



**Question and Answer Series**  
**The 72 Shaolin Arts**  
**by Grandmaster Wong Kiew Kit**

## Question 1

We have a valuable heritage, but it might not always be so easy to see all the beautiful utilities in them. Which of the 72 Shaolin Arts would you rate the highest in terms of daily application, health, combat application, spiritual cultivation, and just plain fun?

Are there some arts that carry more benefit than most even realized? For example, the oft spoken and adored Art of Lightness allows the exponent to reach incredible heights by jumping, but shouldn't it also allow the exponent to escape dangerous falls, even dropping off from an airplane, without harm?

What are the hardest Arts to master if the minimum requirements for each are satisfied before training? Which Arts have the most demanding requirements of them all? How much do you see room for improving our current teaching methodology in Shaolin Wahnam: can we still push the bar higher without overtraining? For example, are there Shaolin Arts that contribute more holistically to learning the remaining Arts, and thus should preferably be learnt first?

Olli, Finland

## Answer

As it is often the case, the answers to your questions depend on many variables, like personal preferences, the skills of the teacher, the developmental stage of the student, needs and aspirations, and availability of resources.

Indeed, we have a valuable heritage, and it is not always possible to see the beautiful utilities of the 72 Shaolin arts, or of the heritage.

Twenty years ago I would rate Golden Bell, One-Finger Shooting Zen and Tiger-Claw as the highest of our Shaolin Wahnam version of the 72 Shaolin Arts. It was because these three arts represented the “ultimates” of kungfu or any martial art, namely an invincibility ability to take attacks, dim mark and chin-na.

However, now faced with the same question, I would rate Smiling from the Heart, Entering Silence, and Chi Flow, because these three arts give happiness, spiritual joys, good health, vitality and longevity – qualities any person would like to have in this phenomenal world.

If we wish to break down the benefits into categories instead of referring to the arts as a whole, I would now rate as the best Smiling from the Heart for daily application, Chi Flow for health, One-Finger Shooting Zen for combat application, Entering Silence for spiritual cultivation, and the Monkey Play of the Five-Animal Play for just plain fun.

Yes, there are some arts that carry more benefits than others even when realized. Eagle Claw, for example, is excellent for gripping, but its combat application is mainly a supportive role. In other words, an exponent grips an opponent with Eagle Claw, then delivers the coup de grace on the opponent. On the other hand, Tiger Claw is combat ending. When an exponent applies Tiger Claw on an opponent, the Tiger Claw itself is the coup de grace, there is no need to apply another coup de grace. On health aspects, Point Massage activates energy flow on the face, but Chi Flow activates energy flow over the whole body.

The Art of Lightness not only enables an expert to jump high but also enables him to avoid dangerous falls – within reasonable limits. But I don't think these abilities apply when the heights and falls are extreme, like jumping up to a flying airplane or falling from one.

It is worthy of note that no matter how hard some people may perceive an art to be realized, if the “three requirements” are present, that art can be realized. The “three requirements” are the method, the teacher and the student. The method must lead to an accomplishment of the art. The teacher must be competent. The student must be ready and willing to learn.

I am happy to say that all the 72 Shaolin arts listed in our Shaolin Wahnam version can be accomplished. Although personally I am not accomplished in a few of the arts, like I have not tried poking my finger through thick buffalo's hide in One-Finger Gold, or hurting an opponent 108 steps away in Marvelous Fist, I can teach a willing student to accomplish the task. The question is whether it is worth his time and effort, especially when we have better alternatives.

Hence, for us in Shaolin Wahnam, the question of the “hardest” art in terms of most difficult to accomplish, does not arise as all the arts can be accomplished. But in terms of “hardest” in the sense that it is the most difficult to practice, I would state the Art of Lightness. It is “hardest” because it takes the most time and effort as well as needs to most demanding requirements to be accomplished. It should be noted here that “hardest” is relative. Personally I do not find it “hard” if we have the determination to do it.

At present I do not see any need nor room for improving our current teaching methodology, nor push our bar higher. In fact, now we have to slow down our teaching methodology or lower our bar so as not to over-train.

Yes, being the best arts, Smiling from the Heart, Entering Silence and Chi Flow are the arts that contribute more holistically in learning the remaining arts, and should preferably be learnt first. This is exactly what we are doing. These three arts are what we teach all our students when they learn from us in Shaolin Wahnam. This is following the Shaolin tradition as passed down by my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, that the best arts are taught first.

At the least, Smiling from the Heart calms students, apart from making them happy. Students who are calm and happy progress better than those who are not. Students who are angry, agitated, nervous and sad may not progress at all.

Entering silence is a basic requirement for practicing any internal art. The highest of the Shaolin arts, are internal. Without Entering Silence, students cannot practice any internal art.

Chi Flow is also another requirement for any internal art, though many masters who have accomplished themselves in internal art may not realize it. How could they accomplish the art if they did not, and still do not, realize that chi flow is a basic requirement? They had chi flow, but they were not consciously aware of their chi flow. Hence, they need much longer time to accomplish the art.

We are elite and practice a priceless art. Although we practice Smiling from the Heart, Entering Silence and Chi Flow right at the very start of our art, the 72 Shaolin Arts course provides invaluable skills and techniques for us to get more room our practice.

## Question 2

Could you please elaborate how participants in the 72 Shaolin Arts course will benefit from practicing these arts in their kungfu practice, as well as in their daily life?

Sifu Nessa Kahila, Finland

## Answer

The three of the 72 Shaolin Arts I shall teach in Helsinki from 3rd to 5th August 2016 are

1. Marvelous Fist
2. Golden Bell
3. Art of 1000 Steps

Those who wish to attend these courses should have trained in our school for at least one year, and be able to “sit” at Golden Bridge for at least 10 minutes.

These three arts are not only advanced, but are seldom taught to students. It is indeed a rare opportunity to have a chance to learn them.

Please note that all these three arts are considered the “three ultimates” in all kingfu. The three arts considered the “three ultivates” in Shaolin Kungfu are dim mark, chin-na and neigong.

A master with Marvelous Fist can injure an opponent 108 steps away without physical contact! Marvelous Fist is one of the three ultimates in kungfu, the other two being One-Finger Zen and Strike-Across-Space Palm.

It is not an aim of the 72 Shaolin Arts Course to achieve this ability of the Marvelous Fist. But it is an aim of the course to learn the skills and techniques of the Marvelous Fist.

Course participants who have these skills and techniques, even if they may not have Marvelous Fist, will be very powerful with their punches. They may not be able to hurt an opponent 108 steps away, but if they strike an opponent with a punch, even with physical contact, it can cause serious damage. The punch is the most frequently used attack technique in kungfu.

The internal force developed from training the Marvelous Fist can be used not only for any other attack, it can also be used for any defence. Hence, it has tremendous value in kungfu training.

Internal force is not just for combat. It is more important in enriching our daily life, though many kungfu practitioners, including masters, may not realize this important fact.

The three categories of benefits of internal force are to maintain life, to enhance life, and to produce better result no matter what we do. This means that firstly if you have more internal force now than before, you will live life longer. Secondly, your life performance will be better than before. For example, in an epidemic most other people will be sick, but you won't. It is because of your internal force that overcome possible disease causing



agents.

The third category of benefits is fantastic. Just imagine that after learning the skills and techniques of Marvelous Fist, no matter what you do, you will do better! If you read a book, you will understand and enjoy more. If you perform any physical activity, you will have better result in less time. It is all because of your internal force.

With Golden Bell, you can take punches and kicks, and at advanced level, weapon attack without sustaining injury. This will certainly improve your free sparring. You won't be worried that you will be hit, which is a main reason hampering many kungfu practitioners to perform their best in combat.

This does not mean you will neglect your defence. You still apply your defence techniques accordingly, but in case they fail and you are hit, the attack will not cause you much damage. You can then move in to strike your opponent while he is focusing on attacking you. In fact, in my younger days, I sometimes used this strategy, especially when I knew opponents' attacks were not damaging.

When you have Golden Bell, you are able to attack without sustaining injury because you are being protected by a layer of flowing energy. Besides protecting you, this flowing energy also increases your internal force and performs other benefits.

The three categories of benefits of internal force are explained above. Golden Bell training adds to the internal force developed at the 72

Shaolin Arts course.

An obvious benefit of Golden Bell in daily life is confidence – not just confidence that you will not be harmed when being hit, but confidence in whatever you do. Confidence is important in leading to success in whatever you do.

With the Art of 1000 Steps, a practitioner can run for a long distance without feeling tired and without panting for breath. Hence, practitioners who are trained in such skills and techniques, have good control of breathing and have good stamina which are useful for any kungfu performance.

Moreover, training the Art of 1000 Steps will improve their agility and flexibility, not just physically but also mentally. Any improvement in agility and flexibility will enhance kungfu performance.

More significantly, improvement in agility and flexibility, as well as improvement in breath control and stamina are not just for kungfu, but for daily life. No matter what we do in our daily life, better agility, flexibility, breath control and stamina will enable us to have better results no matter what we do.

The 72 Shaolin Arts course in Helsinki from 3rd to 5th August 2016 not only enhance our kungfu performance but also our daily life. Not only these arts are advanced, they are also not easily available anywhere else.

### Question 3

These three arts, Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell, and Art of 1000 Steps/Art of Lightness, are legendary, and often portrayed in films and spoken of in stories. Because of that, the results from training these arts, as depicted in the films, seems (to me) to be tipping into the realm of fantasy. For instance - Marvelous Fist - striking someone across a courtyard, leaving a fist-shaped purple bruise on their chest, and causing massive internal injury or instant death.

Golden Bell - the practitioner can withstand thrusts from a spear, or be kicked through a brick wall, and sustain zero injury/damage. Art of 1000 Steps/Art of Lightness - the practitioner can run across water and barely disturb the surface, jump to a roof top and run from building to building, or jump to a high tree limb and stand on the thinnest of branches.

For those lucky enough to attend this course, what results (or even "wow" moments) can participants expect during the course itself? And also after 1 year of training, and 3 years of training?

Additionally, how would these results compare to the results of training the Shaolin Wahnam syllabus? For instance, I have heard that students/instructors have developed some degree of Golden Bell by training Horse Riding Stance or Golden Bridge. And I personally have experienced some degrees of the Art of 1000 Steps/Lightness by directing my flowing Chi to my legs to run and jump.

Sifu Matt Fenton, USA

## Answer

These arts are indeed legendary. We are very fortunate to have them in our school, and those who value legends and make an effort to obtain them, have a chance to learn them at the Scandinavian King's Road courses.

Some of the effects of these arts shown in films or spoken in stories are exaggerated, but basically the marvels of these arts are real. For example, during a demonstration Piti (Sifu Piti Parra Duque) gave Dr Juan a strike at his ribs but stopped an inch or two away. Dr Juan was in pain, and a day later when he had an x-ray in his specialist hospital, he found that his ribs were fractured! Although it was not a hundred steps away but just an inch or two, Piti could fracture Dr Juan's ribs without touching them! It was a manifestation of Marvelous Fist.

During the Dragon Strength course in Penang in a demonstration of dim mark, Kai (Sifu Kai Uwe) dotted an energy point at the collar bone of Roland (Sifu Roland Mastel). An inch or two away before touching, Roland felt numb, exactly like the effect of dim mark. Roland had to perform an energy flow to clear the injury. In a course in Frankfurt, while teaching a weapon course, I sliced a sabre near the "tiger-mouth" (between the thumb and the index finger) of a student without touching the "tiger-mouth", but blood oozed out. In both cases, injury was caused without physical contact, which was a manifestation of Marvelous Fist.

Many of our instructors and some of our senior students have Golden Bell which has resulted from their regular training, though they have not tested it or demonstrated it in public. Chun Nga, Mark Appleford and Barry (Sifu

Wong Chun Nga, Sifu Mark Appleford, and Sifu Barry Smale) demonstrated being hit with sharp choppers without injury and without prior formal Golden Bell training. It will be the first time I shall formally teach Golden Bell at the King's Road courses.

The Art of Thousand Steps is one of the arts of lightness. Many of our Shaolin Wahnam family members would have heard of stories of my sigung jumping up a wall of about 10 feet. I did not see this myself, but my sifu who told me the story never lied. I also heard from a community leader in Sungai Petani that his uncles and aunties in China in the past used to jump over high walls at night to "do their business" of robbing the rich to help the poor.

But I had personal experience of the Art of Thousand Steps in my younger days to run up a stairs of about 30 steps to save my small niece from tumbling down just two steps. I also used the Art of Thousand Steps to run up a four-storey building to meet my sijie, Uncle Righteousness' eldest daughter, in lightning speed before she could open the door after answering my call from a window! These interesting stories are found in my autobiography, "The Way of the Master".

In some of my Intensive Chi Kung Courses, I taught course participants to use chi flow to make them run round a training hall about 10 times, which was about the distance round a football field. They were not tired and not panting for breath after running. In my schooldays, I would be very tired and heavily panting for breath just running half a football field.

Using chi flow to run is different from the Art of Thousand Steps, but the way we use chi to run is one of the arts of lightness. The Art of Thousand Steps will be first taught at the King's Road courses.

During the respective courses, these marvelous arts will be formally and systematically taught. Course participants will acquire the necessary skills, techniques and philosophy in just a few days what others, if they are very lucky enough, may take many years. Course participants can expect many "wow" moments during the courses themselves of insights and experiences that other people may think impossible and which they themselves may not have dreamt of before. Amongst many other benefits, they will realize that if they have the skills, techniques and philosophy, they can achieve feats that others may consider impossible.

After one year of daily training the way they have been taught at the King's Road courses, course participants will be able to perform the feats I myself performed, and probably what are described in my autobiography. I myself took less than one year to practice the methods that enabled me to perform the feats, which I shall teach at the courses. It is worthy to remember that remember that course participants are more cost effective than I was at that time.

After three years of daily practice, course participants can be "guardians" or "hu fa" in Chinese, of the respective arts. Not only they know the skills, techniques and philosophy of the arts, they can perform their respective feats very well. This is what I hope will happen. These arts are marvelous, and we want them to be preserved for posterity.

In a personal and practical manner, training of these arts will give course participants good health, vitality and longevity, which I believe are some of the best benefits any art can give. They will also have spiritual joys, attain peak performance in their daily life, and have mental freshness and clarity.

For those who do not attend the respective courses but train the fundamental Shaolin Wahnam syllabuses, will not have the specific skills, techniques and philosophy for these legendary arts, but they will still have the general benefits of good health, vitality, longevity, peak performance, mental clarity and spiritual joys. If they ever develop abilities of these arts, it is co-incidental and will take a much longer time.

## Question 4

The training descriptions for the 72 Shaolin Arts as recorded in classics often depict extremely hard and demanding training. Occasionally you've mentioned that the norm for kungfu training in the past was "bitter training", ie. hard and often punishing training with benefits sometimes accumulating only slowly over time.

However, in Shaolin Wahnam we emphasize cost-effectiveness and always enjoy our training.

Could you describe to us how the systematic training of these three arts was in the past, and how it will be under your teaching for us in Shaolin Wahnam? What are the differences for these different ways of training in terms of our daily practice, progress and attainment?

Sifu Markus Kahila, Finland

## Answer

The hallmark of training in the past as well as now is "ku lian", which means "bitter training". Practitioners daily endure difficult and often tedious training for many years, and eventually derive some remarkable results, like being able to take punches and kicks without injury, causing serious damage on opponents without outward marks, and being able to run fast or jump high.



There is a saying that “three years constitute small success, ten years constitute big success” , which is “san nian xiao cheng, shi nian da cheng” in Chinese. In the past, if a practitioner was lucky enough to learn a special art and trained diligently everyday for three years, he would attain a small success in the art. If he trained diligently for ten years, he would attain a big success.

It should be noted that “ku lian” or “bitter training” does not mean harmful training, which unfortunately is not uncommon among many martial artists today. The training is enduring and demanding, but it does not bring adverse effects. This is a very important principle in genuine kungfu training, and is linked to the philosophy of “seen keong sun, hou fong sun” (in Cantonese), which means “first be healthy, only then think of combat”. Many martial artists today harm themselves in their training, resulting in deformed hands and displaced hips.

To many people, kungfu training in Shaolin Wahnam is like a big joke. We tell our students to enjoy their training, not to endure. Yet, we have better results! Others may be angry at this statement; that is their problem. I am just telling the truth. While other students try to get the best from their training, we tell our students to work at about 30% of what they could get, otherwise they might over-train!

This is because we have become ridiculously cost-effective. If a typical Shaolin Wahnam student today do not train below his potential, it is likely that he will soon over-trained. Over-training is bad; it will bring adverse effects. In some ways, over-training is even worse than wrong training.

Let us look at some quantified examples to examine our cost-effectiveness and our risk of over-training. Suppose a practitioner needs 10,000 units of benefits to be successful in the art he trains.

Suppose he trains Golden Bell. He needs 10,000 units of energy to protect himself from hits and kick without sustaining injury. If he trains Marvelous Fist, he needs 10,000 units of internal force to hurt an opponent without contact. If he trains Thousand Steps, he needs 10,000 units of flowing energy to run fast over a great distance without feeling tired and without panting for breath.

Suppose that for each successful training session, he develops 100 units of benefit. Of course, when he is successful, he may develop more or less than 100 units of benefit, and it is not necessary that 10,000 units mark success. But giving some quantification gives a clearer picture of the process of training, and choosing 100 units and 10,000 units makes calculation easy. Any figures may apply, but the principles are the same.

So, if a practitioner derives 100 units of benefit everyday, he needs to train for 100 days to be successful in his art. But most practitioners, except those in Shaolin Wahnam and which will be explained later, are not successful everyday although they train everyday.

Why? It is because, like me in my student's days, they do not differentiate between skills and techniques. They think, wrongly, that if they have the techniques, they will eventually obtain the result the practice is meant to give. This is so glaringly untrue, but many people may not realize it. The techniques practiced by kungfu practitioners are genuine, but most kungfu

practitioners cannot use their kungfu for combat. The techniques practiced by chi kung practitioners are genuine, but many chi kung practitioners are still weak and sick. These kungfu and chi kung practitioners do not have the necessary skills although they have the right techniques.

For the first few months, although a practitioner of another school uses the right techniques in his training of an art, he has not developed the necessary skills. He may accidentally have the right skills once a while, but it happens too far apart between training sessions that benefit is not accumulated.

Suppose that after six months of daily training, he can obtain 100 units of benefit after every 10 days. So for the 7th month, he has three successful days of training. But he does not have 300 units of benefit for that month, because as the successful days are 10 days apart, some of the benefit he obtained on the first successful day would have dissipated by the time of the second successful day.

Suppose he has accumulated 150 units of benefit on the 7th month, and each month for that year he adds 150 units of benefit. So by the end of the year, he would have 900 units of benefit. If he were to add 150 units every month, he would need more than 100 months, or more than 6 years to acquire the 10,000 units of benefit to be successful in the training of the art.

But he will take less than 6 years because as he continues to train, he becomes more skillful, the successful days become closer and closer until they are continuous, and the amount of benefit per successful day has increased. Normally he will take about 3 years.

Our Shaolin Wahnam practitioners are extremely lucky. Not only they differentiate between skills and techniques, they have the skills transmitted to them. In other words, our Shaolin Wahnam practitioners will get 100 units of benefit on the very first day of their training, and will continue to get 100 units if they train. Hence if they train everyday, they will obtain 10,000 units of benefits in 100 days, which is slightly more than 3 months, whereas others will need about 3 years.

As we have become so cost-effective, the question we need to address is whether our physical body can bear the tremendous amount of internal force within a short time, i.e. 3 months instead of 3 years. To be safe, it is advised that our practitioners work at only 30% of their potential. So, they will take about one year to accomplish success when others will need three.

In the past the three arts – Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and Thousand Steps – were trained according to their appropriate techniques. By practicing the techniques, practitioners gradually develop the necessary skills, but they normally did not realize it. Hence, they took a much longer time to acquire the same result as we do.

In our case, our practitioners understand the underlying philosophy of the arts. They are taught the techniques, and the skills are transmitted to them. Hence, our practitioners will attain the same accomplishment in a much shorter time. Our practitioners have to take care not to over-train, and such practice to prevent over-training will be taught at the courses.

The different ways of training the same arts also bring different effects. It was a very rare opportunity to learn these arts in the past. Hence past

practitioners valued these arts highly, and they were willing to put in time and effort to practice these arts dedicatedly. Practice became a norm, and they would eventually succeed.

Although our practitioners have a great advantage of opportunity and resources, these arts come to them relatively easily. Hence, they are less dedicated than past practitioners in their practice. Hence, they may or may not succeed in accomplishing the arts, despite the great advantages they have.

## Question 5

Sigung has always amazing and inspiring stories to tell. Can Sigung please tell us some stories (personal or from some famous Kung Fu masters of the past) related to Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and The Art of 1000 Steps? Can Sigung also tell us some personal experiences about how he learned these arts from Sitaigung?

Davy, Germany

## Answer

One of the most interesting stories my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, told me was about striking without physical contact. My sifu spent some time visiting famous masters. I didn't ask how old was my sifu then, or whether he had become an established master. I did the same thing many years later. I was not an established master then. It was before I set up Shaolin Wahnam Association, the fore-runner of our school, Shaolin Wahnam Institute.

My sifu met an old master. I could not remember the details, but I think my sifu asked the old master about advanced Shaolin arts many people had thought were lost. Instead of describing in words, the old master decided to demonstrate in action. There were some banners hanging near the ceiling some distance away. The banners were still as no wind was blowing. The old master struck across space towards the banners. Each time he struck the banners moved.

The old master asked my sifu to stand behind one end of a long, low wall. The old master struck at the other end of the long, low wall, and each time he struck my sifu felt a gush of force hitting him.

These two examples showed internal force traveling through empty space, which was a key factor of Marvelous Fist, Strike-Across-Space Palm as well as One-Finger Zen. The old master did not use his fist, but used his palm. So it was not Marvelous Fist but Strike-Across-Space Palm.

My sifu had trained One-Finger Shooting Zen by then. So while speaking with the old master, my sifu used his One-Finger Zen to make circles across the master, who felt his stomach itchy.

My sifu told me that he used dim mark in real fighting, applying the force of One-Finger Zen, only once. A huge man insulted his mother. So my sifu dotted an energy point near the throat of the huge man. He dropped to the ground immediately and white foam came out of his mouth. My sifu had to carry him to a suitable place to retrieve him.

Before learning from my Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, when I was undergoing teachers' training at the Malayan Teachers College in Kuala Lumpur, a college mate told me a story about Marvelous Fist, though both he and me did not know it was called Marvelous Fist then. He told me that an old master punched against a wall which was a few feet away from him. Each time he punched, my college mate could clearly hear a loud echo coming from the wall.

I repeated a similar feat on the Blue Mountain a few years ago, not with fists but with double palms in the pattern "Double Worshipping of the Buddha".

At that time I was preparing to teach a special Wing Choon course. I was lying in bed at night, and recalled that Ng Mui, the teacher of Yim Wing Choon who invented Wing Choon Kungfu had tremendous internal force, and I knew she developed her internal force from "Double Worshipping of the Buddha".

So I got up from bed and practice this pattern. I can clearly remember that each time I thrust out my double palms I could hear a loud echo coming from a wall. I decided to stop practicing in case some people thought there was an earthquake.

My most unforgettable story of Golden Bell was when a chi kung student chopped me with a sharp chopper with full force. He was the same student I helped to overcome serious heart problems some months ago. He swung the chopper in readiness for a chop on me, but I thought he was joking in his exaggerated movement. But before I realized it, the chopper was coming full force at me, hit my stomach and was bounced off about 20 feet away. I am sure that someone who did not have high-level Golden Bell would have his stomach open and the insides pouring out.

Golden Bell saved some instructors from serious injury, though most of them did not train Golden Bell formally. Eugene and Dr. Foong, for example, respectively fell from a first floor and from skiing. If not for their Golden Bell, they would be seriously injured, but they just stood up as if nothing had happened.

Golden Bell also saved a student from Scotland his life, although he did not undergo formal Golden Bell training. Those who were present thought he



would be dead from the way he fell. But he only sustained minor fractures and was out of a hospital soon. Later he resigned from our school due to some flimsy reason. Honestly I am glad he left our school. I would not want an ungrateful student in our school. The reason for his resignation was unreal, but even if it were real, if learning from our school had saved his life, which he publicly acknowledged, the least he could do was to remain a dormant student.

The Art of Thousand Steps also saved my niece, who was only about five at that time, from serious injury. She tumbled down a stairs of about 30 steps. I was at the front door of the house away from the stairs. I raced to the stairs, and up the stairs to catch her before she tumbled down only 2 steps. This was before I set up Shaolin Wahnam Association in Sungai Petani.

Once I ran back from Shaolin Wahnam Association, which is about 6 kilometers from my house in Sungai Petani, because I could not drive my car due to flooding. A senior student of the Association, who was a marathon runner, ran with me. The student was considerate, asking me a few times whether I would need a rest. I completed the run back to my house without feeling tired and without panting for breath. The student did not know I had trained the Art of Thousand Steps.

Many of these stories are found in my autobiography, "The Way of the Master". Secrets of the training as well as principles for happy living are also found.

The very first things I learned from my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, were "Lifting the Sky" and "One-Finger Shooting Zen".

I remember my sifu telling me, "One-Finger Zen and Tiger Claw are two of the most advanced skills in Shaolin. We teach them right at the start so that students have sufficient time to practice these skills. Practice One-Finger Shooting Zen everyday."

Little did I know at that time that one day I would develop two of the most advanced arts of Shaolin, dim mark and chin-na, and these two of the three ultimates of Shaolin depend on the skills in One-Finger Shooting Zen. My sifu did not explain the Shaolin arts the way I now do in Shaolin Wahnam. But I was a good student, and I followed my sifu's advice, for which I am very grateful.

The third ultimate of Shaolin, neigong or internal art, comes from "Lifting the Sky". Although I had been learning Shaolin Kungfu for about 15 years then, and had heard of internal force, and actually experienced it on the receiving end when I learned Wuzuquan from my other sifu, Sifu Chee Kim Thong, I owed much of my internal force from "Lifting the Sky". "One-Finger Shooting Zen" also gave me a lot of internal force.

The internal force came slowly but surely. My sifu did not explain to me the philosophy of internal force, but as I said earlier, I was a good student, and I just followed my sifu's instructions. I also made sure I practiced correctly.

My first evidence of internal force, this time not on the receiving end, was when I broke a brick. I trained Iron Palm on my own for about two years from a modern classic. This was after learning from Uncle Righteousness, and before learning from Sifu Chee Kim Thang and Sifu Ho Fatt Nam. But I could not break a brick. Then one day, after having trained One-Finger

Shooting Zen for many months, I broke a brick with my palm.

I kept on training One-Finger Shooting Zen everyday. Later I could break a bottom brick, i.e. the bottom of two bricks laid one on top of the other, without breaking the top brick. This was a manifestation of Strike-Across-Space Palm.

Years later I could also employ One-Finger Zen for dim mark without physical contact. More importantly, I used One-Finger Zen for healing, usually without contact.

My introduction to Marvelous Fist was incidental. I did not know of Marvelous Fist then. One day my sifu saw me performing "Cross-Roads at Four Gates". I performed the set pattern by pattern.

"You should perform the set in sequences," my sifu said.

When I could perform "Four Gates" in smooth sequences, my sifu told me to increase my force.

"Sifu, how do I improve my force?" I asked politely.

"Make two stone-locks and punch with them," my sifu said. My sifu then taught me how to make stone-locks. It is now easier for modern students to use dumb-bells.

My sifu did not teach me Golden Bell formally, but I knew I could take punches and kicks. Nevertheless, I wanted to learn Golden Bell formally. So, after I graduated from my sifu's school, I read up as much as possible on

Golden Bell, and also enrolled in a special Golden Bell course by correspondence. I followed the methods prescribed diligently, like staying at the Lifting-Water Stance for more than an hour, and hitting myself with beans, rods and pebbles.

Learning Thousand Steps from my sifu was over meals and tea. My sifu described the methods clearly to me, and because of my understanding and experience I could practice the methods correctly. I also practiced diligently. Every morning for many months I ran round the area I am still staying using the methods of Thousand Steps.

Those in Shaolin Wahnam today are very lucky. They just spend some money and attend the King's Road courses from 27th July to 7th August 2016. But they may not value the knowledge and training the way I did, because I obtain them the hard way.

## Question 6

My "double-question" is related to techniques and skills.

In martial arts there is no ultimate technique by itself, except if someone has mastered a technique to an ultimate level. Is this pre-condition for techniques also valid for skills like the 72 Shaolin Arts and how much effort does a practitioner need to acquire such a high level?

There is always a nemesis to every technique. What is the nemesis to the Shaolin Arts taught at the 72 Shaolin Arts course in Finland?

Sifu Leonard Lackinger, Austria

## Answer

Thank you for this question which highlights a very important point.

The term "jue zhao", which means "ultimate technique", is often used in kungfu circles. It means that a master is so skillful in this technique that whenever it is applied in combat, his opponents have no chance to escape defeat.

Although the term refers to a technique, it is actually the skill in applying it that decides victory. If a less skillful practitioner applies the same technique, his opponents may readily counter it.

In kungfu conversation, normally no clear distinction is made between skills and techniques, although strictly speaking “skills” are referred to as “gong”, and “techniques” as “fa”.

It is in our school that we make a clear distinction between “skills” and “techniques”. This distinction has brought us much benefit. For example, we have become very cost-effective because we realize the difference between skills and techniques.

Hence, this pre-condition is also valid for skills. In fact, it actually refers to skills. It is the skill of a master that is “ultimate”, not his technique. “Ultimate” here means that his skill in applying the technique is so high-level that opponents cannot avoid the technique.

Although skills are crucial, the term “jue zhao” or “ultimate technique” usually refers to the technique. The master uses the same technique every time he executes his “jue zhao”.

Will he be equally successful if he uses a different technique but with the same skills? He will be less successful, though he may still defeat his less skillful opponents. “Jue Zhao” is seldom used. It is used only when the master find it difficult to defeat an opponents with other techniques.

In kungfu history, it is well known that the “jue zhao” of Wong Fei Hoong, a famous Southern Shaolin master just about 150 years ago, was “no-shadow kick”. He seldom used it, but if he ever used it, it was a sure hit. His “no-shadow kick” was so secretive that even his inner-chamber disciples did not know it, though they had heard about it.

One night a few of his inner-chamber disciples, led by his most senior disciple, Leong Fuun, stole into Wong Fei Hoong's room to "steal" the no-shadow kick. Leong Fuun pretended to assault his master, who gave him a no-shadow kick, sending him many feet away.

Wong Fei Hoong taught Leong Fuun the no-shadow kick. Later, with the no-shadow kick, Leong Fuun defeated another well-known master called Chow Yen Kit in a public duel.

The "jue zhao" of another well known master, Kuo Yun Sheng, was "beng quan" or "crushing fist". Kuo Yun Sheng was a Xingyiquan master who also lived about 150 years ago, But he and Wong Fei Hoong never met because he live in north China and Wong Fei Hoong lived in the south. Kuo Yun Sheng fought Dong Hai Chuan, the modern patriarch of Baguazhang, to a draw in a public duel.

There was a saying in north China, "ban bu beng quan da tian xia", which means "Defeat heaven and earth with half step crushing fist". Why was it called "half step"? It was because the crushing fist was executed in a triangle stance. If an opponent could defend the first crushing fist, Kuo Yun Shen would move forward half a step still in the triangle stance to execute a second crushing fist. He would continue in this manner until the opponent was defeated. Kuo Yun Sheng always won, except a draw with Dong Hai Chuan. Hence, "half-step crushing fist" was his "ultimate technique".

There was a story about how Kuo Yun Sheng trained his "ultimate technique". He went behind a horse to develop his speed of "half step". Each time he patted the horse, it went forward, and Kuo Yun Sheng would follow.

Soon the horse went trotting quite fast, and the Xingyiquan master followed with his patting. When the horse came to a stream, it could not go further, so it lept over it, with the master following!

The crushing fist is just a vertical punch. We learned the half step crushing fist at a Xingyiquan course during the UK Summer Camp a few years ago. But it is not my “ultimate technique”, nor that of the participants.

Past masters took years practicing every day to accomplish their “ultimate techniques”. But due to our cost-effectiveness and given the low level of combat today, course participants at the Selection of 72 Shaolin Arts need only a year of daily practice to attain a high level considered to be “ultimate techniques” for today’s free sparring – if our participants are willing to spend the time and effort, and apply their “ultimate techniques” in combat.

The three arts to be taught at the Selection of 72 Shaolin Arts are Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and Thousand Steps.

If our course participants are willing to practice daily for one year, and more importantly apply their “ultimate techniques” in free sparring , their Marvelous Fist will be a sure hit for they can injure their opponents without physical contact. With Golden Bell, they can just walk into their opponents, irrespective of the opponents’ attacks unless the attacks are to the eyes, throat or genitals, and smash down their opponents. With Thousand Steps, they can run away from their opponents if they sense defeat, and their opponents would be unable to catch them. The other hand, if they are confident of victory, they can move quickly into their opponents, provided they Golden Bell or be able to cover their opponents from attacking.



The nemesis of Marvelous Fist is Golden Bell. A master of Marvelous Fist can injure an opponent without physical contact, but he may not have any effect on a master of Golden Bell. The internal force of a Marvelous Fist master is bounced off the body of a Golden Bell Master.

The nemesis of Golden Bell is dim mark and chin-na. Although Golden Bell can withstand the force of a fist, it can be penetrated by dim mark and chin-na which attack energy points.

The nemesseses of Thousand Steps are one of the three ultimates of martial arts, which are One-Finger Shooting Zen, Strike-Across-Space Palm, and Marvelous Fist. The Art of Thousand Steps enables a practitioner to run for a long distance without feeling tired and panting for breath. One-Finger Zen, Strike-Across-Space Palm and Marvelous Fist can injure opponents without physical contact. So while a Thousand Steps practitioners is running, a master of one of the three martial art ultimates can injure him without contact.

The answer here is based on knowledge from classics referring to these arts in the past. It must be realized that the level of these arts today is relatively low. Nevertheless, even when the level now is not as high as that in the past, having a chance to learn these legendary arts is an opportunity not to be missed.

## Question 7

How would attaining a high level of skill and proficiency in Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and Art of Lightness improve the work and results of an energy healer when working with their clients?

Sifu Claudien Scicluna, Malta

## Answer

The answer can be “yes” or “no”.

Generally, attaining a high level of skills and proficiency in Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and Art of Lightness does not improve the work and results of an energy healer when working with his clients.

Both in the past and at present, Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and Art of Lightness on one hand, and chi kung healing on the other are different skills, and their practitioners work in different disciplines. Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and Art of Lightness belong to the realm of martial arts, whereas chi kung healing belongs to the realm of medicine and health care.

Although many kungfu masters in the past knew kungfu medicine, i.e. treatment of injuries related to felling and being hit, but it is not so nowadays, most martial artists were not, and are not, concerned with healing. On the other hand, most healers, including Western trained doctors, were not, and are not concerned with martial arts. Some healers, including doctors, may practice martial arts, but they do not relate the martial arts to

their professional work.

Even in the past, to have a chance to learn Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell or Art of Lightness was a rare opportunity. But these high-level masters who succeeded in these rare arts, did not engage in healing.

As a hypothetical example, if they were sick, which actually almost never happened, they would have to take medication. They would not know energy flow to flush out their sickness. If they were injured, which rarely happened because of their high-level martial skills, they would also have to take medication. Some very high-level masters might be able to transmit energy to their disciples to clear injuries, but this was rare.

I do not mean to be presumptuous, but we have brought chi kung healing to an exceptionally high level. We claim, and we have a lot of evidence to support our claim, that chi kung healing can overcome any illness, including so-called incurable diseases like cancer, heart problems, rheumatism, diabetes, viral infection, depression, anxiety, phobia and many others.

It is not easy to determine how successful was chi kung healing in overcoming such diseases in the past as these diseases are in Western terms, and traditional Chinese medicine, now as well as in the past, call the same diseases by different names.

For example, someone suffering from what Western medicine calls high blood pressure would be described differently in traditional Chinese medical terms. Depending on what caused the illness, the disease is described differently, but high blood pressure is usually described as excessive rising

yang energy from the liver.

While high blood pressure is considered “incurable” in conventional Western medicine, if a Chinese trained doctor succeeds in helping his patient reduce the rising yang energy from the liver, the patient would recover. The doctor may use different therapeutic methods, like herbs, acupuncture, massage and chi kung therapy.

In my early years of chi kung healing, I had some difficulty describing the treatment of cancer because there was no record of cancer treatment in traditional Chinese medicine in the past. For a time I even wondered whether cancer existed in China in the past, but later I discovered that there was no mention of cancer because the Chinese described the same disease differently.

As an analogy, because of our Western education, we classify food as proteins, carbohydrates and fats. But the traditional Chinese do not classify food this way. They classify food as hot and cold. Classifying food as proteins, carbohydrates and fats, or as hot and cold, is a paradigm, a special way of looking at things, and not a statement of absolute truth. In other words, it is not absolutely true that food must be classified as proteins, carbohydrates and fats, or as hot and cold. It is just a way of looking at things.

In the same way, classifying an illness as cancer, high blood pressure or viral infection is a paradigm, not a statement of absolute truth. Traditional Chinese medicine uses a different paradigm, and classifies illness differently, usually according to physiological or psychological causes. If the

physiological or psychological causes are overcome, patients recover. Hence, there is no such a thing as an incurable disease in traditional Chinese medicine.

The paradigm used in chi kung healing is even more simple and more effective. Chi kung healers look at illness as yin-yang disharmony, and the cause of yin-yang disharmony is energy blockage. If chi kung healers succeed in helping their patients clear the energy blockage, the patients will recover.

It is so simple, and so beautiful, and I have applied this principle in helping countless people regain good health. However, those used to the conventional paradigm that "incurable" diseases are incurable, find it hard to believe, and may think it is a big joke. Moreover, the low level of chi kung healing generally available to the public today, render this claim ridiculous.

Hence, we in Shaolin Wahnam are in an elite position. Not only we have access to both the highest martial arts and the highest level of chi kung healing, but also we are able to benefit from the transference of one discipline to another, whereas even masters in the past might be unable to. In other words, if we have attained a high level of skills and proficiency in Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and Art of Lightness, we can definitely improve the work and results of chi kung healing.

There are two important reasons why we can do so, namely the magic of energy flow and our understanding of the underlying philosophy.

Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and Art of Lightness are very advanced arts, and

demand a high level of energy management. This high level of energy management will improve our work and results as energy healers.

But why did masters of Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and Art of Lightness in the past, and who were of a higher level than us, could not improve their work and results of chi kung healing. In the first place, they were normally not chi kung healers. Secondly, they did not understand the underlying philosophy of these separate disciplines. Thirdly, they did not have energy flow.

Energy flow is crucial. It acts as a link between these two disciplines. In other words, even when masters of these very high-level arts have a lot of energy, if they do not have energy flow, they are unable to transfer the tremendous amount of energy from these arts to chi kung healing.

Moreover, even if they have a lot of energy and know energy flow, though in practice many masters do not, they are unable to improve their work and results in chi kung healing if they do not know the underlying philosophy.

In theory, the reverse can also be true. In other words, if chi kung healers are very high-level in their healing, they can also use their energy to improve their performance of Marvelous Fist, Golden Bell and Art of Lightness – provided they know energy flow and the underlying philosophy as well as have the abilities of these very advanced arts. But in practice, this is not so. It is because the amount of energy needed for these very advanced arts is much more than that for chi kung healing.

As a rough analogy, if you have money to buy a house, a farm or a car in

Europe, you can also buy a mansion, an estate or a plane in the United States – provided you can convert euros to dollars and know where and how to buy these goods. But in practice, it may not be so, because the money needed to buy a mansion, an estate or a plane is much more than that for buying a house, a farm or a car.

## Question 8

If I may, I would like to ask about the procedural impact/s of training the skills necessary to attain these arts and their comparative relevance to other arts.

What are the unique thematic and holistic effects of the training of the exercises that result in the development of the Art of 1000 Steps, perhaps the specific use of Abdominal Breathing toward this aim, for example, and how does this art compare with the other arts under the umbrella of the "Art of Lightness" (jumping really high, running on water, leaping horizontally, running up walls, etc.?)

What are the unique thematic and holistic effects of the training of the exercises that result in the development of Golden Bell, perhaps Golden bridge and "Iron Plank Bridge", for example, and how does this art compare with other arts such as "Thiew Hang Kung" from Ngok Ka Kung Fu or Iron Body arts and their training methods ("Art of Suspended Training", hitting oneself daily, etc.?)

What are the unique thematic and holistic effects of the training of the exercises that result in the development of Marvelous Fist, perhaps 30 punches, for example, and how does this art compare with other arts such as Cosmos or Diamond Palm, Strike-Across-Space-Palm, One Finger Shooting Zen, and Iron Fist?

Kristian, USA



## Answer

As the techniques are secretive, it is respectful to past masters not to reveal them to the public here. Those who will attend the Selection of 72 Shaolin Arts course will not only learn the techniques, but more importantly the skills and the philosophy.

Not many people, including those rare masters who attained proficiency of these very advanced arts, realize that skills are actually more important. But how did these rare masters attain proficiency of these arts if they did not know the skills.

They had the skills, or else they would not have attained these arts, but they did not realize it. They also took a long time to develop the necessary skills which they did not realize they had. They thought that if they practiced the techniques for a long time, usually for many years, they would attain proficiency in the arts.

Suppose the techniques to attain Marvelous Fist are A,B,C, and the skills are X,Y,Z. The rare past masters who had Marvelous Fist practiced A,B,C which were also kept secretive. They practiced A,B,C everyday for many years. During the long years of their daily practice, they developed the skills of X,Y,X, but they did not realize they had X,Y,Z. It was because of applying the skills of X,Y,Z in the training of A,B,C that the rare masters developed Marvelous Fist, but these masters thought that it was training A,B,C that they eventually had Marvelous Fist.

This situation is actually glaring to us in Shaolin Wahnam regarding kungfu and chi kung, but most other kungfu and chi kung practitioners do not realize it, i.e. the underlying philosophy of applying the right skills to the eight techniques in training for a required length of time to attain proficiency in an art.

Most other kungfu practitioners have practiced right kungfu techniques, and most other chi kung practitioners have practice right chi kung techniques for many years. But these kungfu practitioners still cannot apply their kungfu for fighting, and many of these chi kung practitioners are still sick and weak, though the fundamental aim of kungfu is for fighting, and the fundamental aim of chi kung is good health.

Why is it so? It is because these kungfu practitioners do not have the skills to use kungfu for fighting, and these chi kung practitioners do not have the skills to generate an energy flow which overcomes illness and gives them good health. They do not know the underlying philosophy of kungfu and chi kung training.

After many years of dedicated training, a very few of these kungfu and chi kung practitioners attain proficiency in kungfu and chi kung. Respectively, they are able to apply their kungfu for fighting, and they are health and full of vitality. They become kungfu and chi kung masters – real masters, not “masters” by name.

They are able to attain real mastery of kungfu and chi kung because during the long years of their daily training, they have developed the necessary skills to use kungfu for combat, and to generate an energy flow, but they

may not be aware of this underlying philosophy. Hence, they take many years. Initially, they did not have the skills. Gradually, they developed the skills unknowingly. Eventually, also unknowingly, they became more habitual in apply the skills to their techniques in their training.

If we know the underlying philosophy and have the necessary skills besides the necessary techniques, we can tremendously cut down the length of training. In fact, we have become so cost-effective that we have to guard against over-training. This is what course participants will learn at the King's Road courses in Scandinavia. More than that, the course participants will have the necessary skills transmitted to them from heart to heart, instead of having to develop the skills themselves.

Abdominal Breathing, or any suitable art of breathing, is a fundamental skill in the Art of Thousand Steps. This art enable practitioners to run for long distance without feeling tired and without panting for breath. It is different from other arts of lightness, like jumping really high, running on water, leaping horizontally and running up walls.

The training in Abdominal Breathing provides other benefits besides the Art of Thousand Steps. General benefits, which apply to all other types of genuine chi kung, are overcoming illness and pain, good health, vitality, longevity, mental clarity and spiritual joys. Thematic benefits, which are specific to Abdominal Breathing, include good stamina, ability to speak loudly and for a long time, more internal force, and better respiratory and digestive functions.

Golden Bridge is a fundamental skill of Golden Bell. A more difficult skill or technique is Iron Plank Bridge. Golden Bell is superior to “Thiew Hang Kung” or “Art of Suspended Training”, and Iron Shirt. Relatively, “Thiew Hang Kung” and Iron Shirt are external, whereas Golden Bell is internal. Practitioners of “Thiew Hang Kung” and Iron Bridge, like those of Golden Bell, can take punches and kick or even weapon attacks without sustaining injury. But Golden Bell has more benefits; it also has all the general benefits of chi kung training.

Thirty Punches is a basic technique or skill of Marvelous Fist. The special thematic benefit is that practitioners can injury opponents by punching with the fist without physical contact. Of course, if there is physical contact, the injury is more severe. The general benefits are those of chi kung training.

Marvelous Fist is different from Cosmos Palm, Diamond Palm, and Strike-Across-Space Palm in that Marvelous Fist uses the fist whereas the other arts use the palm. Marvelous Fist, Cosmos Palm and Strike-Across-Space Palm are “soft” and internal, whereas Diamond Palm is “hard” and external. The focus of the internal palms is one energy and mind training, whereas that of external palm is on physical conditioning (but without damaging or deforming the palm).

Marvelous Fist is also different from Iron Fist. Marvelous Fist is “soft” and internal, whereas Iron Fist is hard and external. Practitioners of Marvelous Fist can injure opponents without physical contact, but practitioners of Iron Fist need physical contact. Practitioners of Marvelous Fist have general benefits of chi kung training, but practitioners of Iron Fist may not.

Marvelous Fist is also different from One-Finger Zen, and from One-Finger Shooting Zen. Practitioners of both Marvelous Fist and One-Finger Zen can injure opponents without physical contact, but the former uses the fist, and the latter uses the index finger. One-Finger Zen may be used for healing, but Marvelous Fist may not.

One-Finger Shooting Zen is the technique and skill to develop internal force, both flowing and consolidated. It is the fundamental technique and skill for One-Finger Zen, and may sometimes be used for Marvelous Fist though Marvelous Fist often use Thirty Punches.

The King's Road courses where these very advanced arts will be taught, will be historic. It is rare for any martial artists to have an opportunity to learn these arts. It is rarer still to learn them in just a few days.

## Question 9

The list of 72 Arts of Shaolin practiced in Shaolin Wahnam (<http://shaolin.org/shaolin/72-arts.html>) makes for quite extraordinarily reading. Thank you for very much for kindly posting it.

My question relates to one of the arts listed: The Art of Hei Sai (energy spirit): What is the relationship between the Art of Hei Sai and Shen training?

How has the Art of Hei Sai evolved in the very long history of Shaolin in terms of methods of training the art, and the attainment of, and benefits to practitioners of the Art?

Sifu Kevin Barry, Ireland

## Answer

I am glad you have found the list of 72 Arts of Shaolin practiced in Shaolin Wahnam extraordinary reading. It is a good reference to what we teach in our school, as well as for students as well as instructors to review.

It is a loose list, i.e. the 72 arts are chosen quite arbitrarily and some arts take a relatively short time to accomplish compared to other arts. It also reflects that the lists in other sources were arbitrarily chosen, and different sources may provide different lists.

“Hei Sai; is in Cantonese Chinese. In Mandarin. although the written words are the same, the pronouncement is “qi shi”. “Q” means “energy”, as in qigong. “Shi” means “technique” or “form”, as in “zhao shi”. Literally the two words means “energy technique”. But I have translated “hei sai” or “qi shi” as “energy spirit”, which is closer to what is meant by the term. A practitioner performs a technique in such a way that the spirit of the technique is manifested as vibrant energy.

Some students attending a course with me, sometimes heard me saying, “Don’t do opium smoking,” when a student performed a pattern listlessly. He should perform the pattern with “hai sai”, or at least perform it as a kungfu pattern with good form, some force and vitality.

Many Shaolin patterns can be manifested in Shaolin animals. For example, “Traveling Dragon Plays with Water” takes the form of a dragon, and “Black Tiger Steals Heart” takes the form of a tiger. When performing these patterns, practitioners should manifest the spirit of the patterns. Hence, when perform “Traveling Dragon Plays with Water”, they should manifest the spirit of a dragon, and when perform “Black Tiger Steals Heart”, they should manifest the spirit of the tiger. They should have “hei sai”. If they perform the patterns like a worm or a pussy cat, they are “doing opium smoking”.

Some Shaolin patterns may not take the form of Shaolin animals, like “Second Brother Offers Wine” in Tantai, and “Lohan Strikes Drum” in Eighteen Lohan Fist. This does not mean they have no “hei sai”. Practitioners should perform them with good form, force and vitality, which demonstrates their spirit. If practitioners perform the pattern

listlessly, they “do opium smoking”. It is the same with all other styles of kungfu, and in fact with all other styles of martial arts.

Shen training , or mind training, is a set, and “hei sai” or “energy spirit”, is a sub-set. In other words, “hei sai” is part of mind training. There are other methods of mind training, like meditation, set practice and combat application. When we perform a set, for example, we must have presence of mind. If the presence of mind is outstanding, we have “hei sai”.

There is no record of “hei sai” in the long history of Shaolin or any other kungfu styles. As in life, some people perform their tasks listlessly, some ordinarily, and a few with gusto Those who perform their kungfu movements with gusto have “hei sai”.

I was lucky. All my four sifu had “hei sai” when performing their kungfu. They exhibited excellent examples for me to follow.

I was not sure whether my sifus made any special effort to have “hei sai”. But I believed their performance of kungfu with “hei sai” was habitual, without any conscious effort. Indeed, the term “hei sai” was not often mentioned in the schools I learned from. This means that my sifu did not specially teach “hei sai”.

How would you develop “hei sai”. Very simple. Perform each pattern – individually, in a set, in a sequence, or in combat – with picture-perfect form, energy flow which gives force and speed, and presence of mind. You may have to put in effort initially, but gradually it becomes habitual.



Eventually, not only you have “hei sai” in your kungfu performance, but also in daily life.

With the attainment of “hei sai”, the benefits are tremendous. You may recall my statement to make every movement a masterpiece, not just in kungfu but also in daily life. It means that no matter what you do, you will get the best results. Just imagine: no matter what you do, you will get the best result when you have “hei sai”, i.e. when you perform every task with picture-perfect form, energy flow and presence of mind. This is, I believe, an unprecedented benefit of training our arts.

## Question 10

Jas, UK

I did some one-off running a while back for about 30 minutes. I did no running for many years before that. I didn't get tired at all, I just ran in a bit of a chi flow without regulating breath. I think I only ran 10-20 steps per breath though I didn't count.

"You were able to run for about 30 minutes without getting tired because you had practiced chi kung with us. You were able to use your chi flow for running. Most other chi kung practitioners from other schools would be unable to do that. They could not even generate a chi flow."

Not regulating breath allowed me to release much volume of energy from the mouth. I tried abdominal breathing for many steps but it didn't feel as good, i couldn't let go as much, generate as much flow and release as much waste. Why abdominal breathing wasn't as effective? How will learning the method properly benefit me?

"Trying abdominal breathing was less effective because you were focusing on performing abdominal breathing, instead of letting your chi flow do the running for you. After learning the method properly, you will be able to run better and do other things more efficiently."

Does the Art of 1000 Steps concern speed of running? How do you increase speed? Usain Bolt ran 100 m in 9.5s. As we hear of masters doing crazy things, is it possible to run it in 7 or maybe 5 seconds? What training and other factors would be necessary to do that?

"The Art of Thousand Steps does not concern speed of running, though with regular practice after you have learned the art properly, your speed will increase.

An effective way to increase speed is to let your chi flow faster.

I don't know whether it is physically possible to run 100 meters in 7 seconds or in 5. But energetically it is possible. If you look at the video of me performing Dragon Strength more than 30 years ago the movements were so fast that it was quite impossible to see them. The video is shown in real time. At a Dragon Strength course in December 2014, some course participants also performed the Dragon Strength patterns very fast.

The training at the Dragon Strength courses was meant to achieve this. Course participants just followed my instructions."

What about running on water? How can you train Art of 1000 Steps for that? The Art of Running on Water is called "shui seong tang peng" in Cantonese or "shui shang deng ping" in Mandarin, and it means "from water land on shore". I don't know this art.

"The Art of thousand Steps is for running on land, not on water. You can't

train the Art of Thousand Steps for that."

Given 3 years after the course, how would one train Golden Bell to withstand punches from a top pro boxer without harm? Is it realistic or even possible?

"If a course participant trains Golden Bell daily for three years according to what will be taught at the Golden Bell course, he will be able to withstand punches from a top professional boxer without harm. It is realistic and possible to do so.

I recall seeing in an old kungfu magazine a Ng Mui kungfu master from Singapore taking punches from Mohamed Ali without harm. I don't know how long the master trained Golden Bell, but I don't think he had trained for 30 years. Given our cost effectiveness, where our student can gain in one year what a master might need ten, something that others may laugh at us, the above estimate is reasonable."

If one trains Marvelous Fist intensively after the course for 3 years and throws some punches at an opponent from 5 steps away what would happen to the opponent?

"The opponent would be injured, unless he has high-level Golden bell."

In the use of Golden Bell how much is passive and how much is active energetically and mentally? For example, in my experience if I get hit and I think or feel before that I'll be unhurt, it doesn't hurt as much. If I think it's going to hurt or am worried, then it hurts a lot. This leads me to believe that the active mental part in that moment is important. What is the reality?

"In Golden Bell, being active energetically and mentally is very important. Knowing that a Golden Bell practitioner can take powerful hits without injury, and if he has trained diligently, he would have an active mind set, and his energy will automatically flow to protect him.

For the sake of theoretical discussion, if he is passive energetically and mentally, or worse he is negative energetically and mentally, he will still be unhurt because that is what Golden Bell is meant for, unless his opponent has high-level Marvelous Fist."

How does Golden Bell compare to other protections like a chi kung shield, or just being in a chi flow in terms of strength, ease of use for physical and energetic purposes?

"It is incomparable. Golden Bell is exceptionally high-level protection. It is also easy to use. Once you have Golden Bell, your protection against being hit is automatic, even when the hits come unexpectedly.

A chi kung shield and chi flow protect a practitioner from negative energy, but not physical hits. "

Will practicing these cause over-training or will converting excess internal energy into external skills (using and spreading energy) cause more balance and reduce over-training, or somewhere in between depending on how you train them.

"Over-training can occur irrespective of what art is involved.

When these arts are practiced correctly, including following my advice, over-training will not occur. Even if it occurs, we have remedies to overcome it.

Converting excess internal energy into external skills, like performing kungfu sets at a physical level or playing games, will enable practitioners to have more balance and reduce over-training.

Of course, the training is correct. If the training is wrong, adverse effects may occur. Indeed, from our perspective, many other kungfu and chi kung practitioners train wrongly."

For example I think if you just do 30 minutes of Golden Bridge alone will likely be overtraining. But if we then add 10 minutes of Marvelous Fist and 10 minutes of running and you over-train less even though it is double the time. Is this true or false or something else depending on different types of person?

"What you have said can be true or false, or something else depending on different types of persons.

If you force yourself to perform Golden Bridge for 30 minutes, it is over-training if you do it correctly, or wrong training if you do it wrongly. If you gradually increase you time, and perform Golden Bridge correctly, it is right training.

If you have over-trained, and perform an additional 10 minutes of

Marvelous Fist and another 10 minutes of running, both at a physical level, and you perform all the exercises correctly, you will reduce your over-training.

If you increase your internal force while practicing 10 minutes of Marvelous Fist, and tense yourself while running, you increase your over-training.

Hence, different persons doing the same things may have different results because of various different factors. Over-training can also happen at a physical level. Most other people perform Golden Bell, Marvelous Fist and Art of Thousand Steps at a physical level. If they have over-trained, practicing further, even at a physical level, will increase their over-training.

## 72 Arts of Shaolin

It is commonly said that there are 72 arts of Shaolin Kungfu. These 72 arts are sometimes divided into two groups, namely 36 external arts and 36 internal arts, or 36 “hard” arts and 36 “soft” arts.

It should be noted that an external art is often but not necessarily “hard”, and internal art is often but not necessarily “soft”. This is a misconception many people, including kungfu practitioners, have. The Art of Flexibility, for example, is external, but it is “soft”. Sineu Metamorphosis is internal, but it is “hard”.

It is also worthwhile to know that “hard” and “soft” here are not what most people, especially those not exposed to kungfu, may conceptualize what they mean. These two terms, “hard” and ‘soft’, are translated from the Chinese “gang” and “rou”, or “kong” and “yau” in Cantonese. A ‘soft’ force may be more powerful than a ‘hard’ force., a kungfu concept many people may find it difficult to comprehend.

It is also worthwhile to know that internal force is not necessarily more powerful than external strength, though it often is. But it is certain that internal force is more beneficial. It is also independent of age, size and gender.

It is not certain when the concept of 72 arts of Shaolin was first used, but I believe it was probably during the Ming Dynasty (14th to 17th century), which was relatively late as Shaolin Kungfu started about the 6th century during the Sui Dynasty. Despite its relatively late entry into Shaolin Kungfu, it still has a long history of many hundred years, considering that many martial arts today are only about a hundred years old. Hence, there are different versions of the 72 Shaolin arts, with some versions very different



from others.

There are surely more than 72 arts in Shaolin Kungfu, but terms like 36, 72 and 108 are commonly used in Shaolin terminology. This was in honour of Bodhidharma and the Eighteen Lohan Hands, the first set of exercises taught by Bodhidharma, regarded as the First Patriarch of the Shaolin arts, to the Shaolin monks at the Shaolin Monastery in Henan for nine years starting in 527. Hence, many Shaolin terms, like kungfu sets and arts, take the multiple of 18, such as the 36 Shaolin Leg Techniques, and the 108-Pattern Essence of Shaolin Set.

Let us have a look at three different sets of the 72 Arts of Shaolin. The first is from the popular book available from the internet,, "Training Methods of the 72 Arts of Shaolin", by Jin Jing Zhong: the second is from a modern Chinese book edited by a team of modern Shaolin monks from the Shaolin Monastery in China, based on a classic of the past, "Genuine Shaolin 72 Arts": and the third is from 72 Arts of Shaolin practiced in our school suggested by our Shaolin Wahnam family members in our [Discussion Forum](#) and selected by me.

## **72 Arts of Shaolin mentioned by Jin Jing Zhong**

As some of the arts are literally translated from Chinese, which may not be intelligible to non-Chinese speaking people, I have changed some of the terms, without changing the meaning.

Some of the training is quite brutal, with pain and injury not an uncommon factor. For example, in the training of "Striking with Foot", practitioners are required to kick at rocks with their toes until sending the rocks flying some distance away.

1. Diamond Finger
2. Twin Lock
3. Striking with Foot
4. Pulling out a Nail
5. Embracing a Tree
6. Art of Four Parts
7. One-Finger Zen
8. Iron Head
9. Iron Shirt
10. Art of Taking Blows
11. Iron Sweeping Leg
12. Bamboo-Leave Hand
13. Centipede Art
14. Water Chestnut Art
15. Immortal Palm
16. Hard-Soft Art
17. Red Sand Palm
18. Lying Tiger
19. Swimming Art

- 20.Thoudand-Pound Weight
- 21.Golden Bell
- 22.Finger Lock
- 23.Lohan Art
- 24.Lizard Art
- 25.Rod-Force Art
- 26.Lute Art
- 27.Comet Formation
- 28.Plum Flower Formation
- 29.Art of Stone Lock
- 30.Iron Arm
- 31.Bullet-like Fist
- 32.Art of Soft Bones
- 33.Art of Lifting Weight
- 34.Through-Curtain Art
- 35.Eagle Claw
- 36.Iron Bull
- 37.Eagle Wings
- 38.Sun-Ray Fist
- 39.Golden Cicada
- 40.Iron Bag Art
- 41.Art of Falling
- 42.Tortoise Back
- 43.Running Art
- 44.Light Body Art
- 45.Iron Knees
- 46.Jumping Art
- 47.Iron Palm

48. Running on Water
49. Drawing in Testicles
50. Iron Thrust
51. Stone Pillar Art
52. Sabre and Spear Cannot Penetrate
53. Art of Flying Star
54. Five-Poison Hand
55. Separating Water Art
56. Running on Walls
57. Art of Somersaults
58. Cypress Formation
59. Big Boss Elbows
60. Pinching Flower
61. Art of Pushing Mountain
62. Stone Saddle Art
63. Jade Belt Art
64. Well-Punching Fist
65. Sand Bag Arg
66. Pierce-Stone Finger
67. Pull-Mountain Art
68. Praying Mantis Claw
69. Stomach Art
70. Guan Yin Palm
71. Raising Pot Art
72. Golden Dragon Palm

## **72 Arts of Shaolin mentioned in a Shaolin classic**

Most of the 72 arts mentioned here are the same as those mentioned in the above book, but are not in the same order. It is probable that the author of the above book took the list from the Shaolin classic.

The Shaolin classic emphasizes that these arts should be learned from a master, not from books. Practitioners should have basic training before attempting these specialized arts, suggesting (though it is not explicitly stated) that basic information practitioners are supposed to know, is not mentioned.

1. Iron Arm
2. Ability to take Blows
3. Iron Sweeping Leg
4. Shooting Leg
5. Kicking Leg
6. Bamboo-Leave Hand
7. Hopping Centepede
8. Lifting Thousand Pounds
9. Lohan Art
10. Iron Head
11. Four-Part Art
12. Iron Shirt
13. Twin Lock
14. Raising Weight
15. Stone Lock
16. Iron Pearl Bag
17. Thousand-Pound Weight
18. Rod Force Art

19. Separating Water Art
20. Jade Belt Art
21. Eagle Wings
22. Jumping Art
23. Big Boss Elbows
24. One-Finger Gold
25. Iron Nail Art
26. One-Finger Zen
27. Stone Pillar Art
28. Golden Bell
29. Iron Hull Art
30. Whirlwind Palm
31. Lying Tiger Art
32. Pull-Mountain Art
33. Golden Dragon Hand
34. Push Mountain Art
35. Kick Wooden Poles
36. Eagle Claw
37. Chop-Monster Sword
38. Empty-Force Punch
39. Golden Sand Palm
40. Iron Palm
41. Flying Art
42. Sabre and Spear Cannot Penetrate
43. Five-Poison Hand
44. Running on Walls
45. Running on Water
46. Running Art

47. Falling Art
48. Golden Spade Fingers
49. Plum Flower Formation
50. Pinching Flowers
51. Praying Mantis Claw
52. Running Plank Art
53. Dodging Art
54. Fast Palm Art
55. Light Body Art
56. Iron Knee
57. Running on Grass
58. Through Curtain Art
59. Standing on Waves
60. Dotting Stone
61. Lute Art
62. Soft Bone Art
63. Lizard Art
64. Drawing up Testicles
65. Art of Somersaults
66. Stomach Art
67. Frog Art
68. Thousand Sheets of Paper
69. Spring Fist Art
70. Finger Lock
71. Chase-Wind Palm
72. Soft Nebulous Art

## **72 Arts of Shaolin practiced in Shaolin Wahnam**

In a thread in Shaolin Wahnam Discussion Forum, [72 Arts of Shaolin Kungfu](#) started by Ray in 2005, and revived by Sifu Markus Kahila in 2015, our family members mentioned more than 72 arts practiced in our school. David Langford gave an impressive list of 72 arts, with an extra art, "Art of Being a Cheeky Monkey", practiced by some.

To confirm with the magical number 72, I have selected 72 Arts of Shaolin practiced in our school as follows. Some arts, like Eighteen Lohan Hands and Bone Marrow Cleansing, are collective, i.e. there are many arts under one heading. Some versions of the 72 Shaolin Arts, for example, list "Lifting the Sky" and "Pushing Mountain" as separate arts.

1. Smiling from the Heart
2. Art of Entering Silence
3. Art of Chi Flow
4. Art of Point Message
5. Art of Heavenly Drums
6. Eighteen Jewels
7. Five-Animal Play
8. Eighteen Lohan Hands
9. Art of Massaging Internal Organs
10. Eighteen-Lohan Art
11. Art of Flowing Breeze
12. Art of Floating Clouds
13. Self-Manifested Chi Movement
14. Art of Standing Meditation
15. Art of Sitting Meditation
16. Bone Marrow Cleansing



- 17.Sinew Metamorphosis
- 18.Cosmic Shower
- 19.Small Universe
- 20.Big Universe
- 21.Cosmic Breathing
- 22.Merging with the Cosmos
- 23.One-Finger Shooting Zen
- 24.Art of Flexibility
- 25.Art of Hundred Kicks
- 26.Iron Palm
- 27.Cosmos Palm
- 28.Eagle Claw
- 29.Tiger Claw
- 30.Dragon Claw
- 31.Golden Bell
- 32.Iron Shirt
- 33.Iron Arm
- 34.Art of Stone Locks
- 35.Marvelous Fist
- 36.Art of Triple Stretch
- 37.Art of Iron Plank Bridge
- 38.Art of Bamboo Man
- 39.Plum Flower Formation
- 40.Art of Exploding Force
- 41.Art of Dragon Speed
- 42.Art of Dragon Force
- 43.Art of No-Shadow Kicks
- 44.Art of Thousand Steps

45. Art of Lightness
46. Art of Connecting Bridge
47. Art of One-Breath Flow
48. Art of Staff Force
49. Art of Thrusting Spear
50. Art of Saber Force
51. Art of Pressing Attacks
52. Art of One-Finger Gold
53. Art of Two Finger Zen
54. Striking a Buffalo Beyond a Mountain
55. Art of Covering and Taming
56. Art of Flowing Force
57. Art of Consolidated Force
58. Lift-Practice Art
59. Black Tortoise Method
60. Art of Hei Sai or Energy-Spirit
61. Form-Flow-Force Method or Flow Method
62. Form-Force-Flow Method or Force Method
63. Art of Mental Clarity
64. Art of Mind Flow
65. Art of Through the Woods
66. Empty Hand Enters White Blade
67. Tiger Enters Herd of Sheep
68. Fighting with Fort Behind
69. Shaolin Marvelous Eye Exercises
70. Art of Taming Tiger
71. Art of Pressing Attacks
72. Art of Dodging