed very lucky in Shaolin Wahnam that our students had a chance to learn it.

When training Taijiquan over a period of a long time, like after 20 years, some high level Taijiquan masters may develop Cotton Palm, but it is unlikely they will develop Cosmos Palm because they do not know how to consolidate force. In other words, no matter for how long a Taijiquan practitioner trains, he will never develop Cosmos Palm. As an analogy, no matter for how long a swimmer who uses crawl or breast-stroke trains, he will never be able to use butterfly-stroke.

For the very rare Taijiquan practitioners who know Cosmos Palm, it will certainly enhance his skills in Pushing Hands. He may let his energy flow and be very perceptive not only of this opponent's movement but also his intention. He is so perceptive that he knows the opponent's movement before the opponent makes a move.

He may consolidate his energy so that his opponent cannot even move him. No matter what the opponent does, he remains like a solid rock. By exploding force, he can let his opponent fly back many feet, or be seriously damaged on the spot.

Cosmos Palm is a very high-level rare art. It is not only excellent for combat, but also excellent for health, vitality, longevity, peak performance and spiritual joys. Those who missed the course, irrespective of whether they are Taijiquan practitioners, just missed the opportunity.

Question 10

Would you be willing to talk about the history and nature of Cosmos palm? Was it passed on to us by the Venerable Jiang Nan as his specialized skill? How does Cosmos Palm fit into the grand scheme of Shaolin Cosmos Chi Kung?

David

Sifu's answer:

The question: Would you be willing to talk about the history and nature of Cosmos Palm?

My answer: Yes, I would be willing.

Having answered this question, I can go to the other questions, but I shall spend some time talking about the history and nature of Cosmos Palm.

I don't know exactly when Cosmos Palm started. No one knows for sure, because it depends on how he defines Cosmos Palm, even when he takes the consensus of what Cosmos Palm generally is.

It is quite different from a type of questions like "In what year Christopher Columbus discovered America?" As many of us know (many may not know, and most may not be interested) the answer is 1492.

If we want to split hair, or to have fun, we may argue that Christopher Columbus did not discover America; he saw (but did not land on them) some islands in the West Indies. Other people may argue that there had been a lot of people living in America long before Christopher Columbia was born.

Coming back to Cosmos Palm, I believe it existed long ago, even before Shaolin Kungfu was established in the 6th century CE. Warriors on horseback during the Period of Warring States, which was between the 5th and 3rd centuries BCE, would have used cosmic energy in their hands to hold their heavy weapons, though they probably did not call their skills or abilities Cosmos Palm.

At the early period of Shaolin Kungfu, which was long after the Warring States, but longer before the present time, some high-level Shaolin monks would have Cosmos Palm, and they called their art Cosmos Palm. But the art was a top secret. Not only it was not taught to kungfu practitioners outside

the Shaolin Monastery no matter how advanced they might be, it was taught only to very few selected disciples in the monastery.

In later years, Cosmos Palm was known as Red Sand Palm. In some kungfu literature in English it was sometimes called Cinnabar Palm, because “red sand” in Chinese means cinnabar in English.

I also believe that Cosmos Palm was the forerunner of Cotton Palm. Some high-level Taoist priests on Wudang Mountain focused on flowing force when they practiced Cosmos Palm, and eventually subsequent high-level masters just used flowing force in their practice, resulting in Cotton Palm.

The nature of Cosmos Palm is that the force is flowing, but is consolidated when needed for combat. Hence, the palms of a Cosmos Palm master are soft and gentle. In Cotton Palm, masters discovered that they might not need to consolidate their force, their flowing force is powerful enough to cause serious injury to their opponents.

There may be different methods in developing flowing force and consolidating force. Because of different emphasis, the nature of Cosmos Palm and Cotton Palm may be different.

As the force of a Cosmos Palm master is generally flowing, it contributes greatly to good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance and spiritual joys. The results are intrinsic. In other words, there is no need for a Cosmos Palm practitioner to be concerned how to use his flowing force for good health, or to be happy. Nevertheless, if he is aware of this fact, and also is able to transfer the force to daily use, as we do in Shaolin Wahnam, his benefits will be much enhanced.

Although my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, did not specifically mention it, I believe our Cosmos Palm was passed down to us by the Venerable Jiang Nan. Cosmos Palm is a Shaolin art. It is not found in any other styles of kungfu, and certainly not in any other martial arts. The Venerable Jiang Nan was a very high-level Shaolin monk. The two specific exercises that my sifu taught me to develop flowing energy and to consolidate energy – Pushing Mountain and Forceful Big Windmill – are also from Shaolin.

When one practices Cosmos Palm, he already practices Shaolin Cosmos Chi Kung. Said in modern day mathematical terms, Cosmos Palm is a sub-set of the set of Shaolin Cosmos Chi Kung. As an analogy, man (of course, that includes woman) is a subset of mammal.

In terms of benefits, those who have Cosmos Palm will have more benefits, quantitatively and qualitatively, than those who practice general exercises of Shaolin Cosmos Chi Kung. Quantitatively, a Cosmos Palm practitioner can injure an opponent without leaving any external mark, but a general chi kung practitioner of Shaolin Cosmos Chi Kung cannot. Qualitatively, by practicing Cosmos Palm he has better benefit for health than a general chi kung practitioner.

While it is not necessary, but it is extremely helpful for a practitioner to practice simpler and more elementary Shaolin Cosmos Chi Kung exercises before attempting specific exercises for Cosmos Palm.

Can someone start practicing Cosmos Palm if he has no previous Shaolin Cosmos Chi Kung or any chi kung experience. He can, but he will take a long time to accomplish the art of Cosmos Palm, even if he has learned the techniques.

By the way, Shaolin Wahnam family members can easily understand this statement, but most other people may not. It is the failure to understand the philosophy of this statement that more than 80% of chi kung practitioners all over the world do not enjoy chi kung benefits, and more than 90% of kungfu practitioners cannot use their kungfu for combat despite having practiced chi kung or kungfu for years. They only practice chi kung and kungfu techniques, but do not have the necessary skills.

For a fresh beginner, the first few years of Cosmos Palm training is meant to make him healthy, and build up his force for his Cosmos Palm. For another person who is already healthy, his training starts to build up his force. For a third person who is already healthy and has a lot of force, his Cosmos Palm training teaches him how to apply his Cosmos Palm.

Can a sick person start Cosmos Palm training? He can if he has a very good teacher. Unfortunately, most teachers, in terms of attaining the purposes of kungfu training, are bad. They teach techniques, which are sometimes injurious to health, but never teaches skills. In practical terms, Cosmos Palm training will aggravate his sickness.

It is more cost-effective for a sick person to overcome his sickness first by practicing simpler and more elementary Shaolin Cosmos Chi Kung exercises, or other medical chi kung exercises like the Eighteen Jewels and Five-Animal Play. Similarly, if a person wants to see his friend across a street, it is easier for him to walk than to drive his car.