



Question and Answer Series
Legacy of Wong Fei Hung
by Grandmaster Wong Kiew Kit

Question 1

Grand Master Lam Sai Wing's classical "Tiger and Crane" manual summarizes various techniques of the set:

Tiger Form: Seung Fu Jaau, Daan Fu Jaau, Wui Tau Fu, Jak Min Fu, Che Ma Fu, Cheut Saan Fu, Ha Saan Fu, Hoi San Fu

Crane Form: Baau Hok, Ngo Hok, Duk Geuk Fei Hok, Hok Chi, Hok Ding, Hok Jeui, Hok Jaau

Hung Ga Saam Jin Sau

Fat Ga Lo Hon Kyun

Would you be please so kind and explain some details regarding these techniques, their meaning, principles and application?

Pavel Macek Sifu

Answer

Grandmaster Lam Sai Weng's classic, "Tiger-Crane", is a great contribution to kungfu. I have benefitted very much from it.

I bought the classic when I was learning Shaolin Kungfu from Uncle Righteousness in the 1950s. I did not understand its depth then, I was only interested in the external forms of the set. It was much later when I had a better understanding of kungfu philosophy that I could derive more benefits.

The meaning, principle and application of the techniques are as follows.

"Seong Fu Jaau" means double tiger-claws. This technique is found in the pattern "Hungry Tiger Catches Goat" (Pattern 61). The principle is to control an opponent with one tiger-claw and simultaneously attack him with the other.

It was recorded that "Hungry Tiger Catches Goat" was a favorite of Wong Fei Hoong. It is also one my favorites in all kungfu, not only in Tiger-Crane. I used this pattern often in my younger days of sparring and actual fighting.

The pattern can be used to counter any attack – be it striking, kicking, felling or gripping! If an opponent executes a punch or a kick, for example, I sink back to avoid it, immediately sweep away the attack and "tame" or control the opponent, and simultaneously counter attack his face, gripping his eyes or vital points.

If an opponent attempts to fell me, I move back my back leg to neutralize his leverage advantage, cover him with one tiger-claw preventing him from further strikes, move in my front leg into his stance, and attack his face with my other tiger claw. If he grip my one hand or two hands, I circulate my one or two hands to release the grip, rotating my waist for better momentum, cover him adequately, and counter-attack with my other tiger-claw.

There is a poetic couplet reminding practitioners the finer points of this pattern which sounds as follows in Cantonese:

Tzi ng seong fu ma tan yew
Di mei fok si mut hai kew

It means that when applying double tiger-claws one should slant forward his body in Bow-Arrow stance, and must not be negligent to tame the opponent adequately.

This explains why in the pattern the exponent's body is slanting forward, and one arm is horizontally in front.

“Daan Fu Jaau” means single tiger claw. It is found in “Single Tiger Emerges from Cave” (pattern 62). Its principle is “lean” or “thap” in Cantonese, i.e. you “lean” your technique on an opponent's attack, not block it as some students wrongly think.

There is no need to block an opponent's attack because the defence is in the footwork. By move back your front leg to a False-Leg Stance, or shifting to a Seven-Star Stance in the Tiger-Crane Set, you have avoided the attack.

At an advanced stage, you do not just “lean” your arm on the attacker's arm, but also your tiger-claw on the attacker's face from outside in, implementing the principle “kiew lei kiew seong ko”, which means “when there is a bridge, go over the bridge”.

“Wui Tau Fu” means return-head-tiger. The technique is found in the pattern “Golden Dragon Presents Claws” (Pattern 95). Although it is called a “Golden Dragon”, it is actually a tiger-pattern using tiger-claws.

The principle is to trick an opponent to attack you from your back. You suddenly turn around and counter-strike him using the tactic of “no-defence-direct-counter”, i.e. you don't need to defend against his attack, you just counter-strike him.

“Np-defence” is a misnomer. Again, the defence is in the footwork. By turning around with your Unicorn Step, you have avoided his attack, and your attacking arm deflects it if the attack is still near. It also employs the principle of “when there is a bridge, go over the bridge”.

“Jak Min Fu” means side-face-tiger. This technique is found in the pattern “Fierce Tiger Crouching at Cliff” (Pattern 45). The principle is facing your opponent from a side instead of frontally as it would be disadvantageous in the situation.

If an opponent grip your head with one hand and elbow your face with the other, as in some Muay Thai fighting, turn your face to a side and respond with “Fierce Tiger Crouching at Cliff”. You can release his grip, deflect his strike, and counter-strike him all at the same time!

“Che Ma Fu” means side-stance-tiger. This technique is found in the pattern “Guard Hand Sink Waist” (Pattern 68). In Shaolin Wahnam, this same pattern is called “Black Tiger Guards Door”. The principle here is to turn your stance to a side for certain advantages as you attack your opponent.

For example, if an opponent attacks you with a right punch, you grip his right wrist with your right tiger-claw, turn your body to break his arm with your left shoulder and simultaneously grip his groin with your left tiger-claw.

“Cheut Saan Fu” means emerging-mountain-tiger. It can be found in the pattern “Fierce Tiger Pushes Mountain” (Pattern 98). The principle is to employ a frontal attack. If an opponent rushes in to grab you, you can strike his solar plexus with your tiger-claw palm, as in this pattern.

“Ha Saam Fu” means “descending mountain tiger”. This technique is in the pattern “Fierce Tiger Descends Mountain” (Pattern 63). As the term “descend” suggests, the tiger-claw movement is downward. Body-movement, with rotation of the waist, contributes to its successful application.

When an opponent attacks you with one hand or both hands, almost in any way, sink your body backward to avoid his attack, then rotate forward with downward movement of your tiger-claws, with the front claw attacking him and the back claw covering him to prevent him from countering.

“Hoi Saan Fu” means open-mountain tiger. This technique is found in the pattern “Double Bows Hand Strike” (Pattern 50). In Shaolin Wahnam, this pattern is called “Double Bows Tame Tiger”. The combat principle is to open an opponent’s defence to strike him.

When your right hand is in contact with your opponent’s right hand, irrespective of their preceding movements, open your opponent’s defence by floating up his right elbow with your right hand, and strike his ribs with your left hand.

“Baau Hok” means well-fed crane. The technique is found in the pattern, “Reincarnated Well-Fed Crane” (Pattern 73). The combat principle is to deflect an opponent’s attack, and simultaneously strike his eye. The feature of a well-fed crane is that its movements are performed leisurely.

Suppose an opponent grips your left wrist with his right hand. Almost effortlessly you release and control his right hand, and simultaneously strike his eye with your right crane beak.

“Ngo Hok” means hungry crane, The technique is found in “Hungry Crane Searches for Prawn” (Pattern 76). Its principle is based on being quick and surprise.

In combat application, cover an opponent with one hand, and attack his groin with the other hand.

The way I perform this pattern is slightly different from what many people do. Instead of holding the five fingers together and pecking at an opponent’s groin, I swing my hand at his groin with my fingers initially open, close the fingers as I grip a testicle and quickly pull it out.

Although I perform this movement in solo practice, I haven’t used it in any real fights, and only an imitation in friendly sparring.

“Tok Geok Fei Hok” means “Single Leg Flying Crane”, and is the name of a pattern (Pattern 74). It is one of the patterns to implement the technique of “no-shadow kick”, for which the great master, Wong Fei Hoong, was famous. The principle lies in the “shadow hand”.

During combat, regardless of what the current patterns are, distract or close the opponent with the shadow hands above, and kick his groin below.

“Hok Chi” means crane’s wings. This technique is found in the pattern, “Black Crow Flaps Wings” (Pattern 15). It is useful for close combat. When an opponent tries to grab you, for example, you can strike him with your elbow.

In the set, both elbows are used. But in application, you may use only one elbow. Kungfu is alive.

“Hok Ding” means crane-thrust, and the thrust is executed with a phoenix-eye fist. This technique is found in the pattern, “Right Crane-Thrust Technique” (Pattern 77). The principle is to strike an opponent’s energy point or vital spots like his eyes, throat or solar plexus. As an opponent attacks you, ward off his attack with one hand and simultaneously counter strike him with a phoenix-eye fist of the other hand.

“Hok Jeui” means crane beak. This technique is found in the pattern, “Crane Beak Sink Elbow” (Pattern 72), which is the same as “Reincarnated Well-Fed Crane” (Pattern 73), mentioned above.

The way we use a crane beak is quite different from what many people do. For us, there are three main areas where the crane beak is used – the eyes, the throat and the genitals.

The fingers are slightly open as they approach the target. The fingers close on the target, i.e. an eyeball, Adam's apple, or a testicle, and pull it out. It is extremely cruel.

Nevertheless, Hoong Men Ting, the son of Hoong Hei Khoon, used this technique to defeat the Golden Bell of Pak Mei.

“Hok Jaau” means “crane-claw”. This technique is found in “Reincarnated Well-Fed Crane” (Pattern 73). Instead of brushing off an opponent's attack, you may gently hold his wrist with a crane-claw, while you strike his eye with a crane beak of the other hand.

Why do you use a crane-claw, which is not solid, instead of a tiger-claw. It is because your purpose is not to grip him as a combat-ending technique but just to control him so that you can execute your combat-ending technique with your crane beak at his eye.

“Hung Ga Saam Jin Sau” means Triple-Stretch of Hung Ga Kungfu. Triple-stretch is a very important force training method in Southern Shaolin. It consists of moving a hand-form, like the One-Finger Zen hand-form, three times forward and backward to and fro from the waist to a position where the arm is fully extended at shoulder level so as to consolidate force.

In the Tiger-Crane Set, Patterns 7, 17, 32, which are “One-Finger Stabilizes Empire”, “Precious Duck through Lotus” and “Thread Bridge at Bow-Arrow Stance”, employ the triple-stretch technique. The purpose is to consolidate force, but many students wrongly perform it as isometric exercise resulting in big muscles.

“Fut Ga Lo Hon Kyun” means Lohan Kungfu of Buddha Family. Buddha Family or Fut Ga is a style of Shaolin Kungfu. Lohan Kungfu was a kungfu set originally developed from the 18 Lohan Hands, and the prototype of Shaolin Kungfu. Through out many centuries, there were many versions of Lohan Kungfu.

Lohan Kungfu is characterized by long stances and extended hands. Patterns like “Forward Step Thrust Punch” (Pattern 48), “Eight-Tenth Arrow Punch” (Pattern 55), “Throw Ball in Waves” (Pattern 70), “Thrust Punch from Sleeves” (Pattern 71), “Lohan Emerges from Cave” (Pattern 83), are “One Star Throw Punch” are typical Lohan Kungfu patterns.

This 108-Pattern Tiger-Crane Set is based on Lohan Kungfu with the triple-stretch method to train internal force at the beginning, and tiger and crane patterns in the middle.

Question 2

I am very curious about the nature of the 12 bridges of Iron Wire in application when using techniques and strategies found within the Tiger-Crane 108, and Taming the Tiger. Could you please give us some examples of how they are used?

David

Answer

The 12 bridges of Iron Wire have puzzled many people, but the puzzle can be solved when we realize that the 12 bridges refer not to 12 different types of internal force, but the same internal force used in 12 different ways.

The same problem occurs in the 8 forces of Taijiquan. It is not 8 different types of force, but the same force used in 8 different ways.

As an analogy, you have the same money from your income, but you may use your money in different ways and classify them accordingly, like food money, rent money, entertainment money, and saving money. On some occasions, you may use the money initially reserved for one category for another. For example, to make your girlfriend happy, you may take some of the money reserved for saving to entertain her.

In the same way, the force used for "lifting bridge" in Iron Wire may be used for "retaining bridge" in another occasion, or the force used for "warding off" in Taijiquan may be used for "rolling back". But because of the different ways of force training in Iron Wire and in Taijiquan, Iron Wire force and Taijiquan force may have different characteristics. Similarly the characteristics of the income from a manager, who receive a salary at the end of the month, may be different from those of a salesman, who receives a commission when he makes a sale.

Nevertheless, because of our ability of chi flow, we can readily convert Iron Wire force to Taijiquan force, and vice versa. In the same way, a skillful manager may make adjustment so that he can use his money whenever he likes, or a skillful salesman can make adjustment to receive a large sum of money at the end of the money.

The 8 forces of Taijiquan are ward-off force, rolling-back force, pressing force, contact force, spreading force, anchor force, shoulder force and elbow force.

The 12 bridges of Iron Wire which manifest 12 types of force are hard force, soft force, pressing force, straight force, separate force, stabilizing force, inch force, lifting force, retaining force, circulating force, controlling force, and matching force.

There is a poetic couplet in Cantonese to help practitioners remember the 12 bridges as follows:

Kong yow pik cheit fun ting chuin
Tai lau wan chai ding thien khuen

Word by word it may be translated as follows:

Hard soft press straight separate stable inch
Lift keep circulate control match the cosmos

“Hard” and “soft” are generic terms that can apply to all the other types of force. In other words, pressing force can be hard or soft, straight force and be hard or soft, etc.

It is important to bear in mind that the classification of the 12 different types of force is to enable us to be more efficient in kungfu as well as in everyday life. It should not limit us. If we use a certain type of force in a particular pattern, it does not mean that only that force can be used in that pattern. This will be limiting ourselves, a mistake some students make. We can also use a different type of force for the same pattern. Knowing this possibility and being able to put it into practice enables us to be more proficient.

For example, hard force is usually employed in the pattern, “Black Tiger Steals Heart”. But a skillful exponent may also use soft force for this pattern. The type of hard force in “Black Tiger Steals Heart” is usually straight force. But if we want to use this pattern to press into an opponent, we may use pressing force.

With this in mind, let us examine some typical use of force, represented as the 12 bridges in the Iron Wire Set, in some of the patterns in the 108-Pattern Tiger-Crane Set and the Taming-Tiger Set. In the examples below, the first example is taken from the Tiger-Crane Set, and the

second example from the Taming-Tiger Set. A picture series of the patterns of the Tiger-Crane Set can be found at <http://www.shaolin.org/shaolin/kungf...-pictures.html> and that of Taming-Tiger can be found at <http://www.shaolin.org/shaolin/kungf...-pictures.html>

Hard force is used in "Lohan Emerges from Cave" (in the Tiger-Crane Set, Picture 116) and in "Double Hanging Fists" (in the Taming-Tiger Set, Picture 54). When an opponent attempts to move away, you can press in with "Lohan Emerges from Cave". If an opponent grips your arms, you can release his grip with "False Leg Lift Fists", followed by striking him with "Double Hanging Fists".

Soft force is found in "Right Circulating Soft Force" (Picture 31) and in "Big Boss Offers Wine" (Picture 25). "Right Circulating Soft Force" is an excellent pattern to develop soft force. When an opponent grips your wrist, you release it with a sharp turn of your hand, followed by striking him with "Big Boss Offers Wine".

Pressing Force is found in "Black Tiger Charges at Door" (Picture 37) and "Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge" (Picture 4). In "Black Tiger Charges at Door" you control an opponent and simultaneously press on him. "Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge" is an excellent technique to develop pressing force.

Straight force is found in "Double Dragon Emerges from Sea" (Picture 29) and "Dark Dragon Draws Water" (Picture 19). "Double Dragon Emerges from Sea" develops straight force, and "Dark Dragon Draws Water" applies it

Separate force is found in "Cross-Road Separate Gold" (Picture 128) and "Left Right Separate Bow" (Picture 28). If two opponents hold your arms, one on each side, you can release their holds using "Cross-Road Separate Gold". An opponent attacks you with a sophisticated technique, "Rising Dragon Galloping Tiger", striking your head and kicking you at the same time. You can respond with "Left Right Separate Bow", followed with a kick to his groin.

Stabilizing force is used in "Tame Tiger Hide Dragon" (Picture 3) and in "Double Stability of Golden Bridge" (Picture 68). "Tame Tiger Hide Dragon" is applied as a taming hand to control an opponent. "Double Stability of Golden Bridge" is an effective to develop stabilizing force.

Inch force is used in "Sink Bridge Shoot Palm" (Picture 45) and in "Continuous Pearl Punches" (Picture 95). As an opponent attacks your middle or lower body, you sink your forearm or elbow to intercept his attack, and counter-strike with a finger-thrust using the pattern "Sink Bridge Shoot Palm". "Continuous Pearl Punches" is a series of pressing attacks on an opponent from close-quarters.

Lifting force is found in "Immortal Emerges from Cave" (Picture 50) and "Double Bows Tame Tiger" (Picture 86). As an opponent attempts to grip your head with his two hands, you lift them up using "Immortal Emerges from Cave". When you are in contact with an opponent's bridge, meaning arm, lift it up at his elbow and strike him using "Double Bows Tame Tiger".

Keeping force, or retaining force, is found in "Wave Dragon Back to Cave" (Picture 10) and in "Yun Thian Tames Tiger" (Picture 121). If an opponent grips your right wrist with his left hand, you apply "Wave Dragon Back to Cave" to grip his wrist instead. As you move forward to attack your opponent, he tries to kick at you. You still move in but tame his kick using "Yun Thian Tames Tiger" while moving in.

Circulating force is found in "Bow Arrow Thread Bridge" (Picture 44) and "Horse Riding Hand Sweep" (Picture 104). In "Bow Arrow Thread Bridge", you circulate energy to your fingers before shooting out. In "Horse Riding Hand Sweep" you circulate energy to your palm for the hand sweep.

Controlling force is found in the pattern, "Fierce Tiger Descends Mountain" (picture 98), and in "Comet Chases Moon" (Picture 122). In "Fierce Tiger Descends Mountain", you control your opponent with a powerful sweep of your downward tiger-claws. In "Comet Chases Moon" you control your opponent's both arms while striking him.

Matching force is used in "Four Fingers Towards Sky" (Picture 9), and in "Single Tiger Emerges from Cave" (Picture 128). Irrespective of whether your opponent's movement is attacking or defensive, you match him using "Four Fingers Towards Sky" to sense his momentum and intention. If an opponent attacks you with his right hand, you match him with "Single Tiger Emerges from Cave". Then you thread away his arm and strike him with "Golden Leopard Speeds through Forest" as in Picture 129.

As mentioned earlier, the types of force in these patterns are typical of their application, but variations are possible. For example, in the “Single Tiger Emerges from Cave” pattern above, using matching force is typical. But for some particular reasons, an exponent may use inch force if he wishes to strike his opponent at close quarters with his tiger-claw, or use controlling force if he wishes to grip his opponent.

The classification into 12 bridges, or 12 different types of force depending on its application, is meant to facilitate our efficiency; it is not meant to enslave us. For example, if we use the force developed from Iron Wire to grip an opponent in a chin-na technique, or to strike an opponent, and we call it gripping force and striking force, it would be enslaving for a critic to say, “No, there is no gripping force or striking force from Iron Wire. There are in total 12 bridges with 12 different types of force.”

Question 3

What are the characteristics of the predominant animals in Wong Fei Hoong’s Hoong Ka Kung Fu, the tiger and the crane (and of the other Shaolin animals), in combat application and especially in daily life?

For people with what kind of character and body type is Hoong Ka best suitable and therefore recommended to specialize in?

Sifu Leonard Lackinger

Answer

The Hoong Ka Kungfu of Wong Fei Hoong is famous for the following three kungfu sets – Taming-Tiger, Tiger-Crane and Iron Wire.

It is worthwhile to note that during his time, as well as during the time of his successor, Lam Sai Weng, the term “Hoong Ka” was not used. They described their kungfu as “Shaolin”. In the three modern classics by Lam Sai Weng on the three famous kungfu sets, he also described his kungfu as “Shaolin”. The term “Hoong Ka” became popular about 50 years ago in the 1960s, about one generation after Lam Sai Weng.

The prominent animal of “Taming-Tiger” is the tiger, especially the tiger-claw. Some examples of patterns for the tiger claw are Single Tiger Emerges from Cave, Black Tiger Guards Door, Separate Sea to Search for Shells, Fierce Tiger Descends Mountain, and Hungry Tiger Catches Goat.

The function of the tiger claw is not for stretching, like making claw marks on an opponent's body, as some people mistakenly think it is. There are three main combat functions of the tiger claw, which in Cantonese are known as "fun ken", "chor jeet", "na yuit", which means "separating tendons", "dislocating joints", and "gripping energy points".

These attacks are combat-ending by themselves. In other words when a Hoong Ka exponent has successfully applied a tiger claw attack on an opponent, he can let go of the opponent and the opponent cannot continue fighting. It is unlike a lock. When an exponent lets go of the lock, the opponent can continue to fight. In a tiger claw attack, an opponent cannot continue to fight because his tendon has been torn, his joint has been dislocated, or his energy flow has been stopped due to a grip on his energy point. We shall have an introduction to the tiger claw at the Legacy of Wong Fei Hoong course at the UK Summer Camp.

When you apply Single Tiger Emerges from Cave, for example, it is not just warding off an opponent's attack, which we learn at the basic level. The pattern can be applied to grip the energy points of an opponent's head or arm. When you use Hungry Tiger Catches Goat, you tame your opponent with one tiger claw, and with the other tiger claw you rib off some tendons in his face, dislocate his neck or grip his energy points on his head.

Kungfu is meant for fighting. Making some marks on an opponent's face with a tiger claw is child's play. These tiger claw attacks cause serious injuries, and we would not like to use them if we can. We do not want to fight in the first place. But if we have no choice, like being forced into a challenge match by an arrogant martial artist who continues ridiculing our arts, we must not be afraid to use these techniques the way they are meant to be used. We practice kungfu, not children's play. But in friendly sparring, including with opponents from other schools, we just place our tiger claw a few inches from target.

The tiger form trains bone, which means internal force. Internal force is not just for fighting. It has three main functions – maintaining life, enhancing life, and giving us better results no matter what we do. It is extremely useful in daily life.

As the name indicates, the "Tiger-Crane" set incorporates the tiger and the crane. While the tiger, which has been described above, is forceful and ferocious, the crane is graceful and elegant. Some examples of crane patterns are "Reincarnated Well-Fed Crane", "Hungry Crane Search for Prawn", "Crane-Thrusting Technique", "Single Leg Hungry Crane" and "Single Leg Flying Crane".

While the tiger is famous for its tiger claw, the crane is famous for its no-shadow kick. No-shadow kick is not just a kick, but refers to a genre of kicking techniques performed in a special way so fast or inauspicious that seems to have no shadow.

This class of no-shadow kicks including the organ-seeking kicks, the thrust kick, the tiger-tail kick, and the clutch-kick.

The clutch-kick is not found in the 108-Pattern Tiger-Crane Set taught in Wong Fei Hoong's lineage, but is found in the 36-Pattern Tiger-Crane Set I learned from Uncle Righteousness.

There are two kinds of tiger-tail kick, the straight-body tiger tail and the side-body tiger-tail. The tiger-tail kick is not found in the 108-Pattern Tiger-Crane Set, but the side-body tiger-tail kick is found in the Taming-Tiger Set. It is also found in the 36-Pattern Tiger-Crane Set. The straight-body tiger-tail kick is not found in the Tiger-Crane Set and the Taming-Tiger Set. I learned it from the Great Majestic Set taught by Sifu Ho Fatt Nam. It is also found in the Eighteen Lohan Set which I developed from the Big Bell Lohan Set I learned in Sifu Ho Fatt Nam's school.

There are various patterns for the kicking techniques of the no-shadow kicks. An example each are as follows: Single Leg Hungry Crane for the organ-seeking kick, White Horse Presents Hoof for the thrust kick, and Lazy Tiger Stretches Waist for the side-body tiger-tail kick. Hence, no-shadow kicks are not limited to crane patterns.

A pattern for the straight-body tiger-tail kick from the Great Majestic Set is Fierce Tiger Springs Claws. In the 36-Pattern Tiger-Crane Set, there is no special pattern name for the clutch kick. It is just called a "clutch kick" and is part of the pattern "Old Tree Falls with Root". This clutch kick pattern is called "Immortal Li Steps on Clutch" in the Drunken Eight Immortals Set.

It is interesting to note that some of these kicking techniques are found in our basic Shaolin and Taijiquan combat sequences. But in the combat sequences, these techniques are not used as no-shadow kicks, they are applied as ordinary kicks. They become no-shadow kicks with the introduction of certain tactics. The no-shadow kick, which is a special martial benefit of the Tiger-Crane Set, will be introduced in the Legacy of Wong Fei Hoong course.

The crane form trains essence. The Chinese term "essence" is quick tricky when translated into English. It implies that crane movements are free from unnecessary frills, and only the best or the necessary remains. It also suggests that crane movements are elegant, and free from muscular tension. To those used to Western culture, without muscular tension may suggest that there is no force. This is not true. Crane movements can be very powerful, full of internal force. But the internal force is not hard like that of a tiger, it is soft.

These characteristics of the crane are very beneficial in daily life. A practitioner trained in the Tiger-Crane Set will be courageous and powerful like a tiger, yet graceful and elegant like a crane.

There is no special animal in the Iron Wire Set, but if I have to choose one of the five Shaolin animal that is closest to the way we perform Iron Wire, I would choose the dragon. There are two main reasons for my choice.

The internal force developed from practicing Iron Wire is very powerful, and in our school it is close to dragon force. In most other schools Iron Wire force, if it is practiced correctly, is more like that of a tiger. If it is wrongly practiced as isometric exercise, the force is that of a leopard.

Why does our Iron Wire force resemble dragon force, whereas that of other schools resembles tiger force? It is because, our Iron Wire force, while still very powerful, is flowing, whereas that of other schools is consolidated. The flowing force of our Iron Wire is due to the magic of chi flow.

The tremendous force derived from Iron Wire enhances our combat application, irrespective of what techniques we use, in every way. Some martial artists wrongly think that techniques are of utmost important in combat. This is not true. Force is usually more important than techniques.

This fact is well illustrated in matching juvenile black-belts with adults who are not trained in any martial art in combat. The juvenile black-belts will be badly beaten in real fights. This is an invaluable lesson to parents who think that their children who have attained a black belt level are good fighters. The juveniles are only good at demonstrating forms or in no-contact point sparring.

Internal force is not just good for fighting. It is more beneficial in everyday life. It will ensure life goes on harmoniously, make all your organs and systems work more efficiently, and enable you to produce better result in whatever you do. When you play games, you won't be tired easily. When you perform intellectual work, you can work for a long time without being fatigued

People who are humble, determined, morally upright, neither too fat nor thin, and are not muscle-bound are best suitable, and therefore are recommended, to specialize in the Hoong Ka Kungfu of Wong Fei Hoong, or in any other kungfu style.

If a person is vain, he will not learn well. If he lacks determination, he will not progress far. If he is not morally upright, his teacher and seniors will not teach him their secrets. His teacher may not accept him as a student in the first place.

Indeed, at an advance stage where training operates at the mind level, when his mind is crooked, the internal force developed would be detrimental to him. In other words, only those who are morally upright can reach the highest level of training. This is not moralizing. This is a cosmic truth. It is also nature's way of preserving the highest art for the morally upright.

Why were there some kungfu masters in the past who were wicked? They reached a high level of their kungfu, but not the highest level.

Some people may think of Pak Mei. Did Pak Mei reach the highest level of kungfu? Yes, he did. Was he morally upright? Yes, he was!

Pak Mei did not abuse his kungfu. He did not kill unnecessarily. He did not cheat? He did not womanize? He did not oppress the weak? He did not bully the poor. He was the First Patriarch of three kungfu styles, Pak Mei Kungfu, Er Mei Kungfu and Dragon Style, honoured by thousands of disciples.

Many Shaolin practitioners may consider Pak Mei their arch enemy because he led the Qing Army to raze the Shaolin Temple on Nine-Lotus Mountain to the ground. This was a question of political difference, not of moral issues.

People who are too fat or too thin do not have the right bodily structure to get the best benefit from Hoong Ka Kungfu. But this weakness is only temporary. After some practice, their body shape will be restructured.

People who are muscle-bound are not suitable. Their muscles will block chi flow, hampering the development of internal force which is necessary for any kungfu at the highest level.

Question 4

Wong Fei Hung is one of the great folk heroes of China, and nowadays is known throughout the world. Unfortunately, comparatively few people today practice the arts that he transmitted and systematized.

**Supposing a young person was inspired by the films and stories to learn the Southern Shaolin of Wong Fei Hung;
Can you outline the general aims, path and benefits of the Art?**

Can you also talk about the martial and holistic benefits of the particular sets to be taught at the upcoming U.K. Summer Camp?

Sifu Andy Cusick

Answer

It is incorrect to say that few people today practice the arts Wong Fei Hoong transmitted. Indeed, the lineage of Wong Fei Hoong is one of the best established today, with students all over the world.

Wong Fei Hong's stories have been made into more than a hundred movies, and are very popular amongst the Chinese, especially the Cantonese speaking people. The three books of his successor, Lam Sai Weng, namely Taming-Tiger, Tiger and Crane, and Iron Wire, have become modern classics.

Wong Fei Hoong is one of the best known of Shaolin masters today.

I am not sure whether he systematized his teaching. I thought he taught what he had learned from his father, Wong Kai Yin, who in turn learned from his sifu, Loh Ah Choy. Loh Ah Choy was one of the ten best disciples of the Venerable Chee Seen, the first patriarch of Southern Shaolin Kungfu.

The general aims, path and benefits of the Southern Shaolin of Wong Fei Hoong outlined by me for a modern young man might be different from those outlined by Wong Fei Hoong himself at his time.

From available records, I would guess the following would be the general aims, path and benefits of the arts he would teach to his students.

The general aims of Wong Fei Hoong for his students would be good health and be responsible citizens for society. As Wong Fei Hoong himself forbid his students to fight, it was unlikely that he placed much importance on combat efficiency, though there was no doubt that all his immediate students were great fighters.

Wong Fei Hoong placed much importance on his students becoming responsible citizens to society. He emphasized two qualities, "chong" and "hou", or loyalty to the country and being filial to parents. It is significant to note that Wong Fei Hoong was different from many other Shaolin masters just a generation earlier who were pre-occupied with overthrowing the Qing and restoring the Ming. This was mainly because during Wong Fei Hoong's prime time, the Qing had already been overthrown. Wong Fei Hoong was the Chief Instructor for the Civil Guards of the new Chinese government in Canton.

I believe the path Wong Fei Hoong would choose for his students was to learn the three unarmed set, namely Taming-Tiger, Tiger-Crane and Iron Wire, and weapon sets like the Fifth Brother Eight Trigram Staff, which Wong Fei Hoong was well known for. If the students progressed well, they might learn Wong Fei Hoong's other weapon sets, namely Night-Journey Sabre and Three-Sectional Soft Whip. However, there were no records that these two weapon sets were taught to his actual disciples.

Wong Fei Hoong was an expert in tit-ta, or kungfu medicine. But records show that he did not formally teach kungfu medicine to his disciples.

The main benefits his students get from his teaching would be good health, vitality and longevity, combat efficiency and being good citizens to society.

The general aims, path and benefits of the legacy of Wong Fei Hoong I would outline for a modern young man who learns from me will be different from those of Wong Fei Hoong for his students. There are two main reasons for the difference.

While these arts were the main arts of Wong Fei Hoong, they are selective arts in our school. Secondly, the culture and needs of Wong Fei Hoong's time and ours are different. For example, Wong Fei Hoong's students would take a life time to learn these arts, whereas our modern young man would need only 5 days!

Please note that we are talking about the aims, path and benefits of this young man (or young woman) taking the legacy of Wong Fei Hoong course at the UK Summer Camp. We are not talking about his (or her) aims, path and benefits as a student in our school.

The main aims are to provide him with a comprehensive introduction to the three unarmed sets of Taming-Tiger, Tiger-Crane and Iron Wire, and the weapon set of Fifth Brother Eight Trigram Staff, including the special skills of tiger-claw and no-shadow kick, and to enhance his breadth and depth in kungfu training.

If he decides to specialize in these selective sets later on, he may pass the secrets and benefits of the arts to posterity, including internal force training and combat application. The need to preserve these great arts is more urgent considering that today many practitioners of these arts bounce about like Boxers in free sparring, and lift weights in force training.

The path is to have a good understanding and practice of the form, force training, combat application and philosophy of these sets, including the philosophy and application of tiger claw and no-shadow kick.

The benefits are that within just 5 days he will have an in-depth understanding and practical experience of all these famous sets, which made Wong Fei Hoong one of the best known Southern Shaolin masters in history. The young man may know and perform reasonably well 5 days in what some practitioners of these arts may not have attained after many years!

For example, many practitioners may not know the combat applications of some patterns like Fierce Tiger Crouching at Cliff, Reincarnated Well-Fed Crane and Sun Moon Shadow Hand, but our young man will know. Many practitioners may not be able to develop internal force using these sets, but our young man will be able to, using methods like the flow-method and triple-stretch.

The aims, path and benefits from learning these arts in the 5-day course will enhance his aims, path and benefits as a student of our school. For example, the internal force developed from these sets will enhance his health, vitality and longevity as well as peak performance in daily life. The combat applications learnt from these sets will combat efficiency in sparring and fighting. Because of the

benefit of breadth and depth, he will have better results in whatever arts he choose to practice later on.

Four sets will be taught at the Legacy of Wong Fei Hoong course during the UK Summer Camp. They are Taming-Tiger, Tiger-Crane, Iron Wire and Fifth Brother Eight Trigram Staff.

Taming-Tiger was the fundamental set in Wong Fei Hoong's school to teach combat. Many of the combat sequences Wong Fei Hoong and his students used in their successful fighting were taken from this set. Students attending the legacy course will have the martial benefit of knowing how these past masters fought, and of applying the same combat sequences in their sparring. The holistic benefit is to have a theoretical understanding and practical experience of Southern Shaolin, or Hoong Ka, combat application.

As the name indicates, Tiger-Crane incorporates the tiger form and the crane form, as well as Lohan Kungfu which was the prototype of Shaolin Kungfu. The tiger form is known for its hard force and tiger-claw, whereas the crane form is known for its soft force and no-shadow kick. The martial benefit from the Tiger-Crane Set is an introduction to more sophisticated combat application as well as training of hard and soft force. The holistic benefit is enhancing breadth and depth in any kungfu training.

Iron Wire is an advanced set usually reserved only for special students who have spent many years in the school and have won the trust of the master. It is probably the most powerful set to train internal force. However, in my opinion many practitioners have trained wrongly. They have practiced Iron Wire as isometric exercise and have developed big muscles instead. The martial benefit of this set is to train tremendous internal force. The holistic benefit is to have a deeper understanding of internal force training, especially its flow approach and its consolidating approach, which can be applicable to other methods of force training and to enrich daily life.

Question 5

Grandmaster Lam Sai Weng practiced Iron Wire, yet he also practiced everyday for hours the "Technique of Wave Breaking Hands".

My question's are:

Would it be beneficial to our practice if we also incorporated the Technique of Wave Breaking Hands into our training?

Would he have practiced other external methods, like our methods of Tiger Claw training?.

Why do you think he practiced Wave Breaking Hands, when Iron Wire is already very powerful? Is it because the standard was exceptionally high back in those days?

Sham.

Answer

For us in Shaolin Wahnam, while it is beneficial to incorporate the "Technique of Wave breaking Hands" in our practice of Iron Wire or any training, it is not necessary. It is because we have many other better methods to choose from.

Our choice of force-training methods is unprecedented in kungfu and chi kung history. Even masters in the past did not have our wide range of choice. They also might not have our philosophical understanding. We also have the benefit of chi flow, which not only automatically erase adverse effects due to deviation but also enhance our result. Past masters might not have chi flow the way we do.

An excellent method to complement Iron Wire is Yang Style Taijiquan. It is worthwhile to note that for other people, including masters, practicing Iron Wire and Yang Style Taijiquan at the same time will cancel out each other's benefit. But for us practicing these two opposing arts together will enhance our result. This is because of the magic of chi flow, which even masters may not know.

Two other excellent force-training methods that can enhance Iron Wire are Wuzuquan and Baguazhang. Any other force-training method is also helpful.

Just enjoying a chi flow after Iron Wire or any other force-training method will enhance our result. It will also erase any adverse effects unwitting sustained due to deviation.

For those who may be interested, the Technique of Wave Breaking Hands practiced by Grandmaster Lam Sai Weng was as follows.

Tie a long plate of human hair (from the head) together to make a loop. Go into a Horse-Riding Stance. Place the two arms in the circle of the loop. Open the arms in various ways with the arms striking the plated hair.

With hindsight, I discovered that this training generated chi flow. I believe that it was the chi flow that enhanced the force developed from Iron Wire training.

The Technique of Wave Breaking Hands is not specially meant for the training of Tiger-Claw. It can be used to supplement any force training, but is specially good for the arms.

Two typical external methods of force training for Tiger Claw are gripping jars and jabbing fingers into beans. Grandmaster Lam Sai Weng was well known for his Tiger Claw, and I believe he would have trained these two methods.

When I was training Tiger Claw, my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, taught me three other external methods besides gripping jars and jabbing beans. They were Taming Tiger, Hopping Tiger and gripping an iron ball.

In Taming Tiger, a practitioner does push-ups but using tiger claws instead of the open palms. When he has attained a reasonable standard in Taming Tiger, he hops about in all fours using his tiger claws and his toes from one end of a room to another. Gripping an iron ball is like gripping a jar except a small but heavy iron ball is used instead. These three external methods are not usually taught in most other schools.

But a superior force training method by a big margin for Tiger Claw training is "Fierce Tiger Cleanses Claws". This is an internal method and has to be personally taught by a master. I do not know whether Grandmaster Lam Sai Weng practiced this method. If he did he might not mention it as it was a secretive method.

Tiger Claw trained from external methods may result in a powerful grip. But Tiger Claw trained from "Fierce Tiger Cleanses Claws" enables a master to direct his chi from his Tiger Claw into an opponent's organs, meridians or any part of his inner body. In my sparring in my younger days, some opponents later reported to me that they left some form of electricity penetrating into their body making their limbs or the whole body numb even when I did not use much force.

I guess Grandmaster Lam Sai Weng did not practice Wave Breaking Hands as part of his Iron Wire training; he practiced it as a separate art. The standard of internal force and of combat was certainly higher in Grandmaster Lam Sai Weng's days.

Once I asked my sifu, Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, who was a professional Muay Thai champion himself, whom he thought would win in a fight between Wong Fei Hoong and a modern international Muay Thai champion. After thinking for about a minute he said that Wong Fei Hoong would win. His Tiger Claw was so powerful, my sifu explained, that a single sweep by Wong Fei Hoong would tear off a knee of the Muay Thai champion.

Question 6

1. Since we have the advantage of chi flow and being able to develop internal force from the first day, how long and what manner of practice would enable a Shaolin Wahnam student to reach the level of internal force of Wong Fei Hoong?

2. In Grandmaster Lam's Iron Wire book it says that it is possible to become 9 times your strength by practicing Iron Wire. What does this mean and how long and often do you think he practiced Iron Wire to attain that result?

3. What is your favourite story about Wong Fei Hoong?

Jas

Answer

Wong Fei Hoong's tiger-claw was very powerful. He trained everyday. He would have trained daily for 20 years to have his powerful tiger-claw. 20 years is 240 months. Let us say Wong Fei Hoong developed 1000 units of internal force per month. (We can allot any figure, and 1000 is an easy figure for calculation.). So in 29 years, presuming that the rate of progress was uniform, he would have 240,000 units of internal force for his tiger-claw.

Wong Fei Hoong developed 1000 units of internal force every month, but that did not mean he developed 33.3 units of internal force every day. This was because Wong Fei Hoong did not understand the philosophy of internal force training as we now do.

This, of course, is no slight to Wong Fei Hoong. Most masters, now and in the past, do not know the philosophy of internal force training. They just practice their techniques dedicatedly. This was also how I developed my internal force. It was after 17 years before I could feel some internal force. Our students now, with understanding of the philosophy of internal force building, can feel internal force on the very first day.

Wong Fei Hoong also did not feel internal force initially. It would be after many years before he could feel some internal force. Since the start of the accumulation

of his internal force, his accumulation was also not uniform on a monthly basis. In his initial years, the amount of internal force developed would be little, and far in between. As he became proficient in his tiger-claw training, the amount of internal force generated would be greater, and happened more frequently.

But for the sake of easy assessment, we presume his accumulation of internal force was uniform on a monthly basis. He developed 1000 units per month, but he did not develop 33.3 units every day because development did not occur every day; it occurred haphazardly whenever his practice became perfect, without his conscious knowing. Suppose such haphazard but perfect practice occurred 5 times a month, which is a reasonable estimate. So each time Wong Fei Hoong was successful, he developed 200 units of internal force, and it took him 20 years to develop his powerful tiger-claw with 240,000 units of internal force.

Because our Shaolin Wahnam student is able to generate a chi flow, which is a requirement to develop internal force, he can develop internal force every day. Suppose he is only half as clever as Wong Fei Hoong, and can develop 100 units of internal force a day instead of 200 unit. He will then develop 3000 units of internal force a month, or 340,000 units of internal force in 80 months. Thus he can reach the level of internal force of Wong Fei Hoong in about 6 to 7 years.

Becoming 9 times your strength by practicing Iron Wire means that when you are successful in training Iron Wire, you will be 9 times stronger than what you were before you started your training. If you have 10,000 units of internal force now, you will have 90,000 units of internal force after your successful Iron Wire training.

Like Wong Fei Hoong and all other masters, Lam Sai Weng's development in his force training using Iron Wire did not start on the first day, and the progress was not continuous when the development had started. For the first few years, there was probably no internal force. Later when he could generate a chi flow, but without his conscious knowing, he could accumulate his internal force, but even then it was still haphazard, but becoming more frequent as he progressed. I guess he would need about 10 years to be 9 times stronger than when he first started Iron Wire training.

Our students, with a clear understanding of internal force philosophy, will need less time. Basing on the same estimation we used for Wong Fei Hoong, our students will need about 3 to 4 years training Iron Wire successfully everyday to be 9 times stronger than they were before they started training.

Interestingly, my favourite story of Wong Fei Hoong is not about his kungfu, but about his use of language.

Wong Fei Hoong came back to his school holding a letter in his hand. Showing much excitement, his favourite student, Leong Fhun, asked his master in Cantonese.

“Sifu, hai mn hai yow kow ta?”

In English, it means, “Teacher-Father, are we going to have some fighting?”, thinking that the letter Wong Fei Hoong was holding in his hand was a challenge letter.

Wong Fei Hoong replied, “Ta ta ta lei kor tau”, which means “Fight, fight, fight your head.”

“Lei kor tau” or “your head” is usually used by women in an endearing manner.

It is interesting that a great kungfu master also spoke such feminine, and amusing, language.

My favourite story of Wong Fei Hoong concerning kungfu was when he fought with another master, while the elder brother of the other master was watching. The other master executed a tiger-tail kick at Wong Fei Hoong, which incidentally was Wong Fei Hoong’s specialty.

Wong Fei Hoong dodged the kick, and the other master rolled away. It appeared to be a draw.

Later, when Wong Fei Hoong had left, the other master said to his elder brother, who was also a kungfu master.

“I thought Wong Fei Hoong was a great fighter. But his kungfu was just so so.”

“Not just so so,” his brother replied. “Wong Fei Hoong let mercy roll from his hand!”

“What do you mean, Brother?”

“Have a look at the underside of your pant,” his elder brother replied.

The other master looked at the underside of his pant and was very surprised to find a big hole.

“How did this happen? Why was I not aware of his attack?”

“You’re still mong-sang-sang,” his elder brother said. “Mong-sang-sang” is an endearing term used to tell someone that he is foolishly ignorant.

“His tiger-claw tore off your pant as you rolled away,” his brother explained. “Had Wong Fei Hoong not been merciful, your clan-house would have disappeared.”

“Clan-house” is a Cantonese idiomatic expression meaning genitals. Without his genitals, the other master would not be able to produce children to carry on the lineage of his clan.

Question 7

So far I could enjoy many different force training methods which you generously taught on various courses.

One result of the Iron Wire set training which was outstanding was the tremendous mental clarity I could experience. Why do you think is that so?

You told me that the Iron Wire was evolved out from the Triple Stretch. The Triple stretch method on the other hand evolved from the Sinew Metamorphosis if I remember correctly. Could you please elaborate how the different exercises and skills interact with each other and how do you think the whole evolution process was taking place?

Sifu Roland

Answer

The wide range of force-training methods available in our school is unprecedented in kungfu history. In the past, even great masters had only one or two choices. Wong Fei Hoong, for example, derived his internal force from Iron Wire. There was no records of other great masters of this time, like Hou Yuan Jia, Dong Hai Chuan, Guo Yun Shen and Yang Deng Fu in South China. Hence, Wong Fei Hoong did not learn internal force methods like the Eighteen-Lohan Art, Baguazhang Walking, Santi Stance, and Taijiquan flowing force.

Wong Fei Hoong also trained tiger-claw using external methods like gripping jars and jabbing into beans, but there was no records of his training with such internal methods like Fierce Tiger Cleanses Claws, One-Finger Shooting Zen, and Lifting Water.

On the other hand, even when masters of other kungfu styles existed about the same time as in northern China in the 18th and 20th centuries, the masters only trained and taught the force-training methods of their own school. Practicing training methods or learning combat techniques of other schools was severely frowned upon. Hence, Huo Yun Jia developed his internal force only with his Eighteen-Lohan Art, Dong Hai Chuan with his Baguazhang Circle Walking, Guo Yun Shen with his Santi Stance, and Yang Deng Fu with his Grasping Sparrow's Tail.

These past masters did not practiced force-training methods outside their own style. But in our school we have all these great training methods!

How do we have these training methods? These great masters known for these training methods did not come to teach in our school. They did not come in person, but we obtained their teachings from their classics and literature written by their successors. Our learning from their teachings is made easier due to two important reasons.

All these training methods originated from Shaolin. Although the techniques and finer points might have evolved and were very different from the initial techniques, their basic principles were the same. For example, the techniques or outward forms of force training in Northern Shaolin, Baguazhang and Xingyiquan were very different, but basically they involved the same principles of consolidating energy using static posture, then letting the energy flow using movement.

The approach in Grasping Sparrow's Tail of Taijiquan was different. It involved letting energy flow right from the start, without first consolidating it, and generating more and more flow so that the flowing force became powerful. This approach and principle were also found in Shaolin, like in Cosmos Palm, Wuzuquan and Dragon Strength.

The second reason was that I had a good philosophical understanding and practical experience in all these various types of Shaolin force training. Hence, when I read the classics and relevant literature, I had no difficulty in trying out the force-training methods of these other styles.

There was another very important factor – the magic of chi flow. Chi flow sped up my results incredibly. When I practiced the methods mentioned in the classics, I did not have to wait for a few years to see results. I obtained the expected results in a very short time, often immediately.

How do we know that the internal force developed from these various methods were the same as the internal force taught by the past masters to their students? We compared the internal force we had with the internal force of the past masters as described in the classics, and found them to be the same. We also used the same training methods.

For example, it was described that a past Taijiquan master, despite his small size, could employ his flowing force to fell a bigger, stronger opponent. We could do that in our practice. It was described that a past Xingyiquan master could injure an opponent within inches. Although we did not apply our force on a real person, judging from the huge amount of destructive force we could generate within inches with which we could break a brick, we could reasonably conclude that we could cause much injury if applied on a person.

When I taught Iron Wire in Ireland, and a lot of students reported that they had tremendous mental clarity as a result of the training, I was initially quite surprised. I knew very well that training Iron Wire would produce tremendous internal force, but before this I did not know that training Iron Wire also produced tremendous mental clarity. This was not mentioned in the classics.

As you said in another context, once was an incident, twice was a co-incident, but when it happened 6 or 7 times a day, or in a course, it was natural. The same wonderful result happened in subsequent Iron Wire courses in Barcelona, Lisbon and Las Vegas. With these empirical results, we can reasonably conclude that training Iron Wire in our school produce tremendous internal force and tremendous mental clarity.

Based on my understanding of internal force philosophy, I can think of two good reasons why Iron Wire training produces tremendous mental clarity. We have to clear our mind of thoughts when training Iron Wire. Clearing the mind of thoughts is attaining mental clarity.

We clear our mind of thoughts, or attain mental clarity, every time we train any internal art, but it is in Iron Wire that this requirement is most urgent. If our mind is troubled by myriad thoughts, not only we fail to develop internal force but also we may derive adverse side-effects. This urgency in clearing the mind of thoughts contributes much to attaining mental clarity in Iron Wire training.

The second reason is that the tremendous internal force we have developed strengthens not only our body, but also our emotions, intellect and spirit. We experience this benefit clearly in advanced arts like Cosmic Shower and Small Universe.

Classifying a person into four dimensions of the physical, the emotional, the mental and the spiritual is a Western concept. In the Chinese concept, a person is a person is classified into two dimensions, the body and the heart, with the emotional, mental and spiritual aspects belong to the heart. It is not the organ heart. In Western language, it is the mind. When the mind is strength, it has better mental clarity. Thus, training Iron Wire, which produces tremendous internal force also produces tremendous mental clarity.

The Iron Wire Set was invented by a great Shaolin master, Thiet Kiew Sam. Thiet Kiew Sam learned from the Venerable Cheng Chao, who in turn learned from the Venerable Sam Tuck. Sam Tuck was the second most senior disciple of the Venerable Chee Seen, the First Patriarch of Southern Shaolin Kungfu, and also one of the two First Patriarchs of our Shaolin Wahnam lineage, the other being the Venerable Jiang Nan.

Sam Tuck's specialty was the Triple-Stretch Set. He taught the Triple-Stretch to Cheng Chao, who in turn taught it to Thiet Kiew Sam. Judging from the way is

consolidated in Iron Wire as well as this historical link, it is justifiable to conclude that based his invention of Iron Wire mainly on Triple-Stretch.

The great Bodhidharma taught two sets of internal exercises at the northern Shaolin Temple in Henan, the Eighteen Lohan Hands and Sinew Metamorphosis. After practicing any exercises from these two sets of internal arts for a long time, practitioners advanced to the level where chi flowed in their bone marrow. This invisible skill, which could be attained via any visible techniques, was called Bone-Marrow Cleansing.

The techniques of Eighteen Lohan Hands later evolved into Eighteen Lohan Fist, which was the prototype of Shaolin Kungfu. The Eighteen Lohan Hands also separately evolved into the Eighteen-Lohan Art, which provided internal force training for Northern Shaolin kungfu practitioners.

The principle of consolidating force in Sinew Metamorphosis led to the development of many internal force training methods, like Golden Bridge, Lohan Carrying Water, and Hanging Double Hooks.

It is significant to note that it was the force training principle, and not the outward techniques, that was transmitted from Sinew Metamorphosis to the various internal force training methods. The outward form of Golden Bridge, Lohan Carrying Water and Hanging Double Hooks are different from any patterns from Sinew Metamorphosis. But despite the difference in their outward forms, the inner principle of consolidating force is the same. In all the methods mentioned above which drew their inspiration from Sinew Metamorphosis, the main principle was to remain quiescent in a static form to allow energy to be consolidated.

But the techniques of Sinew Metamorphosis, while consolidating force like “locking” the wrist in Flicking Fingers, and bending the elbows in Turning Elbows, also involved much movement. In Flicking Fingers, for example, the fingers were flicked, and in Turning Elbows, the elbows were turned.

This concept led to masters realizing that while consolidating energy they must also let the energy flow. (Otherwise the locked energy would become muscles.) This led to the development of internal force training methods like One-Finger Shooting Zen, Double Dragons Emerge from Sea, and Double Worshipping of the Buddha.

It is significant to note that historical writings did not describe Sinew Metamorphosis being practiced at the two southern Shaolin Temples at Quanzhou and on the Nine-Lotus Mountain. Yet, southern Shaolin masters known to us today, like Sam Tuck, Hoong Hei Khoon and Tong Chin Kern were well known for their internal force.

I guess that Chee Seen did not teach Sinew Metamorphosis at the southern Shaolin Temple on the Nine-Lotus Mountain, but taught internal force training methods, which were incorporated into kungfu sets, like Single Dragon Emerges

from Sea and Double Dragons Emerge from Sea. On the other hand, Ng Mui taught Double Worshipping of the Buddha to Yim Wing Choon and Fong Sai Yoke.

These internal force training methods, I believe, were transmitted from the concept of consolidating and flowing force from Sinew Metamorphosis practiced in the northern Shaolin Temple in Henan, and developed in the southern Shaolin Temple in Quanzhou.

Sam Tuck's and Hoong Hei Khoon's specialty was the Triple-Stretch Set. Thiet Kiew Sam, who invented the Iron Wire Set, was descended from the lineage of Sam Tuck. Later, Thiet Kiew Sam met his sisookgung, Hoong Hei Khoon who taught him the finer points of the Triple-Stretch.

All these various internal force training methods are interrelated and they interact. All of them involve consolidating force and flowing force, though in some methods practitioners consolidate force first, then let it flow, and in others, they generate flowing force first, then consolidate it. The proportion between consolidated force and flowing force is also different in the different methods.

In Iron Wire, for example, almost 100% of the training is consolidating force. On the other range, 100% of Grasping Sparrow's Tail training, which is in Taijiquan and not Shaolin Kungfu though Taijiquan originated from Shaolin, is flowing force. It is easy to practice wrongly in Iron Wire, but when practiced correctly the force developed is powerful and fast. It is not easy to practice wrong in Grasping Sparrow's Tail, but when practiced correctly it takes a long time to develop force and the force is relatively little.

Because of our wide understanding and deep experience in internal force training, we may modify the methods to be more cost-effective. In the Internal Force course at UK Summer Camp 2014, we shall first learn the orthodox methods of flowing force and consolidating force, then modify them, with clear understanding of what we are doing, to get better results.

These different force training methods also interact. For us, because of our chi flow and our understanding of their basic philosophy, the more varied we have trained in the different methods, the more cost effective we shall be. For example, if we have trained flowing force in Grasping Sparrow's Tail, we shall be more cost-effective when we consolidate force in Iron Wire. On the other hand, if we have trained consolidating force in Iron Wire, we shall be more cost-effective when we let force flow in Grasping Sparrow's Tail.

This amazing benefit of breadth and depth is unique to us in Shaolin Wahnam. In other schools, including myself when I trained internal force, practitioners have to focus on one method at a time. Practicing more than one method will cancel the benefit of one another.

Question 8

Sifu, would you please elaborate on the similarities, varieties and differences between the One Finger Zen techniques in Hoong Ka Kung Fu:

- Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge
 - One-Finger Stabilizes Empire (in 2 character stance using the triple stretch method and in sideways horse stance)
 - Double Dragon Emerges from Sea (here with One Finger Zen hand form)
 - Circulating Soft Bridge
 - Bow Arrow Threads Bridge
 - Finger Fist Double Shine (in Iron Wire)
- and compare it to One Finger Shooting Zen?

Based on this comparison, is it necessary or recommended to keep training One Finger Shooting Zen separately too?

Sifu Leonard Lackinger

Answer

Congratulations for asking a thoughtful question which indicates deep understanding of the intricacies of kungfu. The question requires a refined answer. Not only it needs much insight to answer it, it also requires much perception to ask the question.

All the patterns mentioned, which can be found in picture-series of the respective kungfu sets shown on my website, employ the One-Finger Zen hand form. But there are subtle differences amongst the various patterns, otherwise there is no need for the different patterns other than for variety or for exhibition.

Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge is also found in the signature greeting of Sifu Hoi Fatt Nam's school. When I first learned it, I was surprised at the internal force it created. It was the first pattern in a kungfu set that generated internal force for me.

My first pattern that generated internal force was Lifting the Sky, the very first pattern I learned from Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, though at the time the force was not substantial that I did not notice it. I was aware of the internal force only with hindsight.

The next pattern that I felt internal force, the first one that I learned that led me later to feel internal force quite noticeably, was One-Finger Shooting Zen. My sifu taught me individual patterns. This, I believe, was the tradition at the Shaolin Temple in the past. Only after teaching me some basic patterns, the onus of which was to develop internal force, that my sifu taught me my first kungfu set, Four Gates. Hence I could

feel remarkable internal force when I learned Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge in the signature greeting. This pattern, Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge, was the first pattern I felt internal force clearly.

I learned Lifting the Sky first, but I was aware of internal force generated by this pattern only much later when I taught chi kung to the public. I learned One-Finger Shooting Zen next. It was this pattern that I first realized generate internal force. Then I learned Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge. This was the first pattern in a kungfu set that I felt internal force remarkably.

Had I not practiced One-Finger Shooting Zen, I would not have felt internal force the first time I performed Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge. Without One-Finger Shooting Zen, I would still generate internal force using Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge but it would take a much longer time, probably half a year instead of the first time performing it.

Had I not learned Lifting the Sky first, I would not have developed internal force using One-Finger Shooting Zen in less than a month. Without Lifting the Sky, I would still develop internal force with One-Finger Shooting Zen, but it would take a longer time, probably in three months.

I did not know this philosophical background at the time I trained these arts. As a good student I just trained the way my sifu so generously and kindly taught me. From this experience, confirmed by experiences of many students later on, we may conclude that I was cost-effective in developing internal force because I first generated an energy flow with Lifting the Sky, then consolidated internal force, while keeping the force flowing, using One-Finger Shooting Zen. As a result, my internal force manifested in Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge.

I do not think my sifu knew of this philosophical background, otherwise, based on his way of teaching and his generosity in sharing knowledge and benefit with deserving students, he would have told me. He just followed the Shaolin tradition of teaching that had been perfected through practice over many centuries. I also do not think past masters knew of this philosophical knowledge. It was not mentioned in classics, not even in an arcane manner.

Hence, we may be creating history of knowledge regarding internal force training. We do not create practice. The practice was already there over centuries. But we add to the rich collection of knowledge, which in the past was kept secretive. With this knowledge we can be very cost-effective in internal force training. We have to thank Leo for asking the question which led me to crystalize the knowledge.

Both Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge and One-finger Shooing Zen use the One-Finger Zen Form and both develop internal force. Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge in Wong Fei Hoong's lineage is performed standing upright in Wuji Stance, whereas

Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge in Sifu Ho Fatt Nam's school is performed in a Horse-Riding Stance like One-Finger Shooting Zen.

Due to the structure of the arms in relation to the body, performing Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge, especially in a Horse-Riding Stance, produces more consolidated force than performing One-Finger Shooting Zen. If a practitioner is not familiar with flowing force, he may perform Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge as an isometric exercise, thus producing big muscles. This deviation, though possible, is less likely in One-finger Shooting Zen.

The same pattern performed in a Two-Character Stance (or standing upright with feet together) is called One-Finger Stabilizes Empire in Wong Fei Hoong's lineage, but One-Finger Shooting Zen (standing upright) in our school. We reserve the name One-Finger Stabilizes Empire when the pattern is performed with the One-Finger Zen extended sideways in a sideways Horse-Riding Stance as in Wong Fei Hoong's lineage.

One-Finger Shooting Zen standing upright was first introduced by me as an expedient means to help students at Intensive Shaolin Kungfu Courses when teaching One-Finger Shooting Zen seated on a Horse-Riding Stance. I found some students unable to remain at the Horse-Riding Stance long enough to learn the whole sequence of One-Finger Shooting Zen.

I asked them to stand upright first when learning the whole sequence. When they are familiar with the sequence, I asked them to perform the sequence on a Horse-Riding Stance. Incidentally, I found that without enduring the rigor of the Horse-Riding Stance, the students could generate a chi flow more easily when standing upright. Hence, starting One-Finger Shooting Zen by first standing upright, and later progressing to performing it on a Horse-Riding Stance is not only more pleasant and less enduring, but actually produces better result.

One-Finger Stabilizes Empire performed on a sideways Horse-Riding Stance produced more consolidated force than One-Finger Shooting Zen performed on a frontal Horse-Riding Stance. This is applicable when the practitioner already has internal force. If he does not already have internal force, it takes much longer time to develop internal force using One-Finger Stabilizes Empire than using One-Finger Shooting Zen. This is probably the reason why One-Finger Stabilizes Empire is not normally used as a force-training method, except in Eighteen Lohan Hands when it resembles Shooting Arrows Left and Right.

In our school Double Dragons Emerge from Sea is performed with dragon hand form, but in Wong Fei Hoong's lineage it is performed with One-finger Zen hand forms. There is some fine difference in the force produced due to the difference hand forms being employed. Using the dragon hand forms focuses on consolidating force, whereas using the One-finger Zen hand forms focuses on flowing force.

When both hands are used, as in Double Dragons Emerge from Sea, the flow of energy is over more of the whole body, whereas when only one hand is used at a time, force flows along that hand but there is more focus on the flowing force.

Circulating Soft Bridge is one of my favorites, though I did not use it as an internal force training method. When I first performed it in the Dragon Strength Set, I did so mechanically, and produced neither internal force nor external strength. But when I performed the same pattern again in Dragon Strength after I had developed internal force from training with Sifu Ho Fatt Nam, the internal force generated from this pattern was tremendous.

I had an aha experience realizing why the pattern was called Circulating Soft Bridge, because the force I generated, while tremendously powerful, was distinctly soft. The name excellently described the nature and function of the pattern.

Words may not describe the experience clearly; when I perform One-Finger Shooting Zen I feel my force flowing, but when I perform Circulating Soft Force I feel my force circulating. Relatively the force in One-Finger Shooting Zen is hard, whereas that in Circulating Soft Force is soft. Yet, the soft force is tremendously more powerful.

In Bow-Arrow Threads Bridge, the One-Finger Zen hand form is employed to develop internal force while sitting on a Bow-Arrow Stance, whereas in One-Finger Shooting Zen, the One-Finger Zen hand form is employed to develop internal force while sitting on a Horse-Riding Stance. Yet, the force developed is quite different. In One-Finger Shooting Zen, the force developed is holistic, whereas in Bow-Arrow Threads Bridge the force developed is localized at the arms and hands. This is probably due to the different stances.

Secondly, the hand movement in Bow-Arrow Threads Bridge is “threading”, and the force travels from down to up. The hand movement in One-Finger Shooting Zen is “dotting”, and the force travels from up to down. The force in Bow-Arrow Threads Bridge is focused at the finger-thrust, whereas in One-Finger Shooting Zen it is focused on the dotting finger. Relatively the force in Bow-Arrow Threads Bridge is hard, whereas that in One-Finger Shooting Zen is soft.

In Finger-Fist Double Shine in the Iron Wire Set, the force at the finger and its arm is soft, whereas the force at the fist and its arm is hard. It is a manifestation of yin-yang harmony, with yin on one side and yang on the other. In One-Finger Shooting Zen, the force at the finger and arm can be hard or soft, or hard and soft, depending on the mind of the practitioner that directs and controls the flow aspect and the consolidating aspect of force training. Here is yin-yang manifestation at a higher level.

Although it is not necessary, it is highly recommended to keep training One-Finger Shooting Zen.

Without One-Finger Shooting Zen we can develop internal force using many other methods. But the nature and function of force developed from these other methods are different from those of One-Finger Shooting Zen. Comparatively, the force in these other methods are thematic, whereas that in One-Finger Shooting Zen is holistic.

In Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge, for example, the force is focused at the arms, and in Bow-Arrow Threads Bridge, the force is focused at the fingers. In One-Finger Shooting Zen, the force is stored at the dan tian, to be channeled to wherever it is needed.

This does not mean that skillful practitioners cannot store force from Triple Stretching of Pearl Bridge and from Bow-Arrow Threads Bridge at the dan tian, or focus force from One-Finger Shooting Zen at the finger. Indeed, I found the signature greeting of Sifu Ho Fatt Nam's lineage extremely useful because right at the start of any kungfu set, the greeting pattern set chi flowing all over the body, then accumulated at the dan tian to be channeled to wherever was needed in the performance of the set.

On the other hand, One-Finger Shooting Zen is a choice training method for dim mark, or the advanced art of dotting energy point, where chi is focused at the finger for this function, though initially chi has to be stored at the dan tian. Nevertheless, relatively speaking, the force of these other training methods is thematic, whereas that of One-Finger Shooting Zen is holistic.

Moreover, One-Finger Shooting Zen makes training all other methods more cost-effective. In other words, if a practitioner straight away starts with any other force training method, like Arrow-Bridge Threads Bridge or Double Dragons Emerge from Sea, he will take more effort and a long time to attain the same amount of internal force than had he practiced One-Finger Shooting Zen first.

Also, if a practitioner only practices any one other force training method he will take more effort and a longer time to attain the same amount of internal force than had he trained One-Finger Shooting Zen too even if he did not train One-Finger Shooting Zen first. This is because One-Finger Shooting Zen involves both methods of force training, namely flowing force and consolidating force.

In both cases, the practitioner will get even better benefit if he already is able to generate an energy flow, having practiced such chi kung exercises like Lifting the Sky or Carrying the Moon.

When we mention that our typical students can develop internal force in a matter of months whereas even masters in the past took years, it is understandable that people outside our school do not believe us, even when they may not openly

accuse us as being arrogant and boastful. Actually our claim is very conservative and we are being modest.

In a regional Wing Choon course in Barcelona yesterday, typical students developed internal force and distinctly felt it on the very first day of their training. It took me 17 years before I had my first experience of internal force! A main reason for this huge time difference is because at the time of my training I did not have a clear understanding of the underlying philosophy of internal force training, but now having understood how internal force is built, I apply it directly to help my students.

Your questions further probe into this interesting and beneficial philosophy. It is very beneficial because internal force does not only enhance our kungfu performance, but more significantly maintains life, enhances life and enables us to produce better results no matter what we do! When you eat your breakfast, for example, your internal force enables you to taste it better and digest it well. When you take your girlfriend out on a date, your internal force gives you vitality and emotional balance to ensure her to have an enjoyable time.

Question 9

Could you please tell me how Wong Fei Hung lived his life, trained and became so well known throughout the world?

Dominic.

Answer

Wong Fei Hoong was the son of Wong Kai Ying, regarded as one of the Ten Tigers of South China. Wong Kai Ying learned Shaolin Kungfu from Loh Ah Choy, one of the top disciples of the Venerable Chee Seen, the First Patriarch of Southern Shaolin Kungfu.

Wong Fei Hoong learned kungfu from his father. Later he learned the Iron Wire Set from Lam Fook Seng, who was a student of Thiet Kiew Sam, a disciple of the Venerable Cheng Choe, who in turn learned from the Venerable Sam Tuck, the second most senior disciple of the Venerable Chee Seen. Hence, Wong Fei Hoong's kungfu is similar to ours through the lineage of Chee Seen, which means "Extreme Kindness".

Wong Fei Hoong spent most of his time in Foshan, meaning "Mountain of Buddha", which is not a mountain but an important city in the province of Guangdong. Wong Fei Hoong was also well known for his lion dance.

There are two types of lion dance, northern lion dance and southern lion dance. There are also two types of southern lion dance, one of which is called Foshan Lion, and the other Hokshan Lion. Hokshan means "Mountain of Cranes". Wong Fei Hoong, being in Foshan, of course performed the Foshan Lion.

Wong Fei Hoong set up a medical clinic called "Po Chi Lam", which may be loosely translated as "Forest of Precious Mushrooms". There is a special kind of mushrooms called "ling chi", which means "spiritual mushrooms" and are believed to promote longevity. What were found in Wong Fei Hoong's Po Chi Lam, of course, were not hordes of precious mushrooms but hordes of poor people coming for "tit ta" treatment.

"Tit ta", which is in Cantonese pronunciation, literally means "fall-hit". In Romanized Chinese spoken in Mandarin, which means the language of court officials it is written as "die da". Interestingly in China today Mandarin is called "pu-tong-hua", which means the language of the common people, not only of court officials.

But do not be frightened by the term "die da". In the language of the common people of China, "die da" is pronounced like "thiet ta" in English, and has nothing to do with the English word "die". If you think that Romanized Chinese phonetics is funny, you are mistaken. It is English phonetics that is full of fun.

"D" in Romanized Chinese is always pronounced as "t" with an aspiration. So don't pronounce "Daoism" as Daoism, but as Taoism, just as "qigong" is not pronounced as ki gong but as chi kung, and "gongfu" not as gongfu but as kungfu. So patients with injuries from falls and being hit went to the "Forest of Precious Mushrooms" not to die but to seek treatment so that they could live, hopefully to a ripe old age.

Besides being a great martial artist, Wong Fei Hoong was a renowned medical doctor. However, there was no records that he passed his medical knowledge and ability to his disciples. Wong Fei Hoong was a medical doctor and martial art instructor to the army of a warlord, Lau Weng Fook, who stationed at Canton at that time. Wong Fei Hoong was also a martial art instructors to the Canton civil guards.

Wong Fei Hoong, like most past masters, practiced his kungfu secretly, not in front of his students, in the early morning every day. Once his disciples longed to know the secrets of his no-shadow kick So they tip-toed into the master's bedroom at night while he was asleep, and Leong Foon, his most favorite disciple, pretended to attack him. Wong Fei Hoong executed a no-shadow kick using "Lazy Tiger Stretches Waist" and sent Leong Foon trampling back many feet.

Fortunately Wong Fei Hoong's "tit-ta" was excellent. After recovery, Wong Fei Hoong taught Leong Foon the tiger-tail kick. Later in a leitai match, i.e. a challenge match on a public platform with no rules, Leong Foon used the tiger-tail kick to defeat a well-known master in Canton.

Of the countless students Wong Fei Hoong taught in the army and civil guards, only a few excelled and became well-known. They were Leong Foon, Lam Sai Weng, Ling Wan Kai and Kwai Kheot Cheit. Kwai Kheot Cheit was his nickname, which means “Ghost Leg Seven”. He was probably the seventh in his family, and his kicks were so effective that like a ghost his opponents did not know where they came from.

Wong Fei Hoong’s key teaching was tolerance. He forbade his students to fight. Training kungfu, he maintained, was for health. He also emphasized being a good citizen.

Wong Fei Hoong’s life history was made into about 100 movie films, making him very famous. There is a saying in kungfu circles that “In the north there is Fok Yun Kap, in the south there is Wong Fei Hoong”, or “pak yow fok yun kap, nam yow wong fei hoong” in Cantonese. Fok Yun Kap, or Huo Yun Jia in Mandarin, was a famous Tantui master and founder of Chin Woo Athlete Association to promote Northern Shaolin. He remained undefeated, beating many martial art masters of various systems who came to China to test her kungfu. However, Fok Yun Kap and Wong Fei Hoong never met. Unlike Fok Yun Kap, Wong Fei Hoong lived to a ripe old age.

Question 10

In my experience sparring with other martial artists, I have come across several exponents who are very fast and powerful, with near-instant reflexes and adaptability. Apart from the fact that they are naturally gifted with such athletic abilities, they have told me that their speed and power are developed through what we would call external training methods.

As Sifu has mentioned before, someone learning a more complex art like Taijiquan or high level Shaolinquan would take longer to reach a high level of combat efficiency compared to an art with less techniques. The same principle seems to apply to the training of force as well – a martial artist using external methods can attain quite a high level of power, even if he may be overtaken in the long run by someone training internal force methods.

Following from the paragraphs above, I have two questions, related to each other:

(1) For a Shaolin exponent who primarily trains using internal training methods, how substantial should his internal force have to be before it is comparable to that of a competent and diligent external martial artist?

(2) An external martial artist who seeks to increase his strength and power would use progressions such as using heavier and heavier weights, spending more time or repetitions, or training more frequently.

How would an internal martial artist like Wong Fei Hong progress if he wants to increase his internal force or be able to apply his internal force in more ways, such as improving his speed and reflexes?

Sifu Zhang Wuji

Answer

We have no doubt of and respect for the ability of those who use external training methods. Personally I have more respect for their dedication to their arts than for those who have the opportunity to excel in internal training but do not train as dedicatedly.

Nevertheless, we also realize the limitations of external training. I can speak from experience as I have used both external methods and internal methods. The external methods I used, fortunately, were not the rough and tough methods used by many external martial artists today which left the trained parts of their body deformed or injured because I used medication in my external training.

The external martial artists may be fast and powerful, and have near-instant reflexes and adaptability, but it is doubtful if they can attain abilities of internal martial artists like catching arrows shot at them, deflecting attacks even when blind-folded, or running up four storeys in less than 8 seconds without panting.

Some people may not believe that internal kungfu masters could catch arrows shot at them, but there is no doubt internal martial artists can deflect attacks even when blind-folded or run up four storeys in less than 8 seconds without panting. Students at the Special Wing Choon Course in Penang in 2010 and I many years ago did that respectively.

Generally it takes a longer time to train internal arts than external arts. This is the traditional, and current, perspective of masters. An internal martial artist training Cosmos Palm, for example, would take a year to attain similar force that an external martial artist training Iron Palm would take 6 months to break a brick.

However, the force of an internal martial artist would last longer than that of an external martial artist. For example, presuming that both the Cosmos Palm exponent and the Iron Palm exponent stop training after successfully breaking a brick, the Cosmos Palm exponent can still break a brick after six months without training whereas the Iron Palm exponent can do so only for a month or two.

There are many other benefits internal martial artists enjoy that external martial artists do not. A Cosmos Palm exponent, for example, is not only powerful at his palms but all over his body, whereas an Iron Palm exponent is only powerful at his palms. The force of Cosmos Palm can also be used to heal, whereas that of Iron Palm is only to destroy.

More significantly, internal force training contributes to good health, vitality and longevity, but external force training does not. An internal martial artist, for example, would have more stamina and mental clarity as a result of his training, but an external martial artist does not. Moreover, internal force is not limited to age, size and gender, but external force is. A slender woman of 60 with internal force, for example, can be a bulky young man of 30.

The chance to train internal force is rare. Many masters have spent years chasing at internal force but to no avail. Our school is a ridiculous exception.

In my many years of teaching, I have made some amazing discoveries that may revolutionize internal force training. It is traditionally accepted that internal force training takes a longer time than external force training. But I have found that many of our students using internal training have developed force that surpasses external martial artists who have trained in a similar or even longer period of time!

My own examples illustrate the journey of these exciting discoveries. When I trained in Uncle Righteousness' school, I hit a wooden man every night for a year, and applied medicated vinegar to strengthen my arms. My arms were powerful – compared to most people.

But when I learned Wuzuquan in Sifu Chee Kim Thong's school, which was famous for internal force, my arms were literally nothing compared to the arms of my seniors. I had no idea how long they had trained, but I was sure it might be more than three years, or perhaps ten. This experience confirmed not only that internal force was superior but also it took more time to develop.

When I learned in Sifu Ho Fatt Nam's school, I trained One-finger Shooting Zen. After a few months I could break a brick, which I could not do training Iron Palm for two years. This experience could not confirm that I took less time training internal force in One-Finger Shooting Zen than external force in Iron Palm because my external force of Iron Palm could have been carried over to my One-Finger Shooting Zen training.

However, the confirmation was quite clear when I knocked arms with a Shaolin master who trained external force dedicatedly. This external Shaolin master tried to impress me by hitting his Iron Arm at a pillar which supported a car porch in front of his house, and the porch literally shook. Finding that I was not impressed by his show of force, he asked me to knock arms with him in "Hitting Tree Stars".

He could only last two hits. When I gently swung my arm down for the third hit, he had already moved away. My internal force bounced him off. The harder he hit at me, the worse would be the bouncing off. I did not know for how long he had trained externally for his Iron Arm. I guessed it could be ten or more years. I had about three years of internal force training, and even when I added my two previous years of Iron Palm training, the total would only be five years.

Another telling but unexpected experience was from who an Aikido student learned from me. He wanted to increase the force of his grip, so I taught him One-Finger Shooting Zen, which included Tiger Claw training. He reported to me that after about six months of daily training, he visited a kungfu school well known for internal force. He told me that he was very surprised at first that he could last about 30 hits knocking arms with the master. Before learning from me, he also knocked arms with the master, but he could not last five hits. What was even more surprising was that the master, not him, who eventually gave way. The master must have trained his internal force for more than ten years.

Internal force was involved in both persons in this case. But it showed that our training of internal force was so effective that after only six months of training the internal force of this Aikido student surpassed that of the master who had trained for many years. And I taught this student at a time when my teaching methodology was far below that of today.

With hindsight I would conclude that our internal force training is so incredibly effective because of chi flow. We have chi flow right at the start of our internal force training, and we know the philosophy as well as have the techniques and skills of flowing force and consolidating force. Past masters did not know the philosophy. Their chi flow as well as flowing force and consolidating force occurred haphazardly, even when they trained everyday. Thus they took a much longer time to develop their internal force.

The concept becomes clear when we use some quantification. Suppose our students develop 100 units of internal force for each successful session a day. Training every day, and presuming the progress is uniform, our students would develop 3000 units of internal force a month.

When past master trained internal force as students, they were less effective and would not develop 100 units of force per successful session as they did not know that chi flow was necessary to develop flowing force and consolidated force. For them chi flow occurred incidentally when they attained an ideal condition without conscious knowing, not purposely like in our case. Suppose they obtained 50 units of internal force when such occasions occurred, which is a generous estimate for them.

But they would not have a successful session every day like our students. Suppose a successful session where conditions incidentally became ideal occurred six times

a month, which is a reasonable estimate. But they would not have developed 50 x 6 or 300 units of internal force, because the days were too far apart for their internal force to be accumulated even when they practiced everyday. In other words, having obtained 50 units of force in one session, by the time they attained internal force in the next successful session, which was five days away, much of the original 50 units would have dissipated.

Let us be generous and estimate that only half of the force had dissipated, leaving them 150 units of force a month, or 1800 units of force a year. It would take them more than a year and a half to accumulate 3000 units of force, which our students can accumulate in one month!

On top of this, students in the past did not get to learn internal force in their early years of training. Only a very few of them who had spent at least ten years in the school and had won the trust of the master before they could have an opportunity to train internal force. Again, let us be generous and presume a dedicated, talented student had won the trust of the master in just five years, and took ten years to develop sufficient internal force to become a master himself, taking 15 years altogether, which actually was an exceptionally short time to become a master. But a dedicated student in our school today will take only one year to attain a similar level. This is unbelievable but true.

The standard of martial art today is lower than that in the past. If we assume that a competent and diligent external martial artist today has a level of force, even externally trained, comparable to the internal force of a talented and dedicated master in the past, a Shaolin student in our school today will need a year of dedicated daily training using internal methods to acquire a similar amount of force.

It is important to note that this student must train daily, not just learn the internal force training methods in a course and expect to have substantial force a year later without training. If he trains about an hour a day for a year, he would have substantial force to break a brick easily, and perhaps to break the bottom of two bricks without breaking the one on top. As the skull of an external martial artist is unlikely to be harder than a brick, and his internal organs even weaker, a strike by our student on the head of the external martial artist would break the latter's skull, and a strike on his body would injure his internal organs without leaving external marks.

An internal martial artist like Wong Fei Hoong would increase his internal force by training longer or by adding weights in his training, like wearing copper rings on his arms when training Iron Wire.

But for us in Shaolin Wahnam, there is no necessity to train longer or add weights in our training, because our methods and skills are already very effective. Indeed we remind ourselves and ask our students to slow down our training so as not to over-train.

An internal martial artist needs not seek other methods to apply his internal force in more ways, like improving his speed or reflexes. Unlike external strength, which is limited in its specific function, internal force is alive.

Besides maintaining his life more harmoniously, an increase of internal force will automatically enhance his life, including enhancing his reflexes, and enable him to have better results no matter what he does, including increasing his speed. In other words, not only he does not need to practice other methods to apply his internal force in more ways, including to improve his speed and reflexes, he also does not need to learn how to channel his internal force for these more ways. As an analogy, if you increase your cash flow, there is no need for you to learn new methods to be able to buy more things. The increase of cash flow will automatically enable you to buy more things.

As a confirmation, there were no records of how Wong Fei Hoong or any past master trained to increase his speed and reflexes or any other abilities. Wong Fei Hoong, for example, did not ask his students to attack him systematically faster and faster so that he could train his speed and reflexes. As his internal force increases, his speed and reflexes also increased automatically.

In our case, for example, an increase of our internal force automatically increases our mental clarity and vitality, and enables us to do our work better in shorter time. We do not need to take extra lessons on mental clarity or take extra nourishment to increase our vitality. We do not need to learn new working techniques or purchase new machines to do our work better in shorter time.

Question 11

In Hong Kong movies, Wong Feihong is often portrayed as being able to handle multiple armed assailants, and seems to have eyes at the back of his head. A lot of this may be due to exciting choreography by the martial arts director but I have wondered to what extent a real-life Shaolinquan practitioner would be able to do the same.

Sifu, you have described in your books and Q&A that you have had experiences when a fight seemed to be in slow-motion and you had the time to select appropriate counters. This phenomenon (Tachypsychia) is well-documented in scientific journals as well as the accounts of the experiences of world-class athletes, soldier-warriors, policemen and firemen, although scientists attribute this to rapid chemical (hormonal) changes in the body in response to stressful situations.

It seems to me that these abilities – all-round awareness and slowing down real-time events in the mind – would be pivotal to victory not only in life and

death combat, but also friendly sparring. Are such abilities only possessed by a select few, such as those well-trained elite athletes and soldiers, or can these abilities be cultivated as part of our current training methods?

Sifu Zhang Wuji

Answer

It was true that a real-life Shaolin master could sense attacks from his back and successfully neutralize his assailants. This was possible because the master's energy field extended beyond his physical body, and when an attack came even before the master saw it, his energy field had picked up the sensation, and without his conscious reaction, his reflexive movements would counter the attack.

I sometimes had such experiences when teaching. I paused in a sparring demonstration to explain some points to other students, but the one sparring with me did not realize that I had stopped, and he continued to attack me. Without even seeing his attack, I warded it off while giving an explanation. It was my energy field that had picked up the attack, and my response was spontaneous and automatic. Many students had seen such experiences during intensive or regional courses.

More advanced than the projected energy field is the projected mind field. Some students reported to me that during intensive courses they knew what attacks their sparring partners would make before the attack actually came. The students' mind field had extended beyond their physical body, and could pick up the intention of their sparring partners before the latter made the physical moves.

In my younger days of sparring and actual fighting, I often could sense my opponents' movements without seeing them, and responded accordingly. When I was attacked by a group of people, for example, I responded without thinking. My movements seemed to operate by themselves, without conscious effort on my part, and the responses were fast and accurate. When I looked back after the fight, I found my earlier spontaneous movements were perfect. If I had time to think, like in friendly sparring when movements were purposely slowed down, I would have responded exactly in the same way.

With hindsight, I concluded that my spontaneous and fast movements in an actual fight against many people were possible because I had trained myself earlier assuming similar situations. Had I not done similar training previously, I might not be able to respond spontaneously in a similar way in a real fight.

I had an aha experience many years ago while working on a WordPerfect programme (at a time when Microsoft Word was not yet invented). I had to make a change at numerous places in a document. So I typed "Find", which located the places where changes had to be made, and then typed "Replace".

Before I could look up from the computer, all the corrections had been made. I suddenly realize that such a fast, automatic correction was possible at so many places because a programmer had programmed the computer to do this work. In the same way I had programmed myself in my practice to respond to attacks in certain ways. When a situation arose that required similar responses, I triggered my mind and the programmed responses just flowed out spontaneously.

ights and sparring occurring to me in slow motion when they were fast in real time sometimes happened in my younger days, but they don't happen now. I don't know the reason for their absence. A few students in our school also told me their similar experience.

It was very interesting. As the movements slowed down in my perception although they were fast in real time, I could deliberate which of a few possible responses I would choose. In normal fighting situation, I would not have time to think. I just spontaneously responded the way I had trained to.

I believe that attributing this phenomenon to rapid chemical changes in response to stressful situations is inaccurate, made through rationalization and not through direct experience. In other words I doubt those scientists making this presumption had direct experience of the phenomenon. If they had, they would realize that being relaxed was essential. Had a practitioner been stressful, such a phenomenon would not occur.

These abilities of all-round awareness and slowing down real-time events in the mind are certainly a huge advantage a practitioner, but it may not necessarily guarantee victory in fighting, sparring or everyday life if the opponent is very skillful.

I may be aware of an opponent's attack and respond accordingly even if I may not see the attack, but a skillful opponent regardless of whether I saw his initial attack earlier, could neutralize my response, or modify his initial attack and continue to attack me.

Even my opponent's real-time attack is slowed down in my mind, thus giving me a huge advantage, like giving me more time and better judgment in my response, my opponent would just react to my response, without bothering whether my response was made due to seeing his attack in real time or being slowed down in my mind.

My abilities in both cases of all-round awareness and slowing down events in the mind make it easier for me not to be beaten by my opponent, but they do not make it easier for me to beat him. On my opponent's part in defeating me, it does not matter whether my response is the result of these special abilities, he just reacts to my response. If he is more skillful, he will still beat me despite my special abilities.

A rough analogy may make the situation clearer. Suppose I play poker with an opponent, and we are down to our last card. I have a king. Due to my all-round awareness, I know he has an ace before he opens his card, or due to slowing down events in my mind, I know he will have an ace before the ace is drawn for him. I may avoid losing badly by withdrawing early, but I cannot beat him despite my special abilities because he has a superior card. On my opponent's part, it does not matter whether I have special abilities or not. When I show my king, he will beat me by showing his ace.

Such abilities are available to only very few people, but these few people are not necessarily selected. In other words anyone who has undergone the appropriate training may have these abilities.

I do not know the exact training methods, but I believe it has to do with training the mind. Being relaxed and clearing the mind of all thoughts are two crucial factors in the training.

I believe these abilities can be cultivated, but there is no necessity to make them part of our current training methods. There are good reasons for not including such training in our regular syllabus.

Firstly, as these methods are thought out from intellectualization and not passed on to us as a heritage, I am not sure whether the training will bring the desired results. It is unlike our established methods where we are sure of the results as proven through centuries.

Even if the training methods bring results that are expected, the results, despite their huge advantages, are more like novelty than practical means to enrich our daily life. It is, for example, unlike training internal force, which will maintain life, enhance life, and enable us to do better no matter what we do.

Even in the limited function of combat, the advantages may not necessarily ensure victory over our opponents as explained above.

Thirdly we already have so many beneficial training methods, that developing this new training method is not a priority. Basically we are a school providing training that will enrich our students' life, not a research center experimenting with new techniques.

Question 12

What is the essence of Wong Fei Hung? And particularly what is the essence of each of the sets, i.e. Iron Wire, Taming Tiger, Tiger Crane and Fifth Brother Octagonal Staff?

Sifu Anton

Answer

The essence of Wong Fei Hoong is Tiger-Crane, which is manifested in his tiger-claw and no-shadow kick.

Wong Fei Hoong's tiger-Claw is very powerful. There were no records of how he trained the force for the successful application of his tiger-claw. But the orthodox methods, employed most tiger-claw masters, were jabbing fingers into beans and gripping beans.

These are external methods, but trained correctly they develop internal force, which is usually hard. It is a common misconception that external methods only develop external, force, and internal force must be cultivated internally and is always soft. "External", "internal", "hard" and "soft" are various ways to describe methods of training both internal force and external force. Internal force can be externally trained and hard, though it is usually internally trained and soft, thus the misconception.

Tiger-law is coNambat ending by itself, i.e. even if you let go of the grip after applying the tiger-claw technique, your opponent cannot fight you any more. There are three main ways of tiger-claw application, namely:

1. fen khen, or separating tendons.
2. Chor chit, or dislocating joints.
3. Na yuie, or gripping energy points.

Wong Fei Hoong's more formidable technique is the no-shadow kick. But he did not use it often because his tiger-claw, or even his ordinary techniques were sufficient to defeat his opponents.

The kick is called no-shadow because it is so fast that an opponent cannot even sense its shadow. But the forte of the kick is actually not its speed, but the tactics of applying it. In theory any kick can be a no-shadow kick if it is executed with the no-shadow tactics, but the following techniques are the most common:

1. Organ-seeking kick.
2. Tiger-tail kick.

3. Clutch kick.

The following patterns are frequently used to executed the above techniques:

1. Single Leg Hungry Crane.
2. Single Leg Flying Crane.
3. Sun Moon Shadow Hand.
4. Lazy Tiger Stretches Waist.
5. Fierce Tiger Springs Claws.
6. Immortal Li Steps on Clutch.
7. Immortal Li Kicks Clutch.

Wong Fei Hoong transmitted his no-shadow kick to his favorite disciple, Leong Foon, and his tiger-claw to his most famous disciple who later spread his lineage wide and far, Lam Sai Weng.

Tiger-claw and no-shadow kick happen to be my specialties too. I shall teach them at the UK Summer Camp 2014.

The essence of the Iron Wire Set is to develop internal force. It is probably the most powerful kungfu set for this purpose. However, today it is frequently practiced wrongly as isometric exercise, which produces big muscles instead. Having big muscles will produce a lot of strength too, but its benefits are different from those of internal force.

A tell-tale sign of practicing Iron Wire as isometric exercise is having big muscles. The eyes of the practitioner are often dull, and he becomes tired easy. He is also prone to anger.

One who trains Iron Wire as an internal art is powerful, but slender and elegant. His eyes shine and he is peaceful, happy and full of vitality.

The Iron Wire Set was composed by Thiet Kiew Sam, the most senior of the Ten Tigers of Canton. He based his composition on the Triple-Stretch Set, which he learned from his sifu, the Venerable Cheng Choe, who in turn learned it from the Venerable Sam Tuck, the second most senior disciple of the Venerable Chee Seen, the First Patriarch of Southern Shaolin Kungfu.

The main technique in building internal force in Iron Wire is consolidating force. This delicate skill is frequently confused with tensing muscles, which leads to the deviation of practicing Iron Wire as an isometric exercise. A tell-tale difference is that when you consolidate force, you feel fresh and relaxed. When you tense your muscles you feel locked-up and tired.

The essence of the Taming-Tiger Set is combat application using tiger techniques, especially the tiger-claw. There are many effective combat sequences incorporated

into the set, though many practitioners may not realize them. As the standard of sparring today is not high, if you practice these combat sequences well and just apply them on your opponents, you have a very good chance of beating them.

The structure of this set, like that in many Southern Shaolin sets, is to train internal force at the beginning, then practice combat sequences for fighting. The force training method is the triple-stretch. In Wong Fei Hoong's lineage, the force training is performed while standing upright, but in our school it is performed on a Horse-Riding Stance.

As its name indicates, the essence of the Tiger-Crane Set is the tiger and the crane. However, in the 108-pattern Tiger-Crane Set in Wong Fei Foong's lineage, the set is based on Lohan Kungfu. Hence, Lohan patterns constitute a huge part of the set. In the 36-pattern Tiger-Crane Set I learned from Uncle Righteousness, and the 72-pattern Tiger-Crane Set I learned from Sifu Choe Hoong Choy, most of the patterns are tiger and crane techniques, with prominence of tiger techniques in Uncle Righteousness' set, and prominence of the crane techniques in Sifu Choe Hoong Choy's set.

Tiger techniques are ferocious. The essence of the tiger is the tiger-claw. Crane techniques are elegant. The essence of the crane is the organ-seeking kick, which forms a part of no-shadow kick.

Fifth Brother Octagonal Staff, or Ng Long Pat Kua Khun in Chinese (Cantonese) is one of the four famous staff sets in kungfu, the other three being Six-and-Half-Point Staff, and Fishing Staff. All these staff sets are from Southern Shaolin.

The Fifth Brother Octagonal Staff is a right-hand staff, i.e. the right hand, which is the controlling hand, is in front., though there are a few patterns where the left hand is in front. All the other three Staffs are left-hand staffs, i.e. the right hand, which is also the controlling hand, is at the back.

Interestingly, the essence of all these famous Staffs is the thrust, which is typical of a spear, and not the hit, which is typical of a staff. If you look at other staff sets, you may find a lot of hitting.

Of the four Staff sets, Fifth Brother Octagonal Staff when compared with the other three, is relatively the one with the most hitting techniques, though the number of hitting techniques is actually small. This is probably the reason why it is a right-hand staff.

The Fifth Brother Octagonal Staff was invented by Yang Wu Lang, a famous Song dynasty general who was the fifth in his family, and famous for his spear. After being ambushed by the Tartars, he escaped to a Buddhist temple on Wutai Mountain and became a monk. He continued to practice his spear everyday, but in

line with Buddhist compassion, he took off the spear-head. His practice is passed down to posterity as the Fifth Brother Octagonal Staff.

Question 13

The 36-pattern Tiger Crane can be traced back to the Venerable Harnng Yein. You also mention that the 72-pattern Tiger Crane Set is traceable back to the famous Shaolin nun Ng Mui. Ng Mui was especially known to be an expert in the Flower Set. Can you please tell us more about the 72- pattern Set and its connection to Ng Mui?

What are the main differences between the 36/72/108 pattern Sets besides the fact that they are different in the number of patterns?

Sifu Roland

Answer

At first I was quite surprised when I learned there was a Tiger-Crane Set in Choe Family Wing Choon. I thought that the Tiger-Crane Set was exclusive to Hoong Ka, though I called the school Shaolin at that time, and also now.

Of the Shaolin five animals, the Snake and the Crane were most prominent in Wing Choon Kungfu. In the Wing Choon 72-pattern Tiger-Crane Set, there were tiger claws but no crane beaks. The crane was represented in the palm and arm movements as well as in kicks. Wing Choon tiger claw, however, was unlike Hoong Ka tiger claw. Wing Choon tiger claw was more like eagle claw.

The Flower Set was found in both Uncle Righteousness' school and in Sifu Choe Hoong Choy's school, but they were different. In the Flower Set of Uncle Righteousness, the dragon was prominent. In the Flower Set of Sifu Choe Hoong Choy, the snake was prominent. The crane was found in both sets, but more prominently in Sifu Choe Hoong Choy's set.

There were a lot of similarities between the Flower Set and the Tiger-Crane Set of Choe Family Wing Choon. For example, the techniques of Breaking Flank and of Horizontal Hand Sweep as well as the deadly Single Leg Flying Crane were found in both sets. With hindsight, I could conclude that both sets were taught by the famous Venerable Ng Mui.

On the other hand, there was not much difference between the Flower Set and the Tiger-Crane Set in Uncle Righteousness' school. The prominent animal in the Uncle Righteousness' Flower Set was the dragon, whereas the prominent animals in the Tiger-Crane Set, of course, were the tiger and the crane. One could easily see the difference between these two sets in Uncle Righteousness' lineage. But leaving

asides that the routine of the patterns was different, at a glance one may even think that the Flower Set and the Tiger-Crane Set in Choe Family Wing Choon were the same set!

At first I did not pay much attention to the combat application of the pattern, Single Leg Flying Crane, in Choe Family Wing Choon, though the pattern was very impressive to watch. But this view changed drastically after my free sparring with a Ng Mui master.

The Ng Mui master and I were talking about the 36 Kicks in Shaolin Kungfu. He told me that he knew only 35 because his master kept the last kick from him, and asked me if I could show him the 36th kick. I did. It was the hook-spring kick.

He said that he was still very grateful to his master as his master taught him an ultimate technique, against which no one could defend whenever he used it. I said that in Shaolin philosophy every attack could be defended. Eventually we ended up in free sparring.

His ultimate technique was a double attack to the eyes with a simultaneous double flying kick executed all in the air, manifested in the pattern, Single Leg Flying Crane. As I knew this attack, I could not only avoid it but also turn it back on him. He was very surprised.

The Ng Mui master showed me some kungfu patterns. Except for Siu Lin Tou, these patterns he demonstrated were similar to Choe Family Wing Choon patterns, confirming what Yim Wing Choon learned them from her teacher, Ng Mui., but later modified them to compose Siu Lin Tou to suit her own situation. Ng Mui patterns were just like our Shaolin patterns minus the masculine aspects of the dragon, tiger and leopard. However, I did not ask him the names of established sets in Ng Mui Kungfu.

Of the three Tiger-Crane sets I have learnt, the 36-pattern set from Uncle Righteousness has the most number of tiger and crane patterns. This is interesting. It is the shortest of the three sets, yet has the most patterns of the Shaolin animals named for the set. It is because almost all the patterns in the set, including the signature Shaolin greeting at the start and the end, are tiger or crane patterns.

I would guess that if the 72-pattern Tiger-Crane Set from Choe Family Wing Choon is demonstrated, many people may not find any obvious tiger and crane patterns! This is because they associate tiger and crane patterns with what they see in Hoong Ka Kungfu, which is most famous for the tiger and the crane. In the same way, if Choe Family Wing Choon is demonstrated, many people may think it is not Wing Choon Kungfu because they associate Wing Choon Kungfu with Yip Man's Wing Choon which is most famous today.

The tiger patterns in Choe Family Wing Choon are unlike the tiger patterns in Hoong Ka Kungfu. Wing Choon tiger claw is more like eagle claw, and it is more for grabbing than for separating tendons, dislocating joints and gripping energy points. There are also not many tiger claw, in its eagle claw version, in the set.

Most of the patterns in the 72-Pattern Tiger-Crane Set from Choe Family Wing Choon are crane patterns. But there are no crane beaks. So those accustomed to Hoong Ka's crane patterns with their typical crane beak may wrongly think there are no crane patterns in this 72-pattern Tiger-Crane Set. Wing Choon crane patterns are characterized by movements of palms and arms, which represent the wings of a crane. There are also inauspicious kicks, except the spectacular kicks from Single Leg Flying Crane.

It is worthy of note that the Single Leg Flying Crane pattern in the Wing Choon set is different in its performance in the set than the Single Leg Flying Crane pattern in the Hoong Ka sets. Single Leg Flying Crane is similarly performed in the 26-pattern set and the 108-pattern set, with two arms at the sides, not in crane-beak form but in open palms with the thumb separately open, and an organ-seeking kick below while standing on one leg. The impression one gets is to open an opponent's two arms with a gentle grip on top, while kicking his groin below.

Single Leg Flying Crane in Choe Family Wing Choon is spectacular, and it demands much skill to perform it correctly. Despite its name, an exponent is not standing on a single leg. In fact he is not standing on any leg. He is flying in the air with the fingers of his two palms thrusting into an opponent's eyes, while double kicking his groin below. It is an attack that often catch an opponent by surprise. Even if he is not surprised, it is not easy for him to avoid the tricky multiple attacks of this pattern.

I reckon that the combat application of Single Leg Flying Crane in Hoong Ka Kungfu was originally like that in Wing Choon Kungfu. That was also how Hoong Man Ting, the son of Hoong Hei Khoon, defeated Pak Mei when he and his kungfu brother, Chow Yein Kit, killed Pak Mei to avenge the death of their sigung, Chee Seen, during the burning of the southern Shaolin Temple on Nine-Lotus Mountain. (In a Hong Kong movie, it was shown differently that Hoong Man Ting climbed up onto Pak Mei's shoulder to strike his bai-hui energy point.) But later Hoong Ka masters camouflaged this deadly move in its present pattern. But as Choe Family Wing Choon is exclusive, taught only to selected students, this secret is still maintained.

Paradoxically, while the 108-pattern set is the longest of the three Tiger-Crane sets, it has the least tiger and crane patterns. This is because many of the patterns in the set are from Lohan Kungfu, on which the set is based. Surprisingly too, the tiger-tail kick, which is an important part of the no-shadow kick, is not found in this set (but is found in the Taming-Tiger Set).

An interesting feature is the use of the phoenix-eye fist in this set in the patterns, Left Crane Thrust Technique and Right Crane Thrust Technique. The phoenix-eye fist is not found in the 36-pattern set or any set in Uncle Righteousness's school, but frequently found in the 72-pattern set and many other sets in Choe Family Wing Choon. It is a very effective hand form for striking energy points.

Eighteen Lohan Fist, which evolved from Eighteen Lohan Hands, was the prototype of Shaolin kungfu sets. A lot of Lohan patterns are found in the 108-pattern set, but not in the 36-pattern set except for 2 patterns, and not in the 72-pattern set.

Lohan patterns are powerful and hard. They are very useful for pressing against an opponent. Of the three Tiger-Crane Set, the 108-pattern set is the hardest, the 36-pattern set the next, and the 72-pattern set the softest.