

Yang Taiji is One Family Across the Straits

by Prof. Qu Shijing

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Prof. Qu's Preface

I went to Taiwan in the spring of 2009, and visited the Zheng Manqing Memorial Hall in order to fulfill my teacher's last wish. Thanks to Brother Xu Yizhong's interest and support, he arranged for the Shr-Jung School of Taiwan to collect my 14 articles that had been published in the "Wu Lin Journal," and published them together as a book in order to share them with Taiji friends in Taiwan. After the book was published in Taiwan, friends here in mainland China have often asked me for a copy. Therefore, I decided to re-publish that book in a Simplified character edition by the Ancient Book Publishing House of Shanghai. Using this occasion of publishing a second edition, I would like to re-state my reasons for sharing this material.

The first reason is that the historical truth must be respected. After my teacher, Dr. Huang, graduated from the Fine Arts College of Shanghai, he obeyed Master Chengfu's request to be the Taiji training partner of Uncle Yang Shouzhong, and practiced Taijiquan in the Yang family household every day. Dr. Huang himself not only witnessed the martial arts skills of Chengfu, Wu Huichuan, Tian Zhaolin and Zhang Qinlin, but he himself also practiced with them and felt and experienced their martial skills. I was born too late, so I didn't have the chance to witness Chengfu's excellent skills. However, I have witnessed and experienced the martial skills of Uncle Tian Zhaolin, Dr. Huang and Brother Zhang Yu. Moreover, I have verified the facts of Chengfu's weight, appetite and internal energy with Mr. Jiang Changfeng who was a disciple of Master Wu Jianquan. When I was young, I often heard anecdotes of Yang Taiji from Dr. Huang, but unfortunately I didn't take any notes at that time. After so many years, my memory perhaps could be faulty. For example, I recently learned that Uncle Wu Huichuan died at the age of 46, rather than 47, and that Uncle Tian Zhaolin died in 1959, rather than 1960 as I had erroneously remembered.

Taijiquan's reputation has always been that of an excellent internal martial art. When Grand Master Yang Luchan and his eldest son, Yang Banhou, taught Taiji to the members of a Manchu military unit during the Qing Dynasty, someone intentionally instigated trouble between Banhou and Liu Shijun (劉士俊) who also taught "Yue Style Free Boxing" (岳氏散手)

to the students in that same military unit. Luchan tried to settle this matter peacefully, and he ordered Banhou to apologize to Liu. However, Banhou knelt down in front of his father, Luchan, and declared, “As a martial artist, I would rather save face than be afraid of dying. Should I be victorious against Liu, our Yang family Taiji will have a reputation as a good martial art, and we can stay in Beijing and be respected. Should I unfortunately be defeated by Liu, please wrap my corpse in a grass mat and bury me in our hometown, and I swear that I will never ever become a martial artist in the next life!”

After that, Banhou not only defeated Liu, but he also was never defeated by any other martial artist. At that time, there were many top boxers in Beijing, such as the Bagua Master Dong Haichuan (董海川), the Xingyi Master Guo Yunshen (郭雲深), the Master of Yue Style Free Boxing mentioned above, Liu Shijun, and the "King of Wrestling" Zhou Dahui (周大惠). Should Yang Style Taiji not develop real martial skills, how could it enjoy its' reputation of “Unbeatable Yang?” Because of the fact that Luchan and Banhou were undefeated in their bouts with other martial artists, Yang Style Taiji was able to become famous in Beijing.

Uncle Tian Zhaolin and Chen Weiming were pioneers in taking Yang Taiji to the south. Uncle Tian won the Championship of the National Martial Arts Tournament of Nanjing in 1912. In 1925, Uncle Chen established the Zhi Rou Taiji School in Shanghai, and defeated the Shaolin boxer Xu Wenfu, and was well respected in Shanghai after this bout.

When Master Chengfu visited the Central Martial Arts Organization (CMAO) of Nanjing in 1928, he had a friendly sword bout with Mr. Li Jinglin, the Deputy Chairman of the CMAO. Li had excellent sword skills and his movements would dazzle the opponent’s eyes. People called Li the "Celestial Sword". At the very beginning of the bout, when Chengfu moved his sword to touch Li’s sword, Li’s sword suddenly flew away from Li’s hand.

In 1934, Chengfu was invited to teach Taiji in Guangzhou. The "Boxing King of the South" frequently asked to have a public bout with Chengfu. Chengfu finally agreed and arranged for the bout to occur. The “Boxing King” fiercely punched at Chengfu’s center line; Chengfu yielded to the incoming force by short backward steps. Eventually, Chengfu used “Step Up to Seven Stars,” touched the boxer’s fist by using just his index finger, and the boxer instantly fell back and landed on the ground.

Based on the brief history mentioned above, it is clear that Yang Style Taiji has indeed been through many strenuous fights and successfully established itself in the south of China in the 1930's. Since then, Uncle Dong Yingjie had several bouts with Thailand boxers and he was never defeated. Moreover, Uncle Zheng Manqing successfully defeated many western boxers and an international fencing champion. Regarding Yang Style Taiji passing onward overseas, it has also been proven effective through many real fights. Indeed, the only indicator to verify the truth of its effectiveness is by the actual practice. Yang Style Taijiquan includes philosophical foundations, unique theories and excellent martial training skills. Moreover, the effectiveness of Yang Taiji has been proven by many actual contests. Those undeniable historical events mentioned above prove that Yang Taiji deserves to be considered a treasury of traditional Chinese culture.

As a martial art, Yang Taiji is excellent; but how and why has it become known primarily as a mere health exercise? Regarding the development of Yang Taiji, I don't know the history of what happened in other places. However, I do know and quite understand the history and evolution of Yang Taiji in Shanghai over the past 60 years.

According to the tradition of the Yang family, those who learned Yang Style Taiji were categorized into three groups: students, disciples and lineage-holders. These "students" ; dominate the numbers of all who practice Yang Taiji. However, they merely practice the form without any Neigong training or study of the martial aspects of Taiji. "Disciples" have been through the Bai Shr Ceremony and are specifically trained in the Basics and foundations of Taiji as a martial art, such as holding postures and the spear drill. Disciples practice the form with its' use as a martial art in mind, in order to smoothly circulate and strengthen the internal energy throughout the whole body. Although the Taiji form that students and disciples practice are similar externally, only disciples are taught how to cultivate the internal aspects of the form. The master carefully sifts through a few of his more skillful and talented disciples to find the potential "lineage-holders," and these few in-door disciples may inherit the high level of martial skills from the master. The lineage-holders of Yang Taiji are rare, and there have been only just a few in each generation.

Nowadays, the Shanghai Taiji society is full of "Masters" so-called. Such an unusual

phenomenon was created by a key man, Mr. Gu Liuxin. As mentioned above, “students” practice the form only for the purpose of maintaining and improving health. Whereas “disciples” receive more training in the martial aspects of Taiji. Such a two-pronged training system has worked effectively, and no contradiction existed between these two ways of training. Gu who acted as the leader of the martial arts community in Shanghai, actually was a proletarian revolutionist, rather than a martial artist. Knowing his lack of standing in the martial community, he should have paid respects to those real martial artists, humbly consult the Taiji seniors and fully develop the traditional Taiji culture.

Perhaps Mr. Gu’s original intention was to do just that. Brother Zhang Yu was a member of a key group in the martial arts community of Shanghai in the early 1950’s. According to Zhang’s memory, Gu first expected that Uncle Tian Zhaolin would just present the marvelous treasures of Yang Taiji and fully disclose his real martial skills and secrets of the art to Gu. Unfortunately, Uncle Tian didn’t understand what the government leader expected of him, and he refused to actively cooperate with Gu. At that time, those Taiji seniors such as Uncles Tian Zhaolin and Chen Weiming, were lacking in any interest of politics, and they were somewhat oblivious to the changing political climate, so they couldn’t understand why they must obey Gu’s guidance and directions.

In 1950, there was a benefit entertainment that was performed by the martial arts community of Shanghai. When Uncle Tian Zhaolin performed push hands with his students, a Shaolin boxer emerged on the stage and challenged Tian. Gu, who helped organize the event and was present, thought that Uncle Tian would demonstrate his amazing Taiji skills through such a challenge. Should not Mr. Tong Zhongyi have immediately stepped in, reconciled the two and prevented further embarrassment, the situation might have gotten out of control and eventually trigger a real and serious fight on the spot. From this event, Mr. Gu knew that he was really unable to control the fourth generation of Yang Taiji seniors who owned amazing Taiji skills.

Fu Zhongwen, a distant relative of Chengfu by marriage, was a laborer but had more political sense than his Taiji seniors, and he was willing to obey Gu’s guidance and direction. At that time, he also taught Yang Style Taiji on the roadside near the Xianle (仙樂) Book Market. Therefore, Gu promoted him to be the representative of Yang Style Taiji and assigned him to

teach the Taijiquan form at a public gym in Shanghai. Moreover, Gu invited Brother Zhang Yu to teach Yang Style push hands for the Martial Arts Association of Shanghai, and the teaching place was located at a triangle-shaped garden area at the intersection of Huang-Po Road (黃陂路) and Wu-Sheng Road (武勝路). Therefore, from this arrangement, Yang Style Taiji practiced for health and for martial skill were separated. Sadly, the public's interest in the martial aspect of Taiji began declining day after day.

However, what Gu had done in separating the health and martial aspects of Taiji was based on the demands of the political situation at the time. Therefore, I don't think that Gu should be condemned for doing what he did. Although, should Gu have been willing to humbly consult with the Taiji seniors and had patiently tried to persuade Uncle Tian Zhaolin to act as the leader of Yang Taiji in Shanghai, I believe that the development of Yang Taiji in Shanghai might have been totally different. What a pity that this didn't happen! Unfortunately, Uncle Tian and Mr. Gu didn't cooperate at all, and Yang Taiji lost such a wonderful chance to further develop in Shanghai. I can't help but lament what could have been.

Nowadays, should you ask any person in the parks of Shanghai what Yang Style Taijiquan is all about, I believe that around 80-90 percent of those asked would consider that Yang Taiji is merely a kind of exercise only for the purpose of health. Should you tell them that Yang Taiji is an amazing martial art, I think that those people wouldn't believe what you say, and consider that the notion is nonsense created by novelists who write martial arts fiction.

The second reason for sharing this material is that I feel the lineages of Yang Taiji must be truly united. I obeyed my teacher's last wish to never become involved in political matters of the Taiji community. In the recent past, the disciples of Uncles Li Yaxuan and Zheng Manqing had some minor disputes due to the misunderstanding of Yaxuan's criticism about the book, "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan." Therefore, both sides mutually had their arguments and opinions published in martial arts journals.

Both Uncles Yaxuan and Manqing are excellent disciples of Chengfu. Their disciples are inheritors of true lineages of Yang Style Taiji, so they shouldn't have misunderstandings and should work together in order to promote Taiji as widely as possible. So, I wrote an article, "Yang Style Taiji Is One Family," which was published in the fourth issue of "Wu Lin Journal"

of 2001, in order to reconcile their views and unite Taiji friends across the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. After then, the editor-in-chief of “Wu Lin Journal”, Ms. Lao Jian (勞堅), asked me to submit more articles, but I didn’t make any promises to her.

Later, Ms. Lao requested Mr. Shen Shanzeng (沈善增) to appeal to me. I couldn’t refuse Mr. Shen’s appeal. Therefore, I submitted more articles to “Wu Lin Journal” one after another, in order to inspire the reunion of Yang Style Taiji.

Yang Style Taiji originally contained both martial skills and health benefits. Nowadays, millions of people practice the form only for the purpose of health. On the other hand, almost no one studies now to develop the amazing martial skills of Yang Taiji. I am very anxious about this situation.

As for Yang Taiji in Shanghai, the fourth generation of Tian Zhaolin, Wu Huichuan, Tian Zuolin, Chen Weiming, Chu Guiting and Huang Jinghua, have all passed away. Moreover, of the fifth generation, Ye Dami, Chen Zhijin, Shen Yongpei, Zhang Yu, Wu Yunzhuo, Yue Huanzhi, Zhao Diqi, Lin Bingyao and Wang Zhuanghong also have passed away, one after another. The martial skills of Yang Style Taiji eagerly need to be rescued.

Yang Luchan, Banhou, Jianhuo, Shaohou and Chengfu had different personalities and form styles. As for Chengfu’s form, it changed somewhat from his early, middle and late ages. Moreover, between each generation, the headmaster of the Yang family Taiji traditionally selected students to be his disciples, and taught each disciple according to his aptitude. Therefore, the lineages of Yang Taiji must respect the traditional history, tolerate different viewpoints regarding form and styles, honestly unite together, and pursue mutual goals. Then, those lineages are able to have friendly bouts and promote the excellent martial arts of Yang Taiji.

Now, the priority should be that the lineages definitely never, ever haggle over whose position is higher. It is to waste time and energy!

Although I am anxious about the future of Yang Taiji, I am getting old and my capability is short. I honestly appeal to the young generation to cherish Yang Style Taiji, never pursue it

for the purpose of fame or wealth, and study Taiji very hard, in order to promote the tradition of Yang Style. That by doing so, we should not bring shame to our predecessors of Yang Style Taiji, but be worthy practitioners of this marvelous art they created.

CHAPTER-1 "Yang Style Taiji Is One Family"

(Mr. Qu Shijing (瞿世鏡), the author of the book, once was a researcher of the Academia of Social Sciences in Shanghai. In the 1950' s, he became the disciple of Dr. Huang Jinghua who was Chengfu's in-door disciple. Mr. Qu knows Yang Taiji and anecdotes of the Yang family very well.)

In 1954, I became an in-door disciple of Dr. Huang Jinghua for learning Yang Taiji. When Uncle Zheng Manqing taught Chinese painting in the Art College of Shanghai, Dr. Huang learned painting from Uncle Manqing. Since then, there had been a close friendship between Dr. Huang and Uncle Manqing. Also, they learned Taiji together at the Taiji school of Mr. Ye Dami. When Master Chengfu came to Shanghai, both learned Yang Taiji with Chengfu and later they became Taiji brothers. "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" was narrated by Chengfu and transcribed by Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang. They strictly followed Chengfu's original intention and dared not to arbitrarily write a word that was different from what Chengfu said. Besides, Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang invited Mr. Qian Mingshan (錢名山) to write an inscription for that book, and requested Mr. Lang Jingshan (朗靜山) to take photos of the author, Chengfu. As for proofreading at the publishing house, it was taken charge of by Dr. Huang. When "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" was published, the authors were printed as Yang Chengfu and Zheng Manqing and the proofreader was printed as Huang Jinghua. However, Dr. Huang humbly said, "I am junior. How do I dare to enjoy the same honor with my teacher and elder brother?" The original edition of "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" was bound in the traditional Chinese style, and I still have one preserved quite well up to now. It is a genuine Yang Taiji book, and its authority is unquestionable.

Mr. Jin Renlin (金仁霖) wrote an article talking about "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" published in the 22nd issue of "Taiji Journal" in Taiwan. What Mr. Jin said in that article mostly is correct. However, a few points are necessary to be corrected according to facts. When Master Chengfu stayed in Shanghai , there were three places where he had resided. When Chengfu came to Shanghai from Nanjing in 1928, he resided in Sheng-Da (聖達)

sub-district on Jin Shen Fu (金神父) Road. The second place was in Dai Rui (大瑞) sub-district on Ju Lai Da (巨籟達) Road, when he returned to Shanghai from a brief stay in Hangchow. The third one was in An Le (安樂) village on Fu Xi (福熙) Road, when he returned to Shanghai from a brief visit in Guangzhou. Mr. Jin mentioned in his article that Master Chengfu lived in “Sheng-Da sub-district on Ju Lai Da Road ”. Apparently, this is an error.

Regarding the incident how Chengfu bestowed on Mr. Ye Dami some photos of himself, this is a special story. Mr. Ye recommended himself to edit the manuscripts for Chengfu’s first book, but, even though he said he would, he had not started to do it at all. Therefore, Chengfu took the manuscripts back and eventually assigned Dong Yingjie to edit them into “The Applications of Taijiquan.” After then, Ye once told Chengfu that, “The text of the “Applications of Taijiquan” is not of a high standard and is somewhat vulgar, and there are also a lot of mistakes in its contents. If this book is sold publicly, I am afraid that it would hurt your reputation.” Chengfu immediately ordered Dr. Huang to go to the publisher, take all remaining unsold books back, and burn them up. Before those books were burned up, Ye came to the Yang house and privately requested Dr. Huang to, “Don’t burn all of them up. Please keep a copy for me, because there is something really valuable in that book. In order to show my appreciation for your help in doing this, I will give you a pair of Dragon Spring swords as a present.”

After Ye left, Chengfu asked Dr. Huang what Ye said. Dr. Huang dared not to cover up for Ye and frankly told Chengfu everything. The next day, when Ye came to the Yang house to practice push hands with Chengfu, Chengfu continuously issued powerful energy toward Ye, and Ye was bounced quite far away. After that, Madam Yang asked Chengfu why he issued such strong energy toward Ye. Chengfu said that, “Ye told me that the “Applications of Taijiquan” was not good, but he asked Jinghua to keep a copy for him when I ordered Jinghua to burn up the remaining books. His integrity is questionable.” Once Ye knew that he was misunderstood by Chengfu, he repeatedly explained to Chengfu. “As for the weaknesses of “The Applications of Taijiquan”, it refers to its writing style rather than its contents. Moreover, the contents of that book are truly valuable, because it describes and interprets what the real Yang Taiji is.” Hearing this from Ye, Chengfu released his anger and gave Ye some photos.

Mr. Jin mentioned that, after Chengfu moved to Shanghai, Ye Dami introduced Pu Bingru, Pu's brother, Uncle Zheng Manqing, Dr. Huang Jinghua and the family of Zhang Shuhe (張叔和) to learn Taiji with Chengfu in order to ensure the living expenses of Chengfu. Such an argument seems to be exaggerated. The families of Pu and Zhang were indeed rich, and their contribution probably was helpful to Chengfu. However, Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang were penniless. Dr. Huang himself mentioned that he not only didn't pay any tuition but also had lunches and dinners in the Yang family house. Practicing the form, push hands and taiji spear everyday consumed lots of energy. Dr. Huang and his Taiji brothers needed nourishing food to alleviate their hunger. Therefore, the Yang family prepared "Beef-tendon Roll with Green Onion and Soysauce" as a staple meal for those students.

Since a lot of disciples had free meals in Yang's house, Chengfu spent a lot of money on food. It is unreasonable that Chengfu's living was sponsored only by those students who were introduced by Ye Dami. Chengfu was a Taiji Master at that time and his wealthy students were not few in number. For example, after two sons of Mr. Chen Mingai (陳銘皚) became disciples of Chengfu, they paid two hundreds Silver coins as monthly tuition. But generally, those pampered sons of wealthy families never wanted to be trained hard, and their Taiji skills were hard to show any improvement.

When Dr. Huang acted as the daily Taiji training partner of Uncle Yang Shouzhong, he also had to assist in managing sundry duties for the Yang family. When Chengfu got an edema the first time, Dr. Huang invited Dr. Cheng Dexiang (程德襄) to cure Chengfu.

Years later, after Chengfu died, Dr. Huang became a disciple of Dr. Huang Taiheng (黃泰亨) for learning acupuncture. Mr. Jin mentioned that Ye Dami introduced "Dr. Huang Jinghua" to be a disciple of Chengfu. Actually, When Dr. Huang became the disciple of Chengfu, he wasn't a Doctor at that time, but was only a student of the Shanghai Art College.

Mr. Jin is a remarkable disciple of Ye Dami. Basically, what Mr. Jin said about "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" was quite fair except those details mentioned above, and I didn't have further dissenting views. As for Uncle Yaxuan's criticism about "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" and a lot of misunderstanding about Uncle Manqing, I believe, perhaps, that it was a result from the various teaching methods of the Yang family.

As for the teaching methods of the Yang family, there are three gradations which depend upon the relationship between the student and teacher. The general students would practice the form together, while Chengfu sits aside to watch them, and a senior brother would demonstrate the form in the leading position. After completing the whole set of form practicing, Chengfu usually makes brief remarks and the daily procedure of practicing for general students is finished. As for those disciples who have been through the Bai Shr ceremony, Chengfu teaches the disciple individually, and only just one posture each time. Chengfu explains the main points thoroughly and corrects mistakes repeatedly. The whole form cannot be connected until each posture can reach the level of Chengfu's criteria and satisfaction.

There are two sets of Yang Taiji. One is for health and the other is for boxing. The form for health can be categorized into three kinds: Big, Middle and Small. Grand Master Jianhou taught his disciples by those three forms. Both Mr. Wang Yongquan (汪永泉) of Beijing and Uncle Tian Zhaolin once learned the Middle form. Ye Dami learned Taiji from Uncle Zhaolin and his Cloud Hands can be categorized into the three forms. Master Yang Shaohou once taught the Small form. Uncle Zhaolin and Mr. Wu Tunan (吳圖南) once learned the Small form.

As for Chengfu, he taught students by the Big form, but there were some postural differences among his early, middle and late age. For example, in Chengfu's early age, his form started with ward off, south-west and following ward off, north-west. Then, it followed Ward Off, Roll Back, Press and Push (Grasping the Sparrow's Tail). Grand Master Jianhou taught the same style of the Big form. Both Wu Huichuan and Tian Zhaolin were the early disciples of Chengfu, and their forms were same as this style. The book, "Form, Sword, Saber, Spear and Free Boxing of Taiji" written by Chen Yanlin (陳炎林) who was a disciple of Uncle Zhaolin, and the form of Brother Zhang Yu (張玉) who was a disciple of Uncle Huichuan, can prove what I mentioned above regarding the Big form.

As for Chengfu's form in his middle age, you can refer to the pictures in "The Art of Taijiquan" written by Uncle Chen Weiming. The first Ward off (left) goes to the south. However, as for Chengfu's form in his later age, the first Ward off (left) goes to the west. You can refer to the pictures in the second part of "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan".

Dr. Huang once taught me how to tell Chengfu's forms among his different ages. Dr. Huang said that, "When you see the forms of students in the Yang lineages, you may know from which age of Chengfu's disciples that he/she learned from."

Uncle Li Yaxuan was an early disciple of Chengfu. When he saw the form depicted in "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan," he considered that this form was different from the one he learned. Therefore, Uncle Yaxuan thought that Uncle Manqing himself revised the form privately. Professor Lu Dimin also considered the same point as Uncle Yaxuan's. Actually, Chengfu himself continuously improved and changed the form. That was why the misunderstanding happened.

As for the boxing form, it is quite different from the health one. It is called "Taiji Long Form" by the Yang Family and "Taiji Fast Form" by the Wu. The practicing speed of Taiji Long Form alternates slow and fast. Its movements combine softness with vigorousness, and its steps are performed in a slippery style. One must make a sound when the energy is issued. Chengfu taught disciples by disassembling the whole set of the Taiji Long Form posture by posture in order to train them for free boxing. When Dr. Huang learned Yang Taiji from Chengfu, he repeatedly practiced each posture individually. Dr. Huang had seen Chengfu demonstrate the entire form only three times. The first time was when Chengfu himself played the first half of the Long form, and the second time, Chengfu performed the other half. The last time one was when Chengfu himself demonstrated the whole set of the Long Form. Chengfu said that each posture can be connected with any others after one has practiced and learned each posture very well, no matter whether the form is long or short. Therefore, Chengfu's Taiji Long Form was 60 postures, Uncle Dong Jingjie's was 23 postures and Uncle Chen Weiming's was 108 postures.

The posture names of Chengfu's Long Form were appended in the book "Taiji Sword" by Uncle Weiming. Also in that book, Uncle Weiming listed the posture names of his own Long Form that added more postures. Currently, there are two books which describe Yang Taiji Long Form that are sold in book stores in China. Both claim that they are real lineages of Yang Taiji. When I read them, I find that their number of postures are over one hundred and are

mainly based on Uncle Weiming's edition and add some variations. However, those particular Long Form postures are definitely not from Chengfu's original Long Form. No matter how the authors employ splendid interpretations, they cannot cover up the facts.

Not only did Chengfu change the form during his late age, but also he changed the sword as well as saber. According to Dr. Huang's analysis, the reasons of such changes mainly were:

First, Chengfu's martial level and internal energy were getting better. But paradoxically, his external form was getting somewhat less martial in appearance. In fact, it was hard to see just how the Form could be used in a fight! Second, Chengfu's weight was over 300 pounds, so his speed of practicing Taiji naturally became slower, and those movements in the Form involving jumps were necessarily omitted. Third, the early disciples were mostly fighters and martial arts lovers, but the latter disciples focused on the purpose of promoting and preserving health. Therefore, the movements of Taiji were naturally simplified.

As for the application of Yang Taiji, there are two characteristics:

The first one is that there are multiple usages of each posture. The application of postures must accompany how the opponent acts. It cannot be fixed, rather, it should accommodate change.

The second one is that the teaching of applications depends on the aptitude of students. For example, "Raise Hands" may lift upward to fight or sink downward to fight. As big guys, both Uncle Wu Huichuan and Tian Zhaolin were good at lifting upward to fight. However, for short guys it is harder to apply such usage. When Chengfu taught an application, he used to ask a pair of Taiji brothers to practice it together. The disciple had to apply the usage on his partner. Chengfu asked his disciples to be familiar with the postures, steps and applications, in order to be able to apply them under any circumstances.

Regarding the lineage of Yang Taiji, one must be careful in jumping to conclusions, especially when the usages and applications of the junior are different from that of the senior. Uncle Yaxuan once said that Uncle Manqing himself created some usages of Taijiquan. Perhaps Uncle Yaxuan neglected the principles of "multiple usages of each posture" and "teaching

students in accordance with their aptitudes.” When Uncle Yaxuan learned, the applications of Taijiquan were taught by Chengfu. However, the usages of Taijiquan mentioned in “The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan” indeed were also from Chengfu’s dictations. Chengfu once said that, “To the beginner, the teacher has to explain the applications. Otherwise, the students have no idea where hands and legs should go. After knowing Jin and internal energy, there is no need to emphasize the so-called applications. All usages will converge toward one and the application of energy is undetected by the opponent. Once the opponent is touched, he will fly away immediately.”

As for the Neigong, it is the strictest part to be taught. After the student becomes a formal disciple and has been assessed by the teacher for many years, the teacher has to make sure that the disciple has a solid foundation and understanding of the form, is familiar with the applications and has a good, decent and noble personality. Then the teacher is willing to teach Neigong. According to the rules of the Yang family, Neigong has to be taught alone in a private setting. After the disciple completed the learning of Neigong, he/she was not allowed to transmit this knowledge to anyone arbitrarily. What the so-called Neigong is, is the path that the internal Qi and Jin use to circulate in the body. If Neigong is not practiced completely, one’s Jin is only from the waist and legs. It cannot be accounted as the real internal Jin. Traditionally, Neigong has not been allowed to be discussed or transmitted arbitrarily. As for the arguments of Uncle Yaxuan’s notes about “The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan” limiting the scope of the form and applications, and not including Neigong, actually, “The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan” only covers the form and applications, rather than Neigong.

Chengfu’s form had changed throughout his life, from his early age to his late. Even so, each posture containing multiple applications is an unquestionable fact. However, the same rules that apply even among those postural differences are found in Chengfu’s “Ten Important Points.” Therefore, Yang Taiji in China, Taiwan and other places in the world actually is one family that is transmitted by Master Chengfu. I wish that there were no more disputes among the lineages of Yang Taiji. The lineages of Yang Taiji should respect each other, have friendly bouts and strengthen our common bonds. It confuses people when they hear multiple strands of the lineage of Yang Taiji from various locations boasting that they are the only true and orthodox lineage.

Taijiquan is an internal boxing method and is an excellent martial art. Chengfu could bounce the opponent away over seven yards. He was definitely respected in the community of martial artists. Whoever is part of the lineage of Yang Taiji can easily yield to the incoming force swiftly, and then bounce the opponent away. No matter how far it is that one can bounce the opponent away, that one is a real lineage holder of Yang Taiji!

CHAPTER-2 "Grandmaster of Taiji: Yang Chengfu"

1. Great skill matures slowly

Taiji Master Yang Chengfu, whose other name was Zhaoqing (兆清), was born in Beijing in 1883. His grandfather (Yang Luchan), elder Uncle (Banhou) and father (Jianhou) all were famous Taiji Masters at that time. From the time Chengfu was a child, he had learned Taiji from his father. Grand Master Jianhou was a moderate man and he could not bear to push too hard in training Chengfu, because Jianhou himself suffered from very hard training when he was a child. When Chengfu practiced the form, sword, saber, spear, push hands or free boxing for daily training, he always followed the traditional rules of Yang family Taiji. However, he never really tried to work hard when he trained. In 1912, Chengfu was 29 years old and he started to teach the form, sword and saber at Zhong Shan Park (中山公園) in Beijing. But, what Chengfu taught was only the external form. If the students wanted to learn push hands, free boxing, two-person dueling sword and Taiji spear, they had to go to the Yang family home. Grand Master Jianhou himself hosted those training sessions and he dealt with those students very well due to his skill and instruction. Therefore, Chengfu's teaching just the forms proceeded smoothly without a hitch at that time.

In 1917, when Jianhou was near death, he scolded Chengfu while shedding bitter tears. "Your elder brother learned Taiji with your elder Uncle. He was trained very hard and has already become a famous person. You teach students publicly and have had it easy all of your life. Now, I am about to die. What if someone comes and asks to have a bout with you and you are defeated? The reputation and martial arts of the Yang family will be destroyed due to your indolence in training. I can't rest in peace after I die." Chengfu was so astonished about what Jianhou said, and he kowtowed to Jianhou with tears streaming down his face. Chengfu, in front of his father, swore that he was going to train himself hard.

When Jianhou died, Chengfu was 34 years old. He refused to see guests and started to train himself very hard day and night. A rich disciple of Jianhou sponsored Chengfu with 30 silver coins a month as living expense. Chengfu spent 6 silver coins a month to hire a strong-big guy as his training partner. Usually, a boxer sets a wood-stake (木樁) in the ground as the hitting target in order to test his energy (or force). For example, according to the tradition of Yang family training methods, the practitioner needs a wood-stake or tree-stake to practice striking using "Shoulder Stroke." As for the sticking-jin (粘勁) of Taiji spear, the practitioner has to repeatedly brush the right-side and left-side of the tree-stake daily. However, the wood-stake or tree is not a living target, unlike a human being who is able to jump, dodge and even fight back. Therefore, as a "living- stake" , having another human being to train with is much more useful for practicing and developing jin.

Whether practicing push hands or San-shou (散手), the movements or steps must fit in with the rules of Taiji. However, when boxers who are from other branches of martial arts come to ask for a bout, they won't follow the rules of Taiji. Therefore, Chengfu needed a "living- stake" in order to practice the skill of "receiving jin" (Jiejin) using any part of his body, and be able to uproot the opponent in all circumstances. Yang Taiji can bounce the opponent quite far away, yet never ever hurting the opponent's internal organs. Chengfu practiced Taiji very hard daily for six years using only a Taiji spear and a "living- stake" as training aids. Eventually, after Chengfu had diligently practiced the Neigong taught by his father, his internal energy circulated smoothly and swiftly inside his body and he could easily bounce the "living- stake" away over seven yards.

Although Chengfu gained significant improvement in his martial arts skills during this time of his intense training, his confidence was still lacking. After all, the "living- stake" was just a training partner, and was unlike a boxer who would come to challenge Chengfu in earnest. At that time, Mr. Wu Jianquan (吳鑒泉) taught Taiji in Beijing, and he had a lot of students and enjoyed quite a respectable reputation. Therefore, Chengfu visited Jianquan and tried to have a friendly bout. The Yang and Wu families had had a long history of good friendship as well as a shared lineage. Jianquan knew Chengfu's intention and agreed to have a friendly bout with him. When the two touched hands, Chengfu immediately followed Jianquan's incoming technique and employed a hand to stick to Jianquan's belly. Then, Chengfu lightly lifted upward three times and Jianquan jumped three times as well. Since a lot of Jianquan's

students watched the bout on the spot, to save face for Jianquan, Chengfu didn't issue energy toward Jianquan even though Jianquan was excellent at yielding. Before this bout, Chengfu was never able to use sticking on Jianquan; much less issuing energy toward Jianquan. But now, when Chengfu touched Jianquan, he could immediately use sticking on him! So, from this time in 1923, Chengfu knew that his martial level had improved significantly, and he was now confident to teach students publicly. Chengfu was 40 years old in that year.

There were a lot of boxers in Beijing. When they heard that Chengfu had reopened the door to teach students, many tried to have a bout with Chengfu. Chengfu never refused any challenger. But, no one was able to defeat Chengfu, and every challenger was bounced far away by Chengfu. Those who watched these bouts were astonished by Chengfu's martial skills. Among those challengers, there were only two who were equally matched with Chengfu. One was Zhang Ce (張策 1859-1935) whose other name was Zhang Xiulin. Zhang was a famous master of Tongbei (通臂) boxing. Zhang's nickname was "Zhang Queue" because Zhang still wore his hair in a queue after 1911. When Zhang had a bout with someone, Zhang shook his queue that flew across the face of the challenger, and then the challenger, who blinked at the queue striking his face, was beaten down at the same time. The other one who was equally matched with Chengfu was Sun Lutang (孫祿堂) who was a master of Xingyi and Bagua. Sun was thin but swift, and he acquired the nickname of "living monkey." After Chengfu had a bout with both Zhang and Sun, they became very close friends, like brothers. Chengfu, Zhang and Sun were the best boxers in Beijing at that time.

2. Undefeated martial skills

There is a common misunderstanding that, once one is trained very hard with only the form for health benefits, then one is also automatically able to be a skillful boxer. Actually, there is a specific set curriculum of hard training programs for Yang family Taiji. For example, in practicing holding postures, one has to accompany this with Neigong. Chengfu's foundation of holding posture was excellent. His "Golden Cock Stands on One Leg" was so stable that no one could push him down. Chengfu once went sightseeing at Shanghai's Fu-Xing Park in late autumn. At that Park, leaves on the big French parasol trees become withered and yellow

during that season. Chengfu issued a shoulder stroke against the trunk of the parasol tree, and the leaves on the tree started to flutter downward like it was snowing. Also, since Chengfu practiced with his training partner, the "living- stake" , very hard, he was able to bounce the opponent away with any part of his body. Dr. Huang once accompanied Chengfu to go out for breakfast. A big guy almost ran into them head-on and just barely passed by Chengfu. Chengfu only felt his thigh touching the big guy, but instantly that guy was bounced far away.

Regarding Chengfu's skill in push hands, he didn't just defeat the opponent by hand techniques, rather he defeated them by using his Yi and Qi. When Chengfu received the incoming force of an opponent and then give a loud shout, the opponent would definitely be uprooted and fly through the air. Chengfu's energy was so powerful that no one was really able to compete with him. Chengfu was excellent at issuing energy from his Dantian. Even though the sound varied, Chengfu would always give a loud shout when issuing energy. Though Chengfu was very overweight in his middle years, his movements were quite fast and his steps were swift. One day, Chengfu pushed hands with Uncle Chen Weiming. Chengfu suddenly issued energy toward Weiming. Weiming, like an arrow shot from a bowstring, flew toward the window, and all of those watching were scared by what seemed was to about to happen. But, Chengfu quickly moved and caught Weiming's ankle and shouted, "Come Back!" Weiming, with a pale face, ended up safely in front of the window. Later, Weiming told Chengfu that Chengfu's energy was so powerful that he was incapable of taking it. So Weiming asked Chengfu if he could issue energy a little more gently. Then, Chengfu employed only his two forefingers to stick to Weiming's wrist and elbow. When Chengfu just sank his forefingers on Weiming's arm, Weiming was uprooted constantly. On another day, Chengfu performed push hands with his son, Yang Shouzhong, at the Eight Celestials Bridge (八仙橋) in Shanghai. Shouzhong suddenly pushed toward Chengfu, and Chengfu received the incoming force with his right hand. Following with a shout of "looking for a beating", Chengfu slapped the palm of his right hand with his left hand, and instantly Shouzhong flew away over seven yards. Fortunately, Dr. Huang and Zhang Yu were there together and tried to catch Shouzhong with their hands, but the energy was so powerful that all three fell down on the ground.

When Chengfu acted as the chief instructor for the Martial Arts School of Hangzhou, a Shaolin boxer tried to use a surprise attack against Chengfu from the rear. This happened in winter, and Chengfu used to keep his hands on the inside of his long-sleeved cotton gown to keep them warm. When the Shaolin boxer just touched Chengfu's sleeves even from the rear, he was bounced away over 4 yards by Chengfu's light yielding and issuing. The boxer immediately bowed to Chengfu and apologized for his rudeness.

Chengfu was also an excellent swordsman. The Dragon Spring sword of the Yang family usually is only half-sharp. That means that the blade is not sharp, but the end-point of the sword is very sharp and can cut a copper coin in half by piercing it. Chengfu's skill with the sword was amazing. However, he never wanted to hurt an opponent by the sword when he had a bout. Therefore, Chengfu always used a bamboo sword so he could strike the opponent's wrist in order to disarm the opponent's weapon. A Mr. Zhang Ce enjoyed a respected reputation in his use of the saber and spear. The spear Zhang Ce used was as thick as the size of a child's arm. In practice, Zhang Ce would hold his big spear by both hands, and sway it right and left by using his waist. Since Ce's power was so strong, no one dared to fight with him. One day, Chengfu privately had a bout with Ce. Chengfu used a bamboo sword and Ce used his big spear. Ce's attack was like a ferocious flood toward Chengfu. Instantly, Chengfu evaded Ce's attack, and following Ce, stepped forward with a loud shout, "Brother, Stand firmly!" At that moment, Chengfu's bamboo sword struck right on Ce's wrist. Ce had to drop his spear to the ground. Chengfu humbly said, "I only could strike you because you, my brother, are getting a bit older and bit slower now. Otherwise, I couldn't come to close to you."

When my teacher, Dr. Huang, and Chengfu played the two-person dueling sword, Dr. Huang always was touched by the tip of Chengfu's sword. Chengfu taught Dr. Huang a special training method to gain this skill. He told Dr. Huang to cut a pomelo skin (柚子皮?) into several pieces and hang those pieces of pomelo skin on different angles and heights of the house beam. Dr. Huang, sword in hand, would then walk the "Nine Square Steps" pattern as instructed by Chengfu. When Dr. Huang saw any piece of the pomelo skin, he instantly employed the sword to pierce it. After training in this manner for a while until he didn't miss any piercing, he changed the pomelo skin and used round kumquats, and then to copper coins that were same size as kumquats. After completing such training, striking the opponent's wrist became easy. However, the whole process of sword training is quite long, rather than

something that can be accomplished overnight.

The Taiji spear skills of the Yang family was very famous. Because Yang Banhou had a pretty bad temper, his mother worried that Banhou might hurt people when training with the spear. She ordered Banhou to take the spearhead off. Therefore, students at the Yang household practiced the Taiji spear without a “spearhead.” Banhou’s spear was made of steel, and it weighed around 40 pounds. But Banhou’s internal energy was so powerful that onetime his steel spear broke as he practiced with it. Chengfu’s spear was as thick as a wine cup. When Chengfu played the two-person dueling spear, he would tightly stick his spear to the opponent’s, and would repeatedly step forward and backward without making any sound. But when Chengfu gave a loud shout, the opponent instantly flew away. Uncle Wu Huichuan was a big guy, and he weighed over 260 pounds. Dr. Huang once watched when Chengfu played the two-person dueling spear with Uncle Huichuan. When their two spears just touched each other Chengfu made a sound of issuing energy, and Uncle Huichuan was immediately bounced from the main house to the courtyard, a distance over 11 yards. Because the power was so strong and quick, Uncle Huichuan smashed through the railings and his spear was still in his hands.

When I was young, Dr. Huang told me stories about Chengfu’s amazing Taiji spear skills. But when I heard these stories, I privately thought that Dr. Huang definitely was exaggerating Chengfu’s martial skills. In the 1980’s, I made a friend of Mr. Jiang Changfeng (江長風) who was a disciple of Wu Jianquan. According to Mr. Jiang, he once saw Chengfu display his martial skills, and it was the same as what Dr. Huang said above. After Chengfu died, Mr. Jiang told me never saw such amazing skills again. Wu Taiji is excellent at yielding, but it is rare to find hardly anyone in Wu’s lineage who can compete with Chengfu’s powerful energy. Mr. Jiang was not part of the lineage of Yang Taiji, so it was not necessary for him to praise Chengfu. Therefore, I deeply believe what Dr. Huang said about Chengfu’s Taiji spear skills. Not only were Chengfu’s Taiji spear skills famous among Taiji practitioners, but they were also admired by other martial arts branches. Yang Hongxiu (楊洪修) and Ma Jinbiao (馬金鏢) who were famous masters of Chaquan (查拳) created their own spear techniques, but some of their spear techniques skills actually were assimilated from Chengfu’s.

Although Chengfu inherited his family's Taijiquan, sword, saber, free boxing, dueling with different weapons and Neigong, and he was excellent in all of these martial skills, he didn't practice hard during his youth. Therefore, he didn't learn some of the special skills of Jianhou, such as using a hidden slingshot to shoot iron pellets, or attacking vital points. Chengfu's level of martial arts was not as high as his father (Jianhou) or elder Uncle (Banhou).

3. Morality and virtue in martial arts

Confucius said, "Clever talk and a pretentious manner are seldom compatible with the benevolent. Resoluteness, persistence, simplicity and slowness to speak are close to benevolence." Chengfu had a simple and honest temperament, but he was also not a loquacious talker. When Chengfu taught Taijiquan, he just demonstrated the form and didn't talk much. Chengfu also never criticized other branches of martial arts, and he repeatedly admonished disciples against disputes about weaknesses of others. If someone disparaged another's martial skill in front of Chengfu, Chengfu would say that practicing one's martial art was not easy, and it is really hard to develop a high level of skill. What a wonderful example of morality and martial virtue Chengfu has given us!

Traditionally, the Yang lineage practitioners would bounce the opponent away over 4 yards by issuing long energy (長勁), rather than by issuing short energy that can hurt internal organs. When Grand Master Yang Luchan taught Taijiquan to the imperial family of the Qing Dynasty, he had to kneel down to pay respect to the emperor's brothers before he pushed hands with them. Luchan would explain that, "In practicing the push hands skills of Yang Taiji, one has to issue energy, and the one issued must be bounced far away. However, it will never ever hurt the internal organs." But Chengfu's internal energy was so powerful that, unless he was careful, he might hurt people by accident. One time, Chengfu had a sword bout with someone in Wuhan (武漢), Hubei province. Chengfu employed a bamboo sword to strike the opponent's

wrist, but only after a few strikes the opponent's hand was broken. Chengfu felt deep remorse about that accident. Thereafter, Chengfu would usually keep his hands on the inside of his long-sleeved gown, so he wouldn't trigger a strike by accident.

Chengfu respected the branches of other martial arts very much. In 1928, Zhang Zhijiang (張之江), the Chairman of the Central Martial Arts Organization (CMAO) in Nanjing, offered the position of Chairman of the Taiji branch to Chengfu. Also, Zhang asked Chengfu to bring some of his outstanding disciples as instructors. Because Chengfu had to settle a lot of affairs in Beijing, he was unable to go south to Nanjing for a short while. Since Chengfu was delayed in taking this position, Mr. Li Jinglin (李景林), the deputy Chairman of the CMAO, asked Mr. Sun Lutang to be the Deputy Chairman of the Taiji branch. Sun didn't know that Zhang had also invited Chengfu, and Sun changed the Taiji branch into the "Wudang" branch that was divided into three sub-branches: Xingyi, Bagua and Taiji. Those martial arts were taught by Sun's disciples. When Chengfu and his disciples arrived in Nanjing, they had no idea what had happened in the CMAO. When Zhang entertained Chengfu in the welcome banquet, Zhang suggested a bout between Chengfu and Lutang in order to decide who should be the Chairman. Chengfu sincerely and honestly replied that, "Sun is my sworn elder brother. This position should be taken by him. It is not necessary to have a bout between us. Also now, the teaching positions are not available and so it is not suitable for my disciples to stay here any longer. We should leave, and I pray for Chairman Zhang's understanding." Later, Chengfu told his disciples that, "Sun and I have a very close friendship. There is no problem for us to have a friendly private bout. But how could I have a public battle with Sun over such an insignificant matter? Zhang is really preposterous!" After Chengfu came to Shanghai, Zhang himself realized that his proposal was improper. Therefore, Zhang recommended Chengfu as the Chief Instructor of the Martial Arts Organization in Zhejiang (浙江). After Chengfu left Nanjing, Lutang also left and recommended Mr. Gao Zhendong (高振東) as the Deputy Chairman of the Wudang branch in the CMAO. Later, Sun took the position as the Chief Instructor of the Martial Arts Organization in Jiangsu (江蘇). What remarkable integrity both Masters had!

When Chengfu arrived in Shanghai, Mr. Wu Jianquan had been teaching Taiji at the Jingwu (Elite Martial) Athletic Association (精武體育會) for a while. Jianquan came to see Chengfu and brought some gifts, such as ham, bird's nest soup, shark's fin and wine. Greeting Chengfu, Jianquan said, "How are you? My father and I learned Taiji from the Yang family. Teaching Taiji has been our career. Regarding the Yang's kindness, we will remember this as long as we live." Chengfu replied, "Wu and Yang Taiji originally were one family. How could you differentiate one from each other? I won't take any one who is your student to be my student. You may set your mind at ease." After that, Chengfu politely refused any of Wu's students who wanted to learn Taiji in the Yang household. Also, Chengfu explained to them that there were some differences between the forms of Wu and Yang Taiji. Chengfu took Tian Zuolin who was Zhang Ce's disciple and Chen Weiming who was Sun Lutang's disciple as disciples, because both were recommended by their teachers themselves. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for Chengfu to take Zuolin and Weiming as disciples. Chengfu always got along well with other branches of martial arts.

4. Passes away

In 1936, Chengfu was 53 years old and his martial level had reached the peak of perfection. Suddenly, Chengfu died at that age. This event caused a lot of guesses and rumors, and opinions were widely divided.

Some people considered that Chengfu consumed too much energy due to fiercely issuing energy. Dr. Huang said that, "Such an argument is definitely nonsense. Issuing energy in Yang Taiji is extremely light, relaxed and ingenious. It can bounce the opponent far away and never employs hard force. Both Grand Master Luchan and Jianhou had extremely powerful energy, but they enjoyed longevity. Now, I am over 80 years old, and I still can bounce the opponent over 4 yards away without using any hard force."

The second guess was that Chengfu was a "playboy" , and eager in seeking carnal pleasures. Dr. Huang said that, "Chengfu was honest and kind. Moreover, he was very loyal to his wife.

This couple lived together in harmony. After Chengfu came to Shanghai, a lot of rich ladies learned Taiji with him. However, Chengfu always kept a proper distance from those female students. As a disciple of Yang Taiji, I followed Chengfu all the time. Chengfu refused to be contaminated by any evil influences. You should not listen to meaningless gossip.”

Dr. Huang was good in both Chinese and Western medical knowledge. He believed that Chengfu died in middle age due to an improper diet. When Chengfu was young, he practiced Taiji so hard he had to eat a lot for replenishing calories. When Dr. Huang first came to the Yang's house, he was scared at Chengfu's tremendous appetite in devouring his meals. After Chengfu became famous for his skills, he didn't have to practice Taiji so hard. However, Chengfu didn't control his diet, and he ate as before. The calories that Chengfu ate were not used completely in his daily training as before, and they accumulated on Chengfu's body. Chengfu's weight was getting heavier day after day. Moreover, Chengfu always preferred a meat dish to a vegetable one. Dr. Huang believed that Chengfu's levels of cholesterol and triglyceride were pretty high. Therefore, Dr. Huang thinks that Chengfu's edema was not a result from kidney disease, rather it was from heart disease that was the disastrous outcome of over-high levels of triglycerides. “Disease comes from eating”, is an ancient proverb. This is a truth indeed.

What I have briefly said about Chengfu can be a supplement in studying Yang Taiji. Also, it can perhaps inspire a bit of introspection for junior practitioners. Master Chengfu was a grandson of Grand Master Luchan. He had practiced Taiji since he was a child. At age 40, Chengfu's martial skills reached a level of perfection. Even as a member of the third generation of the Yang family, Chengfu didn't inherit all of the martial arts skills of his father, uncle or grandfather. Nowadays, anyone who has ties of kinship or friendship with the Yang family claims himself as a lineage holder of Yang Taiji, or boasts of himself as an excellent martial artist. Chengfu possessed excellent virtue as well as amazing martial arts skills. However, he was always humble and prudent. He is a paragon of what a decent martial artist should be. Those who don't have true martial skills and like to talk wildly should feel shame comparing themselves with Master Chengfu. I know I am certainly not good enough myself, so I sincerely conduct self-examinations of my Taiji training and moral conduct repeatedly. I wish that all Taiji practitioners can mutually encourage one another to do likewise.

Chapter-3 "Jingxuan, Shaoxuan, and Yaxuan: Three Outstanding Pupils of Yang Jianhou

Niu Chunming (牛春明 1881-1961) was born in Beijing and belonged to the race of Manchus (滿族). In 1901, Niu studied medical science in the Catholic Gospel Hospital, run by missionaries from Italy, and he majored in orthopedics. At that time, Grand Master Jianhou developed some minor problems with his feet, and he went to see a doctor in that hospital. Niu was assigned to tend to Jianhou, and upon meeting him, Niu took this chance and earnestly asked to learn Taiji with Jianhou. But, Jianhou was already retired and was not taking new disciples. However, Jianhou considered that Niu, being a doctor, was a diligent and studious man. Therefore, Jianhou ordered Chengfu to take Niu as a disciple, but Niu actually was taught mostly by Jianhou himself. Jianhou nicknamed Niu “Jingxuan (鏡軒)”.

In 1907, the Catholic Gospel Hospital recommended Niu as a doctor for the Beijing Fire Brigade. Meanwhile, Jianhou was also invited by that fire brigade to be an honorary instructor of martial arts. From that time on, Niu was often taught by Jianhou and he really learned something. In 1912, Niu assisted Chengfu to teach Taiji in Central Park. In 1914, Niu acted as an assistant instructor at the Yang house. Not only did Niu completely learn the form, sword, saber, spear and Neigong from Jianhou, but he also privately learned attacking vital points during the last years of Jianhou's life. Unfortunately, Jianhou passed away before Niu could learn how to reverse the effects of attacking the vital points.

Because Niu trained diligently to learn the skill of attacking vital points, he was able to use his internal energy (jin) in his fingers to penetrate objects. Niu once went on a picnic, and he forgot to carry a tool for opening cans. Niu simply penetrated the tops of the cans by his fingers. Also, Niu's skill of sensing energy was extremely amazing. Generally, Taiji practitioners are able to sense the opponent's energy only by touching the body of their opponent. However, Niu didn't have to touch the opponent and he was still able to sense the opponent's energy. For example, when Niu would spar with others, and the opponent tried to

attack Niu with his right hand, Niu would say in advance of the attack, “please attack me by your right hand.” When the opponent planned to kick Niu by his left foot, Niu would say in advance, “please kick me by your left foot.” Such skill did Niu have, and it proved effective every time.

After Jianhou died in 1917, Niu traveled around and performed his medical duties as a doctor. He visited Dotong (大同), Shanxi Province, Shijiazhuang (石家莊), Hebei Province, Fuzhou (撫州), Jiangxi Province, and tried to find Taiji friends or masters. Unfortunately, Niu never found anyone who was skilled at attacking vital points. He had hoped to find someone who could teach him how to reverse the damage done by the strikes. In 1920, Niu went further south and set up a Taiji school for a short while in Shanghai. Later, Niu left Shanghai and moved to Zhejiang (浙江) Province. When Niu stayed in Zhejiang, he also taught Taiji in the area of Lanchi (蘭溪) and Yongkang (永康). One day, a boxer who was from Yongkang visited Niu and launched a surprise attack toward him. At that time, Niu was sitting on a chair and drinking tea. Niu didn't leave his seat and just turned his waist to yield to the incoming force. Then, Niu followed the attack and issued energy toward the boxer who was not only bounced away, but he hit a table and crashed into the whole tea set which was broken into pieces when he, and it, hit the ground. The next day, the boxer was accompanied by three other boxers, and the four surrounded Niu and tried to attack him. However, the four were bounced away one by one. After that, the four earnestly asked how Niu was able to fight against more than one opponent at a time? Niu said that, “This is a Taiji skill of sensing Jin. Sensing the incoming force first, and then issuing energy toward the opponent. This whole process happens in an instant, like a lightening flash. Since I have acquired this skill, I'm not worried about being surrounded by many guys like you. I am still able to turn peril into safety.”

In 1928, when Chengfu acted as the chief instructor in the Martial School of Hangzhou, Niu went to assist Chengfu in teaching. When Chengfu went to Shanghai and Guangzhou, Niu stayed in Hangzhou to continue teaching. During the Sino-Japanese War, Niu escaped the war and resided in the countryside. In 1946, Niu returned to Hangzhou and established a Taiji school at No. 37, Kai-Yuan Road (開始路). During that time, Niu often had friendly bouts with a Tong-Bei boxer named Ma Yusun (馬雨蓀) and a Bagua boxer named Wang Zhuocheng (王卓誠). After 1949, Niu taught medical courses at the Medical University, the Military Hospital

and the University of Hangzhou. When Niu taught push hands at the Young Men Christian Association in Hangzhou, a pile of rice straw was put against the wall behind the students to protect them as they were bounced backward by Niu. Niu participated in the National Martial Arts Tournament in Beijing in 1956. People called Niu the “Buffalo Hercules (牛大力士),” because all of the younger challengers, who were from different provinces, were bounced over four yards away by Niu. However, Niu said that, “The nickname of “Buffalo Hercules” is not right. The power comes from Neigong rather than brute strength.” In 1960, there was a documentary film called “Evergreen (萬年青),” which recorded performances of several Taiji martial artists. The director asked Niu to perform his Taiji skills. Niu called someone to bring a cage with a bird inside. Then Niu led the bird out and let it stand on his palm. When the bird tried to flap its wings and fly away, it was unable to do so. That was because the bird had to lift off by way of Niu’s palm. However, Niu yielded to each attempt by the bird to lift off, so the bird was unable to fly away. Such amazing skill was inherited from Grand Master Jianhou.

Unfortunately, because Niu smoked too much, he died due to cancer in 1961. Niu had some excellent disciples, such as Shang Shichang (商世昌), Pan Zhicheng (潘志誠), Gu Qiou(顧啟歐), Qu Wen(瞿文), He Mingsheng(賀鳴聲) and Ding Shuide (丁水德). Niu’s daughter, Xiaoling (筱靈), wrote “The Taijiquan of Niu Chunming” in Hongkong. Niu’s grand son, Meng Xianmin (孟憲民) established the Taiji School of Niu Chunming in Hangzhou in 1996.

Tian Zhaolin (田兆麟 1891~1960) was a fire fighter in the Beijing Fire Brigade. Grand Master Jianhou saw that Tian was diligent and strong, and therefore he gave Tian a lot of attention when instructing members of the brigade. Jianhou was quite strict in teaching his students. If the student’s practice of the postures did not come up to Jianhou’s standards, Jianhou wouldn’t teach the next posture. According to Tian’s memory, he was asked to only practice both the Preparation and Beginning stationary postures for over half a year. Tian’s basics were quite solid, his comprehension was very good and he practiced Taiji constantly. Therefore, his martial skills improved significantly. Tian asked to Bai Shr to Jianhou many times. However, Grand Master Jianhou rejected Tian’s request due to Tian’s impatience.

In 1915, Tian, at age 24, was selected to be the leader of a fire fighting team in the Beijing Fire Brigade. That same year, Jianhou appointed Tian to be Chengfu's disciple through a Bai Shr ceremony. Also, Jianhou bestowed the name of "Shaoxuan (紹軒)" upon Tian, as Tian was actually being taught by Jianhou at that time. After Jianhou died, Tian learned fast boxing and free boxing of Yang Taiji with Yang Shaohou (楊少侯). Tian practiced very hard and achieved a high level. Shaohou's reputation earned him the nickname of "the Bodhisattva of a Thousand Hands (千手觀音)", which meant that Shaohou's martial skills were varied and swift. Tian learned some of these skills of Shaohou.

Tian accompanied Shaohou to Hangzhou. At that time, there was an evil practice in Hangzhou by which strangers were easily cheated and abused by the rickshaw drivers in that city. One day, Tian got in a rickshaw, and the driver, hearing Tian's northern accent knew that Tian was a stranger. Reaching Tian's destination, the driver demanded double payment, but Tian refused to pay it. The driver came forward and tried to pull Tian's sleeve. Tian followed the driver's incoming movement and used the technique of "Pull" (Cai). Immediately, the driver somersaulted and fell down to the ground. Other rickshaw drivers saw this happen and became angry toward Tian. A dozen drivers came over together and surrounded Tian to attack him. Witnesses at that time said they didn't see what Tian did, but could only hear the sound of Tian's shout as he issued energy, as all of those drivers who attacked him fell to the ground.

Another day, Tian was sitting alongside a window drinking tea in a teahouse near the West Lake. Two Nationalist military officers came in and asked Tian to yield his seat. Tian refused their request. Therefore, the officers tried to rough up Tian, but the two were bounced away over 4 yards by Tian. The officers went back to their military compound nearby, and called more than a dozen people to help them get even with Tian. Back to the teahouse they went, but Tian took this chance to fully display his skills. Tian calmly defended himself and bounced away each of the attackers one by one. Because Tian was attacked twice by more a dozen people and wasn't hurt at all himself, Tian's martial reputation spread around quickly. Upon hearing about Tian, a lot of people asked to learn Taiji with him.

In 1923, Chengfu's martial level had reached the pinnacle of perfection, and he decided to re-open the door of his family compound for teaching Taiji. Upon hearing this news, Tian

especially went back to Beijing to have a friendly bout with Chengfu. Right from the beginning of the bout, Tian's hand was stuck when he touched Chengfu's hand. He seemed to have no way to escape from Chengfu because of Chengfu's superior skills in sticking. Then, he was continually bounced away over 4 yards several times by Chengfu. Tian thought that he owned all the skills of Yang Taiji because he was trained very well by both Jianhou and Shaohou. Tian never expected that Chengfu's martial level would be this high and almost too profound to be understood. Tian became emotionally overwhelmed and could not help crying. Immediately, Tian knelt down, kowtowed to Chengfu and earnestly asked for Chengfu's teaching.

Because Tian was taught personally by Jianhou, Shaohou and Chengfu, his martial level was quite unique and he once won the championship of a tournament in Nanjing . In the early 1930's, Tian taught Taiji at the Jewelry Association of South City in Shanghai . A lot of people from different industries were attracted to learn Taiji because of Tian's reputation. Moreover, Tian also taught Taiji publicly at Bund Park (Huangpu Park) for decades. During the 1950's, I frequently visited Bund Park and watched Tian push hands with his disciples. No matter how high the disciple's martial level, once he touched Tian's hands, he was instantly controlled by Tian. In less than few minutes of pushing with Tian, the disciple would begin to sweat and not be able to stand anymore. Then immediately, another disciple would take a turn to push hands with Tian. One by one, Tian pushed with over a dozen of his students and disciples, and yet he still kept on talking and laughing as if nothing had happened. Beginning at 6:00 a.m., when the Park opened Tian started teaching. Tian would take a rest and eat a bowl of noodles around 10:00 a.m. After that, Tian would continue to push hands with his disciples and students until noon.

Again, due to his reputation, a lot of boxers asked to have bouts with Tian. Tian neither refused their requests, nor asked their names or where they were from. Tian always enjoyed these encounters. Moreover, Tian never lost to them. A dock laborer, who had learned Shaolin boxing and was able to lift a stone of over 260 pounds, frequently sneered at Tian's push hands and considered Tian's martial arts skills to be mere fakery. One day, when I was watching Tian push hands with his disciples, the dock laborer made a surprise attack toward Tian's back. As Tian was attacked, he didn't bother to turn around and just gave a loud shout. The dock laborer was bounced over 4 yards away. Then, Tian turned around and asked the

laborer if he was hurt? The laborer felt so ashamed and his face turned red. He explained to Tian, “I’m not hurt. I just wanted to test your martial skills...please don’t mind me.” Tian just laughed.

I have watched the push hands of several famous Taiji boxers, such as Zhang Daquan (張達泉), Ma Yueliang (馬岳梁), Hao Shaoru (郝少如) and He Bingquan (何炳泉). They each had their own strong points, but Tian really was different from those boxers mentioned above. Tian totally represented and embodied the unique style of Yang Taiji. Some of Tian’s disciples were also good at push hands, such as Ye Dami (葉大密), Chen Zhijin (陳志進), Yang Kairu (楊開儒) and Shen Yongpei (沈永培). The book entitled “The Form, Sword, Saber, Spear and Free Boxing of Taiji” was dictated by Tian and recorded by Chen Yanlin. That book was published by the Guo Guang Publishing House of Shanghai in 1943. It thoroughly presented the so-called large frame form, the weapons, and the Neigong taught by Jianhou. However, it didn’t include Jianhou’s middle frame form and Shaohou’s small frame form. Unfortunately now, the middle and small frame forms of Yang Taiji lack successors to pass them down to future practitioners.

Li Chunnian (李椿年 1896~1976) was born in Jiaohe county, Hebei Province. At age 14, Li learned Shaolin boxing with Chen Dianfu (陳殿福), and Soft Palm (綿掌) with Fu Kunting (傅昆庭). Several years later, Li had a bout with a Taiji practitioner named Fu Haitian (傅海田). When Li touched Haitian’s hands, Li immediately lost his balance, and yet he was unable to escape from Haitian’s control and continually fell to the ground. From this encounter, Li realized that Taiji was an amazing martial art. Because of Haitian’s introduction, Li came to Royal Park in Beijing and learned Taiji with Chengfu. In addition to practicing Taiji at Royal Park, Li also went to the Yang family house to study Taiji. At that time, Grand Master Jianhou was impressed by Li very much and appointed Li to be Chengfu’s disciple through a Bai Shr ceremony. Also, Jianhou bestowed the name of “Yaxuan (雅軒)” upon Li. Jianhou actually taught Li all of the Yang family’s skills. In addition to the form, sword, saber and spear, Jianhou also taught Li a unique skill of using the slingshot. Using this skill, one shot can cause damage to an iron plaited door, even if the door were tens of yards away from the shooter. The slingshot shooter who knows this skill is also able to shoot a mosquito with a mud ball. And if he is highly skilled, when the mud ball is taken away from the wall, the unfortunate mosquito will be found stuck inside the mud ball. Moreover, the highly skilled

shooter can shoot a ball into the air, and is able to shoot a second one to hit the first one while it's still in the air.

Li's movements were quick and swift, and his skill in using the Taiji spear was very profound. He was also good at issuing short energy when he pushed hands with others. Li once had a bout using a spear with Mr. Zhang, a Shaolin boxer, at the Central Martial Arts School in Nanjing, and Zhang was bounced away over 4 yards by Li. A dozen students of Zhang who were there at the time got angry, and immediately took bamboo swords to attack Li together. Li, moving swiftly, yielded the incoming force of each of the attackers, and then struck their wrists with the spear, making each of them drop their bamboo swords.

In 1929, When Chengfu acted as the chief instructor in the Martial Arts School of Hangzhou, Li went to assist in the teaching. During that time, Mr. Zhou Shenghong (周聲洪) also was there. He was a Shaolin boxer and was able to smash bricks with his palm. People called him "Iron Arms". One day, Zhou asked to have a private bout with Li. Li lightly lifted his the right hand toward Zhou, and Zhou hastily resisted Li's hand with both of his hands, leaving his chest unprotected. Li quickly turned his palm downward to stick Zhou's ribs and issued short energy. Suddenly, Zhou crouched down, held his chest with his hands and couldn't speak. Li helped Zhou to return back to the school's dormitory and gave him some medicine. Later, Zhou remarked that Taiji free boxing "comes and goes like a ghost."

When Chengfu went to Shanghai and Guangzhou to teach Taiji, Li stayed in Hangzhou to assist Niu Chunming in teaching. In 1934, Li acted as the chairman of the Taiji School in Nanjing . During the Sino-Japanese War, Li left Nanjing, and went to the city of Chengdu, in Sichuan Province and resided there for his remaining years. Mr. Xu Jun (徐俊) who was the Commander of the Cavalry in the Nationalist military, had learned Shaolin boxing with many masters, and his muscular strength was amazing. One day, Xu asked to have a bout with Li and Xu's attack was ferocious. Li, yielding to and following Xu's attacks , stepped backward and used "pull" (Cai) to deflect Xu's hands. Xu's attacks were continuously blunted, and he fell down a couple times. The following day, Xu earnestly asked to become a disciple of Li's.

General Guo Xunqi (郭勳祺) also was a disciple of Li's. After 1949, Guo acted as the deputy Chairman of the Sports Affairs Council in Sichuan Province, and Li acted as a representative of the Political Consultative Conference as well as an instructor of the Sports Affairs Council in Chengdu. From that time, Li taught a lot of students in Sichuan Province. He preserved and transmitted a lot of the skills of the Yang Taiji form, sword, saber, spear, push hands and free boxing. Li's lineage holders include Zhou Zineng (周子能), Li Ziyi (栗子宜), Lin Mogen (林墨根), Zhang Yijing (張義敬), Li Mindi (Li's daughter 李敏弟) and Chen Longxiang (Li's son-in-law 陳龍驤). The book, "Taijiquan li chuan zhen (太極拳理傳真)" was written by Yijing and was published by the Chungqing (重慶) Publishing House in 1986. The book, "The Collection of Yang Taiji Weapons" written by Mindi and Longxiang include the detailed explanations of the form, sword and saber. It was published by the Sichuan Technology Publishing House in the 1990' s. It also was read and admired by a lot of Taiji friends and was re-printed again and again.

Niu, Tian and Li were called collectively as the "Three Xuan (三軒)", and were directly taught by Grand Master Jianhou. They were the pioneers who spread Yang Taiji in the south of China . During several decades, they had bouts with a lot of boxers who were from different branches of the martial arts, and they were never defeated. They are indeed the top boxers of the fourth generation of Yang Taiji.

CHAPTER-4 "Shining Stars of Yang Chengfu"

ZHANG QINLIN

Zhang Qinlin (張欽霖 1887-1967) was born in Xingtai (邢臺), Hebei Province (Not to be confused with Chengfu's nephew, Zhang Qinglin (張慶麟)). Zhang's parents died when he was still just a kid. At age 15, Zhang became a servant at the Yang family house. When Grand Master Jianhou taught his Taiji class at night outside, Zhang always followed Jianhou and held a lantern to help light his path. Day after day, Zhang gradually became interested in Taiji and secretly imitated Yang's martial arts. After Jianhou retired from teaching Taiji, he himself taught Zhang and appointed Zhang as a fourth generation lineage holder. Zhang was diligent and intelligent. Therefore, Zhang learned a lot from Jianhou.

A Mr. Wan, who was a student of Du Xinwu (杜心五), was a top boxer of the Central Martial Arts Organization (CMAO), and he wanted to have a bout with Chengfu. One morning, because Chengfu had played mah-jong all night, he was trying to take a bit of rest by sitting on a chair. Suddenly, Wan appeared at Yang house and loudly yelled to Chengfu. Then, before Chengfu could rise from his chair, Wan launched a surprise attack toward him. Wan employed his right hand to punch Chengfu's chest. Quickly, Chengfu stuck to Wan's right hand by his left hand. Wan couldn't go forward or escape backward from Chengfu's sticking. At that moment, Zhang, who was standing nearby Chengfu, instantly jumped toward Wan and employed his right hand to fiercely chop Wan's right hand. Subsequently, Zhang took two Dragon Spring swords and challenged Wan to a duel. Because Wan's hand was injured by Zhang's chop, Wan knew he couldn't hold the sword then, and so he awkwardly left Yang's house. A Mr. Liu Baichuan (劉百川), a senior Shaolin boxer, was able to break an arm-size tree by a kick. People called Liu "the number one leg south of the Yangtze River ." Liu once asked to learn Taiji from Chengfu, but Chengfu told Liu that, "Taiji and Shaolin have their own specialized skills and training methods. Your martial level has reached perfection. I don't think that you need to learn Taiji. You should just focus on the Shaolin skills." Chengfu and Liu always respected each other, even though Chengfu had not taught Liu Taiji.

When Liu learned that Wan launched a surprise attack against Chengfu, Liu was very angry and he went to Du's house to condemn Wan. Du knew that Wan was not capable of fighting with Liu. Therefore, Du himself fought with Liu. Liu's attack was so fierce that Du couldn't help withdrawing backward to a wall. Liu knew that Du had no place to escape, so Liu tried a strong kick toward Du. However, Liu didn't expect that Du had Qinggong (輕功) skills, whereupon Du suddenly jumped up onto a two-meter high wall. Then, Du told Liu that, "Brother Liu, get on the wall and have a bout with me." But, Liu's prior kick was too strong and his leg was stuck inside the wall. After Liu pulled his leg out from the wall, Liu said to Du, "Would you dare to come down to the ground and have a bout with me?." Mr. Li Jing-lin (李景林) learned of the dispute between Du and Liu. Li, knowing how skillful they both were, worried that Liu and Du fighting each other might result in one of them being seriously injured. Li hastily led some of Chengfu's senior students to Du's house to stop the two from fighting. Du knew that Liu was a straightforward man, and so he agreed to stop fighting and hastily called Wan out. Du ordered Wan to kowtow to Liu. Because Wan publically knelt down and apologized to Liu for his rudeness, what else could Liu do but to forgive Wan?

The story of Liu mentioned above was spread widely. But, some relayed erroneous messages and then spread that story incorrectly. For example, some said that Chengfu slipped on the ground due to Wan's surprise attack. Zhang was there at the time and personally witnessed and experienced that event, and he himself told Dr. Huang that story. Therefore, I feel obligated to disclose the truth here and correct any misinformation. Chengfu considered that Zhang acted bravely in giving him a hand, and deeply appreciated Zhang's heroic act. After this incident, Chengfu asked Zhang to stay late, and privately taught Zhang that night. Zhang had learned Taiji with Jianhou and Shaohou, but he never had a chance to test his skills with Chengfu. Chengfu told him that, "There is no one here tonight. You don't have to worry, so do your best to attack me." Zhang tried to attack several times. But, all of his attacks were handled by Chengfu's sticking ability, and Zhang was bounced away over 5 yards each time. Zhang was totally convinced of Chengfu's perfection in his martial arts skills. After that, Chengfu himself privately taught Zhang Neigong in the dead of night for over three months.

Zhang was trained by Jianhou and Shaohou for many years, so his martial foundation was very profound and his comprehension was excellent. After Chengfu's training though, Zhang's martial level improved significantly. Zhang's style of Taiji was exactly like Chengfu's. None of

the other Taiji students of Chengfu could compete with Zhang. Some people have said that the form of a particular member of the junior generation of Chengfu's relatives was like Chengfu's. But, Dr. Huang said that his form was just externally similar to Chengfu's. Actually, unlike Zhang, this distant relative didn't get the real training in Neigong. But Zhang really obtained Chengfu's essence, and his martial arts were truly like Chengfu's. After Zhang had completed the Neigong training, he left Chengfu and traveled around to many places in China.

There were a lot of martial artists who resided in Shanxi (山西) Province. But Zhang was never defeated when he had bouts with boxers in Shanxi. People ranked Zhang as "the number one boxer in Shanxi ." One day, Zhang heard that Zuo Yifeng (左一峰), a Daoist Master of the Jin Dan branch (金丹派), had achieved a high level in Neigong skills. Zhang went to Zuo and, feigning interest as a potential student, asked about his skills. Zuo said that, "You may attack me by any methods and I promise I won't fight back." Then, Zhang launched an attack using Parry and Punch. However, when Zhang's fist touched Zuo's body, Zuo didn't move, but Zhang couldn't help being bounced backward and went flying away. Zhang then honestly and sincerely asked to become a disciple of Zuo and learn his Daoist Neigong. Zuo accepted Zhang and taught him.

When Chengfu came back to Shanghai from Guangzhou to try to cure his illness, a Dr. Huang Taiheng tried placing three acupuncture needles successively into Chengfu's Dantian, and all three needles were bent by Chengfu's Qi inside his Dantian. Dr. Huang Taiheng asked Chengfu, "Why is there such a great mass of Qi in your Dantian?" Upon hearing the doctor's question to him, Chengfu was suddenly reminded that, even though Uncle Manqing and my teacher Dr. Huang had studied Taiji with him for many years and they had learned the essence of Taiji, they had not learned Neigong yet. Chengfu worried that Uncle Manqing and my teacher Dr. Huang would not be able to complete their study of without Neigong training. Therefore, due to the severity of his own illness, Chengfu wrote Zhang a letter that called Zhang back to act as a substitute teacher to instruct Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang in Neigong. Mr. Pu Qiucheng (濮秋丞), Miss Bingru's father, sponsored the traveling and living expenses of Zhang. However, Pu wondered that, since Uncle Tian Zhaolin and Wu Huichuan were in Shanghai at that time, why didn't Chengfu let Tian and Wu do this teaching, rather than calling for Zhang who resided in Shanxi? It seemed to make no sense to Pu. So, in order to

clear up any confusion regarding Chengfu's choice of Zhang, Pu asked Wu to join the welcome dinner for Zhang, and took this chance hoping to see just whose martial level was better. During the tea time of the reception, a servant came to tell the guests that the banquet was ready. The two elder brothers, who had been sitting together, supported each other's back with a hand when they stood up simultaneously, and said to each other, "Elder brother, after you, please." Suddenly Wu, who was a big and tall man, jumped forward a step, and Zhang stood there steadily without any movement. At that moment, my teacher Dr. Huang was standing behind the two elder brothers, and Pu also was standing there. Both Dr. Huang and Pu saw this event clearly. Pu then realized it was not necessary to see a bout between Zhang and Wu. Whose martial level was better was crystal clear because of what he witnessed. After completing his teaching of Neigong, Zhang told Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang that, "I prefer a simple and free life and can't bear the bustling life in the city." Without leaving behind any contact information, Zhang left Shanghai and no one knew where he went. Hu Yaozhen (胡耀真) was Zhang's lineage holder. Both Li Jingwu (李經梧) and Feng Zhiqiang (馮志強) studied Taiji Neigong with Hu for a while.

WU HUICHUAN

In 1912, Wu Huichuan (武匯川 1890-1936) started learning Taijiquan with Chengfu at the Zhong Shan (中山) Park in Beijing. In 1914, Wu became a disciple of Chengfu and, despite rumors to the contrary, he never learned Taiji with Jianhou. Rather, he only studied directly with Chengfu. According to the tradition of the Yang family, when the student finds a good partner for regularly practicing push hands or free boxing with, the partner is called a "Xiang Shou (相手)" or "mutual training partner". Chengfu was a big and tall man. Therefore, Chengfu specifically picked those students of his who were strong, tall and agile as his practice partners. Wu Huichuan, Li Yaxuan and Dong Yingjie all acted as Chengfu's "Xiang Shou". Among the three partners, Wu acted as Chengfu's "Xiang Shou" for the longest time. Therefore, Wu had the most number of chances to practice push hands, free boxing, two-person dueling sword and spear with Chengfu.

Regarding Chengfu's teaching method, he just demonstrated the form and didn't talk much. So, the only chance to really understand Chengfu's body movement, issuing energy and

emotional expression was by being bounced out by him. Even though Wu's weight was over 260 pounds, he frequently was bounced away over 7 yards. Therefore, Wu knew Chengfu's issuing energy very well, and Wu himself also was good at issuing powerful short energy.

Zhang Yu and Wu Yunzhuo were each over 240 pounds in weight, and both were specifically chosen by Wu as his in-door disciples. When they practiced push hands and free boxing with Wu, he would just stick to them. When Wu issued energy toward them they would just fly away and fall on the ground heavily with a "thud". Therefore, Wu Huichuan and Tian Zhaolin were called "the Heng-Ha Generals (哼哈二將) of Yang Taiji" by the martial arts community in Shanghai. Uncle Yaxuan also praised Wu, saying that Wu had really learned true martial arts skills from Chengfu.

Huichuan was also somewhat of an arrogant man. He named his Taiji school "The First Disciple of Yang Taiji - Wu Huichuan Taiji School." In 1928, Ye Dami was entrusted by Shen Bao News (申報) to raise scholarship aid funds for students attending the evening division of local colleges. Ye invited martial artists of different styles to perform for this charitable cause. When it was Huichuan's time to perform, he (Huichuan) vigorously walked into the stage wearing a top hat and a black overcoat. Then, Huichuan rudely threw Zhang Yu the hat and overcoat with disdain, as if he didn't care what people thought about his behavior toward Zhang Yu. Mr. Wu Jianquan instantly stood up and warmly welcomed Huichuan's arrival to the stage, but Huichuan just slightly nodded to Jianquan. Indeed, Huichuan exuded arrogance in his attitude toward others. When boxers conduct a performance, they usually just touch each other slightly and won't really strike their performance partner in earnest. However, Huichuan constantly issued strong energy toward his student and performance partner Zhang Yu. Zhang Yu couldn't stand up to Huichuan's fierce assault, and so he repeatedly fell and rolled on the ground from each attack by Huichuan. Dr. Huang was shocked by Huichuan's public display of rudeness. He privately wondered, since Chengfu was a gentle and humble person, just why was elder brother Huichuan so rude?

Huichuan was originally trained in Shaolin boxing. In 1912, Huichuan lost a bout with Niu Chunming. Because of his defeat by Niu, he then switched to learn Taiji. Huichuan was a very strong guy, and he was able to grasp a leg of a banquet table with filled wine glasses placed upon it, and steadily lift it up without spilling a drop. Taijiquan boxers usually don't use sand

bags as a training tool. However, Huichuan imitated the Shaolin practice of using sand bags for training. He hung six sand bags from the ceiling beam of his training house, each sand bag weighing over 260 pounds. Huichuan would stand in the middle of the six sand bags, and push them to swing forward and backward. Then, Huichuan punched, kicked, head butted, shouldered and elbowed those sand bags until they were broken. After a long period of this type of training, Huichuan was able to issue energy with any part of his body.

Zhang Xiaolin (張嘯林), a famous man in Shanghai who was one of the "three Shanghai tycoons" and, along with Du Yuesheng, also one of the leaders of the Shanghai Green Gang, invited Huichuan to be an instructor of martial arts, and gave Huichuan a car. Xiaolin also gave Huichuan a permit that allowed him to have unlimited free consumption of alcohol at any night club belonging to Xiaolin. Huichuan delighted in enjoying the night clubs. He went to one every night and never got tired of it. Moreover, Huichuan co-invested stocks with friends, but in doing so he lost most of savings. When Huichuan practiced push hands, he liked to issue strong energy and once accidentally injured a wealthy businessman because of his carelessness. Later, the businessman hired thugs to take vengeance on Huichuan. They tried many times, but those thugs were always defeated by Huichuan. So one day, the businessman drove a car to run down Huichuan and, though not killing him, caused him severe injuries.

Huichuan constantly experienced bad luck in his life. And at the end, he fell ill and died of an acute liver disease at age 47. Uncle Chen Weiming lamented that, "Elder brother Huichuan was so very strong and he was supposed to inherit and glorify Chengfu's teaching. Unfortunately, he died in his middle age. It seemed that this was his destiny." My teacher Dr. Huang said that, "Elder brother Huichuan just only focused on practicing Taiji intensely, but he didn't try at all to engage in cultivating his moral character. What a pity!"

TIAN ZUOLIN

Tian Zuolin (田作霖) (Not to be confused with Tian Zhaolin) had studied Tong-Bei (通臂拳) with Zhang Ce (張策) since he was a kid. Because of Zhang's recommendation, Tian became a disciple of Chengfu. Tian developed excellent skills through a comprehensive study of both

Taiji and Tong-Bei, and he also was good at free boxing. Tian taught boxing over several decades at Fu-Xing (復興) Park in Shanghai. When I was a kid, my father, as a superintendent of a hospital, invited Tian to teach boxing for the health of his employees who served in the hospital. Tian demonstrated Taiji and Tong-Bei for the employees, but most of them didn't know the profundity of Taiji and they all preferred to learn Tong-Bei. Tian's movements were extremely fast. He was able to quickly move in front of you from over 4 yards away, and then could bounce you flying in the air. Because some of the employees brawled with others after they learned boxing from Tian, my father decided not to re-hire Tian when his contract expired.

After 1949, most people learned Taiji for health, and those who were interested in learning the martial skills of Taiji were getting fewer. But Tian was not very good at teaching Taiji just for health. Moreover, students were not easy to adapt to Tian's push hands and free boxing methods because they were afraid he might injure them with his power. Therefore, Tian began losing students day after day. Sadly, Tian eventually died due to poverty and sickness. After Tian died, his disciple, Mr. Xue, took over the teaching at Fu-Xing Park where Tian had taught. Xue worked for a rice store and he was quite strong. He could easily lift a 130-pound bag of rice when he was over 70 years old. In the latter days of the Cultural Revolution, I watched push hands at Xue's place. Xue claimed himself that his Dantian was powerful and his abdomen could take anyone's punch. When Xue's disciple strongly pushed his Dantian, the disciple was bounced away. Tourists in the park were curious about Xue's martial skills and so Xue would let them take a try. One day, a strong looking man wearing a yellow military uniform, and who was around age 30, resisted Xue's Dantian with his fist. Xue gritted his teeth and tried his best to bounce him away, but Xue couldn't bounce this man back at all. Xue's face became pale due to his effort. Anyone observing could easily see that this young man was a trained martial artist. I worried that Xue might eventually be injured, so I quickly went forward, saluted this man and tried to dissolve this dilemma. I said to him, "Mr. Xue has already reached a ripe old age. Please be generous to him". I then invited this man to walk aside and had a chat with him. The man claimed to be an armed policeman. He also told me he had studied) Shaolin boxing with a Buddhist monk living on Mount Putuo (普陀山) for many years. At that time, the central government called for the people to prepare for war. So as part of the preparation, the people living around Mount Putuo excavated bomb shelters. The man told me the monk was able to deeply stir cement inside of a barrel with just his arm, and

pierce a brick wall with his bare hands. Anytime the monk fought with someone, he was able to pierce the opponent's chest. The man felt so marvelous for his teacher's martial skills. But, his teacher, the monk, told him this, "No matter how strong you are, there is always someone stronger than you. When I was young, I traveled to Shanghai. I heard that the Yang Taiji boxers were famous for their martial arts. Therefore, I visited Mr. Tian Zhaolin and asked to have a bout. When I punched Tian, I felt like I was punching a bale of cotton. I instantly was bounced backward and flew toward a window. I hastily hooked the window with my feet in order not to fall out. Then, I sat up on the window and loudly exclaimed, 'Amitufo! (阿彌陀佛)! Well done! Well done!' I jumped down from the window, kowtowed to Tian and took him as my elder brother. Now, I suddenly miss Tian. You should go to Shanghai, visit Tian and try his Taiji skills." When I told the man that Tian had been dead for many years, he was very disappointed upon hearing this and immediately left Shanghai.

CUI LIZHI

Cui Lizhi (崔立志 1892-1970), whose other name was Cui Yishi, was born in Ren County, Hebei Province. From childhood, Cui began learning San-huang Cannon Fist (三皇炮錘) with Liu Yingzhou (劉瀛州). Later, Cui studied Wu Taiji (武式太極) with Li Xiangyuan (李香遠). Cui started to learn Yang Taiji in 1907, and he became a disciple of Chengfu in 1909. Cui accompanied Chengfu on his travels from Beijing to Shanghai, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Hankou and Nanjing to assist Chengfu in teaching Taiji from 1928 to 1936. After Chengfu died, Cui went back to Beijing and started teaching on his own. After 1949, Cui set up the "Yongnian Taiji School of Beijing (北京永年太極拳社)", and he also acted as a representative of the Martial Arts Consultative Conference in Beijing. Cui inherited the real martial skills of the form, sword, saber, spear, push hands and Da Lu from Chengfu. Cui specifically was good at push hands and Taiji spear. His form was also similar to Chengfu's early style. When Cui pushed hands with someone, he took in breath first in order to store the energy. When Cui caught the opportunity and gained the superior position, he would suddenly issue energy and send the opponent flying in the air. Cui once sat on a chair and pushed hands with a disciple of Fu Zhongwen at Fu's Yongnian Taiji School in Shanghai. When Cui suddenly issued energy, the wooden floor under the chair was broken by the strong power, and the chair legs were

sunk into the floor. Seeing the damage to his floor, Fu's facial expression suddenly changed, but Fu had also learned Taiji from Cui. Therefore, Fu couldn't get angry at Cui. Cui Zhongsan (崔仲三), Yishi's grandson, learned Taiji with Yishi beginning from a young age, and he has won many Taijiquan championships in Beijing.

CHEN WEIMING

Chen Weiming (陳微明 1881-1958) was born in Qishui (蘄水), Hubei Province. Chen was from a scholarly family. In 1901, When Chen took the imperial examination with his two brothers, all three were selected as "Juren (舉人)". Chen had been plagued with illness from his childhood. In order to improve his health, Chen started to learn Xingyi and Bagua with Sun Lutang in 1915, and his physical condition changed from weakness to vigorousness. In 1917, Chen became a disciple of Chengfu, and he learned the form, sword, saber, spear, push hands and free boxing. In 1925, Cheng established the Zhi Rou Taiji School in Shanghai . According to a report in the May 2, 1925 issue of Shen Bao News, Chen's students included some famous men in Shanghai, such as Wang Yiting (王一亭) and Nie Yuntai (聶雲台).

The book, "The Art of Taijiquan" was narrated by Chengfu and recorded by Chen. That book was published by Chen's Zhi Rou Taiji School and is an important reference for studying Yang Taiji. The photos in that book are of the early form style of Chengfu. In 1929, the Zhi Rou Taiji School moved to the first floor of a building on Tibet Road that housed the Ningbo (寧波) Clan Association. At that time, a Shaolin boxing school was also located on the fourth floor of that building, and Xu Wenfu (徐文甫) and Chen Duoming (陳鐸鳴) acted as instructors for this Shaolin boxing school. Xu was a strong and tall guy, and he was able to lift over 130 pounds of a stone load by the toe of one foot, or by a single hand. Duoming was also a strong guy, and he acted as a manager of a watch store. Xu went to Zhi Rou and asked to have a bout with Chen. Chen was a short and thin man so Xu, not fearing the smaller man, straight away punched toward Chen, and Chen used "Step Back and Repulse Monkey" to yield Xu's attack. Then, Chen employed his right hand to stick to Xu's fist and bounced Xu away over 4 yards using "Parting the Wild Horse's Mane". Xu fell to the floor, smashing his pocket watch. After that, both Xu and Duoming instantly asked to join the Zhi Rou Taiji School . Three months

later, the two started to learn push hands. Chen bounced the two many times over 4 yards by using “Press”. After that, the two forgot about training and teaching in the Shaolin boxing school and fully focused on learning Taiji.

Once, Xu went back to Ningbo to retrieve some money owed to him. After collecting the sum, two gangsters found out that Xu had a lot of cash on him and they followed Xu, boarding the same boat with him. After Xu landed, the two gangsters followed behind Xu for over five miles. When they approached a wooden bridge where there was no one around, the two gangsters tried to rob Xu. Xu suddenly turned around and kicked one of the gangsters into the water. The other one rushed toward Xu with a knife. Xu grabbed the gangster’s hand that held the knife and used Diagonal Flying to also throw this gangster into the water.

Chen Duoming when unarmed, captured a gangster brandishing a pistol, and then took the gangster into a police station. Duoming was praised by the police office and given 300 Silver Coins as a reward.

The educational system of the Zhi Rou Taiji School entails a three-year process of training. Chen designed a series of classes for his Taiji School . The Taijiquan form, push hands with fixed steps and Taiji sword were taught in the first year. The second year, the student learned the Taiji Long Form (fast boxing) and push hands with active steps. Da Lu, free boxing, the two-person dueling sword and Taiji spear were taught in the third year. This system actually was the traditional training sequence of Yang Taiji. Mr. Zhao Di-qi (趙敵七) won the first prize of the first graduation class of Zhi Rou. Zhao’s basics were solid and he never lost when he had bouts with judo players in Shanghai. Unfortunately, he was later assassinated by Japanese gangsters. In 1951, the Zhi Rou Taiji School moved to Chen’s house on Yongjia Road (永嘉路) from the former building of the Ningbo Clan Association. Along with “The Art of Taijiquan,” Chen also wrote “The Taiji Sword” published in 1928 and “Taijiquan Questions and Answers” in 1929. In 1936, Uncle Chen edited “The Drawings of Bagua Qinna”, and he was a marvelous instructor of both literary and martial arts. Lin Bingyao (林炳堯), Chen’s in-door disciple, died a couple of years ago. The Zhi Rou Taiji School has a long history, but unfortunately, it now seems to be lacking a successor.

CHU GUITING

Chu Guiting (褚桂亭 1890-1977) whose other name was Chu Dexin (德新) was born in Renqiu (任邱) county, Hebei Province. As a kid, he learned Xingyi and Bagua with Cheng Delu (程德祿), Huang Bonia (黃柏年) and Jiang Yuhe (姜玉和). Later, Chu learned San He Saber (三合刀) with Hao Enguang (郝恩光) and Wudang Dueling Sword with Li Jinglin. In 1929, Chu became a disciple of Chengfu and learned the form, push hands and weapons. Prior to 1949, Chu once acted as a martial arts instructor for the military of the Nationalist Party. After 1949, he taught Taijiquan at People Park and in the Min-Xing (閔行) District of Shanghai. Chu had a lot of students, and his lineage holder, Wang Zhuanghong (王壯弘) taught in Hong Kong. Chu consolidated Taiji, Xingyi and Bagua into his personal style of martial arts. When he had a bout with others, he was excellent at employing the different skills of each art consecutively. At the moment Chu's first attack is deflected by the opponent, the second one will instantly come after the first one, on and on. Chu's martial art fully exemplifies the spirit of Taijiquan's skills of touching, sticking, moving with and following the opponent

Chapter-5 "Yang, Dong and Zheng Make a Name for Themselves Overseas"

YANG SHOUZHONG

Yang Shouzhong (楊守中 1910~1985) whose other name is Yang Zhenming (楊振銘) is Chengfu's first son. Shouzhong had practiced Taijiquan with Chengfu since he was 8 years old. By age 14, He had succeeded in learning the form, saber, spear, sword, push hands, free boxing and the Taiji Classics of the Yang family. At age 19, he went to Anhui province to teach Taiji alone. Later, he accompanied his father Chengfu to Shanghai, Hangzhou and Guangzhou to teach Taiji. When Chengfu passed away in March 1936 in Shanghai, Shouzhong was responsible for the remaining 9 members of the Yang family. At that time, his three young brothers, Zhenji, Zhenduo and Zhenguo, were at age 15, 10 and 8 respectively. Not only did Shouzhong take care the Yang family, but he also supervised his brother's practice of Taiji in order for them to learn and inherit the martial arts of Yang Style Taiji. In 1937, the Japanese military invaded China, and Chengfu's wife led the three young boys back to their hometown of Yongnian. But since Uncle Shouzhong had to earn a living for the family, he stayed in Guangzhou to continue to teach Taiji. When the Japanese military invaded Guangzhou in October 1938, Shouzhong was forced to escape. Shouzhong's wife started to leave Guangzhou with one of his disciples, but she unfortunately died in a traffic accident due to over-loading of the vehicle she was in. Subsequently, Shouzhong suffered a lot with his young children during this perilous time, but they eventually arrived at a place of safety. After the Japanese surrendered in 1945, Uncle Shouzhong went back to Guangzhou and married Ms Liang Guoyi (梁帼義). At that time, Uncle Shouzhong taught Taiji at a Catholic Church in downtown Guangzhou, and he also called Uncle Zhenji to come to Guangzhou and be his assistant. In 1949, Shouzhong moved to Hong Kong with his family, and he resided in the Yuen Long District of the New Territories for three years. Zhang Shizian (張世賢), Li Xuexun (黎學荀) and Ye Dade (葉大德) were Shouzhong's early disciples during this time in Hong Kong. At the end of 1952, Dong Yingjie (董英傑) and Wu Gongyi (吳公儀) respectfully invited Uncle Shouzhong to reside on Lockhart Road on Hong Kong Island.

Regarding Uncle Shouzhong's martial level, Mr. Zhang Shizian once admired that, "My teacher, Yang Shouzhong, learned Taiji from the originators of Yang Style Taiji. His martial skills are quite profound. His power in issuing energy and stability in his postures are far beyond those of general practitioners. Any part of his body can be punched at random, but he can, at the same time, use the part punched to issue energy back toward the opponent. It is easy for him to launch the opponent over 4 yards. When he has a bout with someone, his moves are so quick and his changes are far beyond that what the opponent expects. Therefore, there are many people who would like to learn Taiji with him."

Both the Chinese and English editions of "Practical Use of Tai Chi Chuan: Its Applications and Variations" written by Uncle Shouzhong are very precious documents on Yang Style Taiji. Shouzhong himself taught his daughters, Yang Dier (楊帝兒), Yang Mali (楊瑪利) and Yang Yili (楊伊利). Although Shouzhong had many students, he only had three in-door disciples. The first disciple, Ye Dade, has two disciples: Chen Zeqiang (陳澤強) who teaches Taiji in Britain and Bao Dehui (包德輝) who teaches Taiji in the US. The second disciple is Zhu Zhenshun (朱振舜) who teaches Taiji in Boston, in the U.S. The third disciple is Zhu Jingxiong (朱景雄) who teaches Taiji in London, Britain, and Europe. Moreover, Shouzhong has some senior students, such as Ma Weihuan (馬偉煥) and Luo Qiong (羅琮) who both are the co-founders of Hong Kong's Yang Taijiquan Association. Uncle Shouzhong has a lot of students who are located all over the world and he created tremendous influence overseas. Thanks to the contribution of three masters: Yang Shouzhong, Dong Yingjie and Zheng Manqing, the reputation of Yang Style Taiji can be spread all over the world.

In 1985, my teacher, Dr. Huang, suddenly asked me to write a letter to Uncle Yang Zhenduo to inquire about Shouzhong. In 1986, Uncle Zhenduo replied that Shouzhong had passed away. What a pity!

DONG YINGJIE

Dong Yingjie (1897-1961 董英傑) Was born in Ren County, Hebei Province. When Dong was a child, he was intelligent, but he had a weak body. Mr. Liu Yingzhou (劉瀛州) who was a friend

of the Dong family introduced Dong to be a disciple of Mr. Li Xiangyuan a Wu / Hao style Taiji teacher. So, Dong started to learn Wu / Hao Taiji with Li at that time. Dong said that once, Li employed a single finger to lightly press Dong's flesh and it was extremely painful. Dong really applied himself and studied Taiji very hard. After a few years of training, Dong built a solid foundation and became strong. Dong also started to make martial arts friends of other styles and have bouts with them. Because Dong seriously admired Yang Style Taiji, he knelt down to Chengfu and asked to become a disciple. Chengfu considered that Dong was sincere in learning Taiji, and agreed to take him as a disciple. Then, Dong started to intensely study the Yang Taiji long form and quickly learned the key points of Yang Taiji.

The book, "The Application of Taijiquan" was narrated by Chengfu and transcribed by Dong. That book presented the art of Yang style Taijiquan, and was published by Wen Guang Publishing House in 1931. There is much rich information in "The Application of Taijiquan", but the text of that book was not of a high standard and is somewhat lacking in literary quality. It was severely criticized by Ye Dami. Therefore, Chengfu ordered my teacher, Dr. Huang Jinghua, to go to the publisher, take back all the remaining unsold books, and burn them. Because of Chengfu's order, an original edition of "The Application of Taijiquan" is rarely found these days. However, Chengfu's eldest son Yang Shouzhong and Dong had the book re-printed in Hong Kong and Thailand. The re-printed edition of "The Application of Taijiquan" was later included in "The Collections of the Traditional Chinese Martial Arts" by the China Book Store of Beijing in 1983. It was again re-published in 1984. That book has the form photos of Chengfu when he was in his late age, the applications of the form in free boxing, the dueling Taiji spear between Tian Zhaolin and Dong, as well as the hand-written classics of the Yang family. Without doubt, the information presented in "The Application of Taijiquan" is important for studying Yang style Taiji.

Uncle Dong knew the essence of Yang style Taiji very well. His form was light, swift and relaxed. Dong was good in skills of sticking and kneading Jin. When Dong touched the opponent's hand, the opponent instantly could not stand firmly and Dong could use this moment to issue energy. When Chengfu was invited by Chen Jitang (陳濟堂) and Li Zongren (李宗仁) to travel to Guangzhou to teach, Chengfu took Dong and Yang Shouzhong with him to Guangzhou in 1933. The government of Guangdong hired Chengfu as an advisor in order to teach Taiji to the civil servants of the Guangdong government. Dong acted as the key partner

of Chengfu for the demonstrations of push hands and free boxing. In 1935, due to the increasing debilitation of an illness, Chengfu went back to Shanghai to try for a cure. Dong and Shouzhong stayed in Guangzhou and continued to teach Taiji. When Guangzhou and Hong Kong were occupied by Japan, Dong went to Macau and resided there in privacy for the duration of the war.

After World War II, Dong went to Thailand to teach Taiji. Thai boxing is good at elbowing and kneeing, and is very famous for the fierceness of its attack and how the Thai boxers can seriously hurt their opponents. When Dong arrived in Thailand, many top Thai boxers tried to have bouts with Dong. When they touched Dong's hand, they were instantly bounced away over 4 yards and none could escape from Dong's powerful energy. It is really hard to imagine how the slow and soft Taijiquan can hold its' own in a country that advocates such a fierce martial art. Indeed, it's something unique in the martial arts world! The book, "The Interpretation of Taijiquan" written by Uncle Dong, was published by the Yingjie Taiji School in 1948. The contents of that book include Dong's photos of the form and the hand-written classics of the Yang family. Liu Tonglu (劉同祿) was the first disciple of Dong. Yue Huanzhi was also a lineage holder of Dong in Shanghai. Dong Shizhuo and Dong Bin were disciples of Yue. Ren Gang became a lineage holder of Dong Bin. Moreover, Uncle Dong Yingjie had many lineage holders abroad, so I won't be able to introduce them one by one.

ZHENG MANQING

Zheng Manqing (鄭曼青1901~1975) was born in Yongjia (永嘉), Zhejiang Province. He also went by the names Zheng Yue (岳), Zheng Manran (曼鬚), Hermit of the Jade Well (Yujin shanren 玉井山人), and other artistic names. He was commonly known as a "Master of Five Excellences" (五絕) : poetry, painting, calligraphy, Taijiquan and medicine. Zheng deeply learned the essence of traditional Chinese culture. He taught at Ji Nan University and at the Art College of Shanghai. At that time, Dr. Huang, my teacher, learned Chinese painting from Zheng.

Because Zheng suffered from tuberculosis he, along with Dr. Huang and Miss Pu Bingru, all joined the Wudang Taiji School of Ye Dami together for the purpose of improving their health.

When Chengfu came to Shanghai from Nanjing in 1928, through Ye Dami's introduction, Zheng, Dr. Huang and Miss Pu began learning from Chengfu. Pu Qiucheng, Miss Bingru's father, enjoyed a highly respectable status in Shanghai and he fully supported Chengfu's coming to Shanghai. Therefore, due to his influence, Zheng and Bingru became disciples of Chengfu prior to Dr. Huang. Zheng was excellent at Chinese medicine. At that time, Chengfu's wife suffered from a serious illness. Fortunately, Madam Yang fully recovered through Zheng's treatment. Chengfu highly appreciated Zheng because of this.

Dr. Huang practiced very hard under Chengfu, and he was very careful in doing everything correctly in his Taiji practice. Also, Dr. Huang acted as the training partner of Uncle Yang Shouzhong in daily practice. Therefore, Chengfu praised Dr. Huang very much and took Dr. Huang as a disciple after Zheng. Both Zheng and Dr. Huang were responsible to transcribe what Chengfu said for his book, "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan." That book was published by the Da Dong Book Store of Shanghai in 1933. Along with Chengfu, both Zheng and Dr. Huang were listed in that book as the editor and proofreader respectively.

In 1935, Chengfu came back to Shanghai from Guangzhou to treat his illness. At that time, Chengfu considered that, since Zheng and Dr. Huang were small, short and thin scholar types, they were probably unable to compete with opponents in the martial arts community without Neigong training. Therefore, Chengfu summoned Uncle Qinlin back to Shanghai in order to teach Zheng and Dr. Huang Neigong. After their Neigong training, the martial skills of both Zheng and Dr. Huang improved significantly. When Zheng had a bout with others, he was good at employing the slipping steps of the Taiji fast form. And although Zheng was short in stature, he would get close to the opponent and issue powerful energy. Zheng's skill could indeed hurt the opponent. In 1939, Zheng acted as a martial arts instructor at the Central Military Training Group in Chongqing (重慶). From 1940 to 1944, Zheng acted as a researcher for the Ministry of Education, and he joined the Ministry's research team that compiled teaching materials for the martial arts. Uncle Zheng was a well known bold and skillful man. Not only did he like to have bouts with people from various branches of martial arts, but he also dared to challenge big and strong western boxers. Uncle Zheng once fought against a boxing champion of the British Navy. When Zheng just touched the champion, he instantly bounced the opponent away over 4 yards. Another day, on the occasion of celebrating the victory of World War II, Zheng publicly invited military officials from different countries to

have bouts. There were 12 military officials who tried to challenge Zheng, but Zheng vanquished 6 of them in seconds. The other 6 were scared of Zheng's martial skills, and so they all gave up voluntarily. After this event, Uncle Zheng became famous for his martial arts skills.

In 1938, Zheng acted as the Director of Martial Arts of Hunan Province. In order for the instructors to complete learning Taijiquan within two months, Zheng shortened the Yang style long form into "the Yang Style Taiji in 37 postures." It has an actual total of 47 postures, but Zheng decided to use the historic name of "37 postures (San Shi Qi 三世七)." In 1949, Zheng moved to Taiwan and founded the Shr Jung School of Taijiquan (時中拳社) in Taipei. His more famous disciples include: Benjamin Lo (羅邦楨), Liang Dongcai (梁棟材), Liu Xiheng (劉錫亨), Ye Xiuting (葉秀挺), Xu Yizhong (徐憶中), Huang Shengshyan (黃性賢), William C. C. Chen (陳志誠), Song Zhijian (宋志堅) and Ju Hongbin (鞠鴻賓). In 1950, Wu Jingheng (吳敬恆) the famous Chinese linguist and philosopher, contributed a calligraphic frontpiece for Zheng's book, "The Thirteen Treatises on Taijiquan." Zheng's Yang style short form was named as "Zheng Zi's Taijiquan (鄭子太極拳).

In 1964, Zheng traveled around the US and Europe in order to promote traditional Chinese Culture, lecturing on the Confucian Classics, History, Calligraphy, Painting and Taiji. In 1973, he founded the Shr Jung Taiji Center in New York City and taught Taijiquan in the US. In his later years, Zheng was invited by the Chinese Culture University of Taiwan to teach the Yi Jing (易經).

In 1956 Ye Xiuting and Huang Xingxian (Shengshyan) , went to Singapore and Malaysia respectively to teach Taiji. In 1965, William C. C. Chen founded a martial arts school in New York and he was especially good at free boxing. Liang Dongcai taught Taiji in Boston beginning in the mid-1960's, and Benjamin Lo taught in San Francisco beginning in 1974. (respectively.) After Zheng's death in 1975, Liu Xiheng continued the Shr Jung School in Taipei (with Mrs. Zheng's blessing) and acted as the Chairman of that school. When Liu retired as the Chairman of Shr Jung in the late 1980's, Xu Yizhong became Chairman and has remained so until now. Xu organized the "Zheng Zi Taijiquan Study Association" in 1993. In 2005, the Memorial Hall of Zheng Manqing was founded at the old house where Zheng had lived in Taiwan. The Memorial Hall has a collection that it displays of Zheng's books that he wrote and paintings that he

created during his lifetime. In 1993, Ju Hongbin founded the Association of Taijiquan in Gaoxiong (高雄) in Taiwan. In 1978, Song Zhijian started to promote his 64 postures version of Yang Style Taiji, Song founded the Chinese Taiji House on Jilong Road in Taipei in 1981. Song and Wu Ronghui (吳榮輝), Song's disciple, acted as the Chairman and the Director of the Chinese Taiji House respectively. Zheng and his disciples worked with persistence to promote Yang Taiji for decades, and they have spread the real Yang style Taijiquan far and wide around the world.

Not only did Zheng participate in the transcribing of “The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan”, but he also wrote “Zheng Zi’s Thirteen Treatises on Taijiquan”, “The New Method of Zheng Zi’s Taijiquan Self-cultivation” and “Taijiquan : A Simplified Method of Calisthenics for Health and Self Defence” (English version)”. Zheng was excellent in both literary pursuits and martial abilities. Among Master Chengfu’s late disciples, Zheng was remarkable.

Chapter-6 "Some Fifth Generation Students"

Some of the fourth generation members of Yang Taiji in Beijing didn't accompany Chengfu to Shanghai, such as Wang Xudong (王旭東), Yan Yuechuan (閻月川), Xu Daishan (徐岱山), You Zhixue (尤志學) and Wang Yongquan (汪永泉). Therefore, I won't introduce those students. But, I want to introduce some members of the fifth generation of Yang Taiji in Shanghai in this chapter.

YE DAMI

Ye Dami (葉大密 1888-1973) was born in Wencheng (文成), Zhejiang Province. In 1917, Ye became a disciple of Tian Zhaolin and he was one of the early disciples of Tian. In 1926, Ye established the Wudang Taiji School in Shanghai. He taught the form, sword and push hands. Before Zheng Manqing, Huang Jinghua and Pu Bingru became disciples of Chengfu, all three studied Taiji at Ye's Taiji school. Ye taught a large frame form of Yang Taiji, in which he also included part of Jianhou's middle form. People called Ye's form as "Ye Family Boxing" Along with Taijiquan, Ye also was good at Yoga (Brahmana Tao Yin (婆羅門導引) and Chinese Manipulative Therapy (Tuina 推拿).

After 1949, Ye taught Taiji at Fu Xing Park and acted as a doctor of Chinese Manipulative Therapy in the Huangpu District. Ye was a smart and studious man with quick-wittedness. When Chengfu taught disciples push hands and free boxing, he usually demonstrated the teaching by himself. But, When Ye visited the Yang house, Chengfu stopped the demonstration and just sat still. After Ye left, Chengfu told his disciples that, "Ye is a very smart guy and you guys are much inferior to him. I repeatedly demonstrate the teaching, and you still can not get the key points. However, if Ye watches my demonstration for a moment, he will understand it completely and always remember it." Prior to 1949, a big and strong gangster type tried to provoke Ye and asked to have a bout with him. Ye privately considered

that, whether he won or lost, both results would be harmful to his Taiji School. Therefore, Ye told the gangster that, “Today I am not available and I will visit you tomorrow.” Then, Ye instantly went out and called a rickshaw. The gangster also called a rickshaw and closely followed Ye. Ye asked the driver of the rickshaw to go to the house of Du Yuesheng (杜月笙). Du was the leader of the Green Gang in Shanghai . The gangster saw that Ye might be a friend of Du, and so he didn’t dare try to cause trouble for Ye again. In fact, the gangster disappeared and never returned to challenge Ye. Jin Renlin (金仁霖), a later disciple of Ye, studied the Taiji Classics quite well and was known for his knowledge of them. Cai Songfang (蔡松芳), Jin’s disciple, really learned the spirit of Yang Taiji, and his skill in push hands were amazing. Should anyone try to push with Cai, they would be bounced away and fall down. Cai taught Taiji in Foshan (佛山), Guangdong Province.

ZHANG YU

Zhang Yu (張玉1909~1988) was the first disciple of Wu Huichuan. Zhang’s martial arts skills and personality were excellent. When Uncle Wu died at age 47, his family suddenly became friendless and helpless. Zhang gave Uncle Wu’s wife the monthly income of his teaching in order to help foster Wu’s son until he grew up. Dr. Huang admired Zhang’s personality and enjoyed being a friend of Zhang. Dr. Huang often had friendly bouts with him. Zhang’s form was from Wu’s that had evolved from Chengfu’s old form. When Zhang practiced the form his internal energy vibrated in each posture. Zhang’s form looked magnificent!

Zhang was good at push hands. He was able to bounce the opponent away over 4 yards by issuing long energy and vibrate the opponent’s internal organs by issuing short energy. Prior to 1949, Zhang taught Taiji at Fu Xing Park, and a boxer from another place came to provoke Zhang. People called such behavior as “Kicking Down the Place.” Zhang invited this boxer to his house and had a private bout. This boxer fiercely attacked Zhang using straight punches, and Zhang employed Parry and Punch to intercept the incoming attack. Finally, Zhang issued short energy toward the boxer’s chest. Then, the boxer instantly vomited blood, fell to his knees and couldn’t stand up. Zhang gave him money and advised him to go back to his hometown to cure his injury.

Another day, a young man came to Fu Xing Park and asked to have a bout with Zhang. He suddenly issued short energy toward Zhang. Zhang received it, yielded to the attack, then bounced this young man away. The next day, another young man came to provoke Zhang and he also was defeated by Zhang. Zhang knew what was going on and asked a disciple to follow the young man and investigate his background. Zhang's disciple came back and told Zhang that the young man went to Huai Hai (淮海) Park on Songshan Road and complained tearfully to his teacher about his defeat by Zhang. Zhang knew the young man's teacher who was a disciple of Uncle Chu Guiting, and Zhang instantly sent a message to Uncle Chu. On the third day, the young man's teacher came to Zhang's place and tried to take revenge on Zhang. Uncle Chu suddenly appeared there and denounced the young man's teacher saying, "Stop this rudeness! We all are from the lineage of Yang Taiji. How could we engage in such internal strife?" A disciple of Zhang tried to smooth out the resentment and treated them all to a meal at a Sichuan restaurant nearby Fu Xing Park.

Wang Zhongliang(王仲良) was Zhang's lineage holder and he died from a botched attempt at a medical treatment. Wu Yunzhuo (吳雲倬) was another lineage holder of Uncle Wu Huichuan. Yunzhuo taught Taiji at Zhong Shan Park for a long time. Rao Shaoping(饒少平) who was the lineage holder of Yunzhuo was good at issuing short energy, and he once won the championship in a push hands tournament in Shanghai. Wu Guiqing (武貴卿) who was Huichuan's nephew taught Taiji at Xiang Yang Park. Regarding their respective martial levels, Guiqing is inferior to Zhang Yu and Wu Yunzhuo. Both Ji Adong (吉阿冬) and Shou Guishun (壽歸順) who are disciples of Rao Shaoping, still teach Taiji at Zhong Shan Park.

FU ZHONGWEN

Fu Zhongwen (傅鐘文 1908~1994) was Chengfu's relative by marriage. Grand Master Jianhou had three sons: Zhaoxiong (兆熊 also called Shaohou), Zhaoyuan (兆元) and Zhaoqing (兆清 also called Chengfu). Zhaoyuan died early, and his daughter, Yang Cong (楊聰), married Zhao Shutang (趙樹堂). Shutang had a son, Zhao Bin (趙斌), and a daughter, Zhao Guizhen (趙桂珍). Fu Zhongwen married Zhao Guizhen. Therefore, Chengfu was a granduncle-in-law of Fu

Zhongwen.

In the book, “Sole Generation of Yang Style Taiji: Teaching and Practice” edited by Fu Zhongwen, the authors Fu Shengyuan (傅聲遠) and Fu Qingquan (傅清泉) mentioned that Zhongwen married “Chengfu’s niece ” on page 4. The pronunciation of “Wai Sheng Nu (外甥女)” and “Wai Sun Nu(外孫女)” are quite similar, but they mean different identities. Wai Sheng Nu means the “niece” and Wai Sun Nu means the “grand-daughter”. The mistake of one Chinese character has upgraded Zhongwen from the fifth generation of Yang Taiji to the fourth. According to that book, Zhongwen became a member of the same generation of Yang Taiji as a cousin of his mother-in-law, Yang Zhenming (楊振銘) Chengfu’s son. Is it possible that this is merely a mistake of typing or publishing? Of course not! The second picture on page 6 of that book was footnoted as “A group photo of Fu Shengyuan, Junior Uncle Cui Yishi and Junior Uncle Niu Chunming.” There is an article written by Professor Yu Zhidiao(于志鈞), which was published in the 19th issue of the Taiji Journal, and it mentioned that Fu Zhongwen was born in 1908. The fourth photo of “Sole Generation of Yang Style Taiji: Teaching and Practice” footnoted that Fu Zhongwen was born in 1903. Uncle Niu met Jianhou in 1901 and became a disciple of Chengfu in 1903. Uncle Cui came to the Yang family for learning Taiji and became a disciple of Chengfu in 1909. Even if Fu Zhongwen was born in 1903, how can Fu become the elder brother of both Niu and Cui? I really would like to know exactly when Fu became a disciple of Chengfu.

During the 1920’ s, Fu Zhongwen worked as a laborer at the Sheng-He (盛和) Cotton Store in Shanghai. Fu came to the Yang family house and stayed there for a night every Saturday. Then, Fu practiced Taijiquan the whole day on Sunday, and Chengfu ordered Uncle Cui Yishi to instruct Fu. According to the tradition of Chengfu’s hometown, Yongnian, people called the maternal grandfather as “Lao Ye (姥爺)”. Among Chengfu’s brothers, he ranked as the third one. Therefore, Fu called Chengfu as “Third Lao Ye,” Yang Zhenming as “Elder Maternal Uncle (大舅),” Yang Zhenji (楊振基) as “Second Maternal Uncle (二舅)” and Chengfu’s disciples as “Elder or Junior Uncle.” At that time, there were many students learning Taiji at the Yang family house. Usually, Fu learned Taiji with his uncles, but sometimes Chengfu himself taught Fu. The above is the real story of how Fu learned Taiji from the Yang family. However, Fu’s supposed lineage according to the book suddenly upgraded his position as the elder brother of the fourth generation of Yang Taiji, standing even higher beyond Niu’s and

Cui's positions. Isn't this deceiving oneself as well as others? Shouldn't we just skip Fu's absurd story mentioned above? However, Fu actually has made his own contributions for the Yang family. One was that Fu recommended Yang Zhenji and Yang Zhenduo (楊振鐸) for jobs for them to earn a stable living. The other one was that Fu had promoted the standard form of Yang Style Taiji for a long time in Shanghai. Should the mistakes in the book "Sole Generation of Yang Style Taiji: Teaching and Practice" be corrected according to the historical truth, that book could still be a valuable beginning text on Taiji. Also, people would pay more respect to the Fu family.

GU LIUXIN

Gu Liuxin (顧留馨1908~1990) was born in Shanghai and graduated from South Asia High School of Shanghai in 1925. Then, Gu enrolled in Wen Zhi (文治) University also located in Shanghai. Gu studied "Liu Ho Fist" (六合拳) with Liu Zhennan (劉震南) in 1926. In 1927, he joined the Zhi Rou Taiji School of Chen Weiming, and later joined Wu Huichuan's Taiji School to learn Yang Taiji. Gu studied Yang Taiji twice, but each time it was for less than one year. Studying for such a short period of time, one was unlikely to really become familiar with the form, and learning Taiji Neigong was certainly out of the question. In 1934, Gu joined the Communist Youth League of China and later joined the Communist Party. Because Gu had contributed to the Communist Party, he was appointed to act as Chief of the Huangpu District in Shanghai after 1949. In 1950, Gu acted as the Chairman of the Martial Arts Association of Shanghai, and he was in charge of the Sports Hall. At that time, because, Zhang Qinlin, Dong Yingjie, Yang Shouzhong, Zheng Manqing, Niu Chunming and Li Yaxuan were not in Shanghai and Wu Huichuan had died, Gu became the top leader of the martial arts community in Shanghai.

Shanghai probably had the most Yang Taiji lineage holders concentrated in one place. Tian Zhaolin taught Taiji at Bund Park; Tian Zuolin, Ye Dami, Zhang Yu and Hua Chunrong (華春容) at Fu Xing Park; Chu Guiting at People Park; Wu Yunzhuo at Zhong Shan Park; Wu Guiqing at Xiang Yang Park; Chen Weiming at the Ningbo Clan Association, Fu Zhongwen and his brother at a vacant lot on Nanjing Road. Moreover, there were my teacher, Dr. Huang and Miss Pu

Bingru, both highly skilled, but neither of whom were professional Taiji boxing teachers, unlike the others mentioned.

So at that time, there were many experienced teachers of Yang Taiji in Shanghai. Therefore, should Gu, as the top leader of the martial arts community in Shanghai, have carefully taken care of and promoted and managed those teachers there, the Chinese martial arts may have been developed very well. Unfortunately, that didn't happen. Gu himself wasn't a real boxer, he only merely acted as an autocratic chairman of the martial arts community. Gu wanted to organize boxers from different branches to put on a public display. He first invited Tian Zhaolin who learned Taiji with Jianhou, Shaohou, and Chengfu, and expected Tian to perform the real skills of Yang Taiji at his bidding. Tian's martial skills had been developed through decades of very hard training. So why would Tian make a public performance of his real skills so easily without any reason? Therefore, when Gu told him to perform, Tian just touched his bare head, pretended to know nothing and simply said, "I am old and I've lost my memory."

Tian Zhaolin and Chen Weiming thought that Taijiquan should only be supported and promoted by real martial arts masters, and they didn't have the notion that obeying the Communist Party regarding the martial arts was extremely important. So Tian and Chen, of course, were unwilling to obey Gu. In 1950, there was a benefit entertainment that was performed by the community of martial artists at the gym on the Shanxi South Road (陝西南路) in Shanghai. I saw Tian perform amazing martial arts skills, and his issuing energy was sharp and simply straightforward. Suddenly, a Shaolin boxer emerged and challenged Tian. Tian loved such challenges, and so he started to perform the skills that he used when he engaged in a gang fight in Hangzhou in the 1920's. In order to prevent a serious public dispute, Tong Zhongyi (佟忠義), a senior boxer, immediately stepped in and reconciled the two and prevented further embarrassment. Tong continued the benefit show by performing a two-person dueling sword form with his granddaughter.

Gu realized that he wasn't able to control the fourth generation of Yang Taiji practitioners, all of whom had amazing martial arts skills. Therefore, Gu publically declared Fu Zhongwen as the "representative" of Yang Taiji. Gu employed the media to promote Fu, and intentionally snubbed those senior Yang Taiji boxers, such as Tian Zhaolin, Tian Zuolin and Chen Weiming. Gu invited Fu to teach the Yang Taiji form at the Sports Hall. Also, Gu invited Zhang Yu to

teach Yang style push hands.

Because Chen Weiming's senior disciple, Zhao Diqi, was assassinated by Japanese gangsters, and his only son died early, Chen felt so frustrated and despondent that his life became fully focused on Buddhism. Moreover, Chen was malevolently criticized by Tang Hao (唐豪) and Gu Liuxin. Finally, Chen died from anger and sorrow. Tian Zuolin died from poverty and sickness. Zhang Yu was responsible for raising money to bury Zuolin. Although Tian Zhaolin had amazing martial arts skills, he was unable to get a job teaching Taiji at the Sports Hall. Zhaolin could only act as a "civilian boxer" to teach Taiji in parks. Because Zhaolin didn't have a fixed income, he sometimes drank too much in order to relieve his depression. One day, a disciple gave Zhaolin two bottles of liquor and they drank together. After that disciple left, Zhaolin continued to drink alone and finished the rest of the liquor. When Zhaolin's family tried to wake him up the next morning, he had already died of alcohol poisoning.

But since then, and even now, the numbers of those learning Yang Taiji are growing. But, most of these are learning just for health and exercise and not to develop real martial skills. The real martial arts skills of Yang Taiji are rarely seen now. However, I've heard that real Yang Taiji is alive and well and preserved in other locations in the lineages of Uncle Yaxuan in Sichuan, Uncle Chunming in Hangchow, Uncle Yingjie, Uncle Shouzhong and Uncle Manqing overseas. I honestly pray that the essence of Yang Taiji can continue to be preserved and promoted.

Chapter-7 "A Unique Taiji Personality: Yue Huanzhi"

In making the observation that the Taiji of the fifth generation of Yang Taiji had changed simply means that those official Taiji instructors merely taught Taiji exercise at the public gym in Shanghai and would never have bouts or exchange skills with other boxers. On the other hand, you won't see the lineage-holders acting as "official instructors." For example, those lineage-holders, such as Uncles Tian Zhaolin, Wu Huichuan, Dong Yingjie, Chen Weiming and Chu Guiting, had real martial arts skills, and they were excellent at push hands as well as free boxing.

Is it always necessarily the case that the succeeding generation of martial artists are doomed to be inferior to the prior one? Is it even possible that Grand Master Yang Banhou had superior martial arts skills than his father, Luchan? Is it even remotely possible that, among the lineage holders of Yang Taiji, any disciple has superior martial arts skills to his or her teacher? Regarding such a possibility, perhaps Brother Yue Huanzhi, the lineage-holder of Dong Yingjie, might be a likely candidate. According to an article written by Mr. Hu Puan (胡朴安), he himself pushed hands with Yang Chengfu, Sun Lutang and Wu Jianquan. When Hu touched these masters, he couldn't withstand their powerful attack, and in each case, he was immediately bounced away and knocked unconscious. However, when Hu pushed hands with Yue Huanzhi, Yue's skill felt as gentle as a cloud drifting in the sky and as smooth as water flowing in a river. In other words, Hu couldn't even feel what happened as he was bounced away. Hu was an honorable scholar, so I don't believe that Hu would be excessive in his admiration for Yue unless it were true.

Yue (1899~1960) was born in Gushi (固始), Henan Province. He studied at Xiamen (廈門) University in the beginning, then he transferred to Fudan University in Shanghai. Yue taught English for two years at Zhejiang (浙江) University after he graduated from Fudan. Then, Yue moved back to Shanghai and taught Chinese over a decade at Zhendan (震旦) University and at the Affiliated Senior High School of Zhendan. When Mr. Rong Desheng (榮德生) founded Jiangnan (江南) University, he employed Yue as the Deputy Principal. Yue studied

Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism all his life, and he gained deep insight and vast knowledge in these studies. Yue was the in-door disciple of Uncle Dong Yingjie, and his martial arts skills were really amazing. There are a lot of wonderful anecdotes about friendly bouts between Yue and other boxers.

Shaolin boxing is savage and stiff, but Taijiquan is soft and swift. Can you imagine the result when Shaolin fights against Taijiquan? Dong Shizhuo (董世倬) was originally good at Shaolin boxing. When Dong tested martial skills with Yue, Dong immediately flew away as Dong touched Yue's hands. Therefore, Dong sincerely requested that Yue teach him Taiji, and so he became the first disciple of Yue. Yao Zongnai (姚宗綦) practiced Shaolin boxing, and he had developed Iron Shirt skills. Yao even had once accidentally killed someone in a match. After Yao had a bout with Dong, Yao started to realize that Taiji was a profound martial art. So, Yao requested to become a disciple of Yue and started to learn Taiji. Mr. Tong Zhongyi (佟忠義) whose dates are 1879—1963, came out on top in the National Martial Arts Contest in 1928, and he once was employed as the head of Shaolin boxing by the Boxing Association of Shanghai City. Tong had the experience of a bout with Yue at the Affiliated Senior High School of Zhendan. When Tong touched Yue, Tong immediately fell down to the ground. Since then, Tong and Yue became close friends, and Yue affectionately called Tong "Elder Brother" . They once were colleagues at the Athletic College of East Asia in Jiangwan (江灣). One day, Yue and Tong arrived at a house together to visit a mutual friend. When they stood in front of the door, they politely tried to let the other go first. Eventually, Tong went first, and Yue lightly supported Tong's back with his hand. Tong's feet floated up and he landed in the house.

Yue often exchanged martial skills with other internal boxers. Dr. You Pengxi (尤彭熙) practiced Xingyi hard with Mr. Wang Xiangzhai (王鄉齋) for many years. After Dr. You lost a bout with Yue, he switched his learning from Xingyi to Taiji, and became a disciple of Yue. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, a Mr. Liu, who was reputed to be over 100 years old and living as a Taoist on Huashan (華山), came to the house of Mr. Hsu Langxi (徐朗西) in Shanghai to meet Yue. At the beginning of the welcome banquet, Mr. Hsu politely asked Yue to sit at the chief place of honor, and it was arranged for Mr. Liu to sit next to Yue. Mr. Liu was unhappy about this seating arrangement. When the first dish was put on the table, Mr. Liu suddenly pulled his sword from his scabbard at his waist, and pointed it toward Yue's chest. Yue immediately deflected the attack with his ivory chopsticks. At the moment that

Yue's chopsticks touched Liu's sword, the sword was stripped from Liu's hand and flew away. Mr. Liu immediately made a salutation toward Yue, and repeatedly said, "I failed to recognize a great man."

Yue never lost any bouts with western boxers. In the autumn of 1941, Mr. Feng Weiren (馮慰仁) hosted the first amateur western boxing match on the basketball court of the YMCA on Sichuan Road in Shanghai. The contestants included foreigners from the USA, Spain, Russia, Italy, Portugal, Korea and Japan. Eventually, Mr. Guo Zhenying (郭振英), a student at St. John's University, won the championship in the 63.5 Kg (140 lbs) weight class. When Guo met Yue at the house of Hsu Langxi, Guo asked to have a friendly bout with Yue, and Yue pleasantly consented to Guo's request. Yue seated himself on a sofa and waited for Guo's attack. Guo threw a fierce punch at Yue. But as Guo's fist was touched by Yue, Guo's hand seemed to get stuck. Suddenly, Guo flew backward, and he almost fell upside down. At that moment, Guo immediately requested to become a disciple of Yue. A Dutch boxer, who didn't believe that Taiji was of any use in fighting came to Shanghai and, in hearing about Yue's amazing skills, requested a bout with Yue. When they met, Yue controlled the Dutch boxer without any effort. Then, all of a sudden, the Dutchman was thrown backward and fell upside down and suffered a contusion of his cervical vertebra. Yue treated the Dutchman for several months. Eventually the Dutchman recovered fully and became a disciple of Yue.

Yue trained himself extremely hard. From the time Yue learned Taijiquan from Uncle Dong Yingjie, he practiced the Taijiquan long form seven times without interruption in the morning. Later, Yue resided in Lushan (廬山) and refused to meet any guest in order to study the Classics of Wang Zongyue and train himself hard. However, Yue once berated his disciple, Mr. Gu Meisheng, for practicing the Taiji long form 20 times daily, because he did so without using any effort or concentration when he practiced. Yue often admonished his disciples that, "If you don't abandon acquired wisdom, your innate wisdom won't appear. If you don't let force go, your internal energy won't come out. If you neither practice in a low stance nor sweat a lot, how can you expect to develop real martial arts skills?" When Yue practiced the form, his body resembled a ball that rolled forward and backward. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, Mr. Tao Lengyue (陶冷月) once saw how Yue practiced the fast form. Tao described that Yue's movements were very quick and he seemed ethereal, like a bank of mist. Tao felt that Yue's skills were quite amazing. Yue often practiced "Shaking Jin", and he

trained himself so hard that his feet developed calluses. When Yue taught push hands to his disciples, he repeatedly admonished that, “You have to focus on sensing energy and practice with your waist as well as feet. You should never ever try to pull and drag your opponent, or trigger a surprise attack. In doing so, you will get nowhere and only waste your time”. Yue had a lot of excellent disciples. His example is clear proof that real martial arts skills only come from hard training.

Mr. Hu Puan once asked for advice how to improve his Taijiquan. Yue considered that Hu’s form wasn’t quite accurate. Therefore, Hu’s internal energy could not freely come out of his body, even though Hu had practiced Taijiquan over a decade. Yue had inherited the essence of Yang Taiji, and he made every effort to issue internal energy out of his body when he trained as though he was having a bout with others. The internal energy of Taiji is like electricity and comes out of the body through the guidance of the mind. The Taiji practitioner has to train himself to be an “electrified” person. Eventually, issuing energy is similar to releasing electricity towards the opponent. If you had a bout with Yue, you would be immediately bounced away like being struck by an electric shock. Someone once asked Yue what the internal energy was all about. Yue replied that issuing internal energy was similar to that a water-soaked dog shaking its body. The listener laughed at what Yue said about internal energy. Yue lamented that what he said about internal energy was the key point of practicing Taijiquan. People should pay attention to this and study it carefully, rather than consider it as a joke.

Yue was not only excellent at issuing energy to opponents, but he was also good at treating and curing sick people with Qigong. Yue’s Qi was so strong it was hard to find anyone who could compare with him. Therefore, the effect of Yue’s cure was often significant. Ms. Hu Yinmeng’s (胡因夢) mother became sterile when Ms. Hu was a young girl, but eventually she successfully had another baby due to Yue’s Qigong treatments. General Chen Yi, the Mayor of Shanghai, once paid a visit to Yue for treatment because of Yue’s reputation. Yue gradually became famous for his Qigong cures day after day, so a lot of patients requested to see him. Yue was a kind and generous man, so he never turned anyone down. When Yue treated people with Qigong, he himself would sweat a lot. Day after day, Yue eventually consumed too much of his own energy and he unfortunately died at age 61. It is a pity!

Dong Shizhuo, Yao Zongnai and You Pengxi are Yue's disciples, and all of them have excellent levels of martial arts. Shizhuo passed Taiji on to Dong Bin (董斌) who died, and Dong Bin passed Taiji on to Ren Gang (任刚) who is good at push hands and free boxing. Among the current members of the young generation of Yang Taiji, Ren can be considered as a remarkable boxer.

Chapter-8 "Remembering My Teacher: Huang Jinghua"

In 1944, my father invited Mr. Tian Zuolin (田作霖) to teach Tong-Bei Boxing (通臂拳) to employees who served in the hospital. Meanwhile, I joined them and thus developed an interest in martial arts. After one year, Mr. Tian was unable to continue teaching. In 1950, there was a benefit entertainment that was performed by the community of martial artists at the gym on the Shan-xi South Road (陝西南路), Shanghai. I saw Mr. Tian Zhaolin (田兆麟) perform some amazing martial skills, and his issuing energy was sharp and simply straightforward. Suddenly, a Shaolin boxer emerged and tried to challenge Zhaolin. In order to prevent a serious dispute, Mr. Tong Zhongyi (佟忠義), a senior boxer, immediately stepped in and reconciled the two and prevented further embarrassment, and performed a two-person dueling sword set with Ms Tong Peiyun (佟佩雲). This event made a great impression on me. Later, Mr. Zhu Jixiang (朱季祥), my brother's classmate, took me to see Zhaolin's push hands at Huangpu Park.

In 1951, my father instructed a medical course hosted by the bureau of public health in the community. At that time, Dr. Huang was a student of the acupuncture branch. For the purpose of explaining diagnostics, there was a patient bed put in the classroom. One day, my father found that the patient bed was broken. The story was that a traumatology doctor who had learned external boxing asked Dr. Huang to test martial skills many times, but Dr. Huang refused all his requests. One day, this doctor suddenly attacked Dr. Huang without warning. At the beginning, Dr. Huang just retreated. Eventually, there was no space for Dr. Huang to retreat, and Dr. Huang yielded to the opponent's force and issued energy toward the opponent. Immediately, the traumatology doctor was lifted up, and then flew toward the bed and hit it badly. That was why the patient bed was broken. Rather than being upset, my father contemplated that Dr. Huang was something of a talent and hard to find. Therefore, my father invited Dr. Huang to give practical training at his hospital, and taught me Taijiquan as well. So, beginning in 1951, Dr. Huang taught me the Yang long form for three years, and

my body gradually became strong. In 1954, my parents gave Dr. Huang a banquet and two famous paintings as the Bai Shr gifts, and sincerely asked Dr. Huang to take me as his disciple. Dr. Huang said: "I have withdrawn from the martial arts community and joined the educational circle. I don't want to take disciples. However, it would be ungracious not to accept Senior Qu's invitation. Since your son loves Taijiquan very much, I will try my best to teach him. Nowadays though, the society has turned into a new one. We don't have to comply with the old customs. Therefore, your son doesn't have to kowtow to me, rather only just bow to me." Therefore, my Bai Shr ceremony was done through three deep bows to Dr. Huang.

After I became Dr. Huang's disciple, I started to practice holding postures while guiding my Qi with my mind. Since then, I have practiced the form in a different way. But under Dr. Huang's teaching, each posture was practiced independently and Dr. Huang explained in detail the meaning, application and steps for each posture. The posture had to be practiced not only both right and left sides, but also repeatedly. When I practiced the slow form, my hips had to be kept horizontal with my knees. When I practiced the fast form, I had to exhale with sound. Meanwhile, I had to practice the Taiji spear daily. Doing one Ji (擠) and one Cai (採) was counted as "one" . According to the rules of the Yang family, I had to practice the spear 200 repetitions on the right and left sides respectively. However, I was a weak young man. A mere 20 repetitions for each side would make me exhausted, and I was unable to practice any more. Dr. Huang sighed and said that, "I don't have any children of my own. You are my only disciple. I love Chinese medicine, painting, Taijiquan and Kunqu (昆曲) Opera . You like Chinese medicine, painting, Taijiquan and classical music. Our temperament is pretty much similar. What a wonderful relationship! Practicing the slow form may make you healthy. But regarding the martial arts, you have to learn the application. Physically, you are a weak guy who can not be trained as a real boxer. I am afraid that you won't reach a great achievement in Taijiquan in the future."

Dr. Huang once said. "Practicing Taijiquan demanded four essential factors which were: 1.) a knowledgeable instructor, 2.) comprehension, 3.) hard training and 4.) practice partners. None of these factors can be lacking. The practice partners would be your Taiji brothers who could practice Taiji skills with you. Since you are my only disciple, I may act temporarily as your partner, and you may issue energy toward me." However, I privately thought about how

could I possibly even try to beat my teacher and be so impolite toward him? Therefore, I wouldn't try to issue energy to Dr. Huang all the time. Dr. Huang heaved a deep sigh and said that, "You've got woman's soft nature and you will hardly reach the real level of martial arts if you don't attempt to practice issuing energy." At that time, I resided nearby Fu-Xing (復興) Park. So Dr. Huang took me to visit Mr. Zhang Yu's (張玉) place of practice which was located in the park. What Dr. Huang attempted to do was to improve my Taiji by exchanging skills with Zhang's disciples. After 10 months of practicing at Zhang's place, I still didn't find any suitable partner because Zhang's disciples practiced Taiji mainly for the purpose of health. In the 1970's, my brother-in-law Lu Qinyuan (陸欽源) and his classmate, Zhou Xinwu (周信武), wanted to learn Taijiquan, so I requested Dr. Huang's permission to teach them. From that time, Lu and Zhou became my partners, and we practiced push hands around 2 or 3 hours in my apartment every night. Also, I practiced the form and Taiji spear in the mornings. Gradually, my level of martial arts improved. In 1983, I was diagnosed with cancer and my body was damaged seriously by having over 60 Cobalt radiation treatments. Since then, I have only practiced the slow form and stopped practicing the Taiji spear drill.

My respected teacher, Dr. Huang Jinghua, was born in Wu-Jiang, Jiangsu Province, in 1909. In 1925, he came to Shanghai to learn painting. In 1926, he learned Taijiquan and sword with Mr. Ye Dami. (葉大密). In 1928, Dr. Huang met Grand Master Yang Chengfu and started to practice with him, but Chengfu left Shanghai for teaching Taijiquan in Hangzhou. During the time that Chengfu was away from Shanghai, Dr. Huang continued to practice Taiji spear at Ye's Wudang Taiji school and practiced push hands with Ye's disciples. When Dr. Huang studied painting in the Art College of Shanghai, the school hired a Taijiquan teacher, Mr. Guan Jiesan (關介三) who was in the lineage of Master Wu Jianquan (吳鑑泉). Guan was good at the delicate skills of push hands. Because Dr. Huang was a student of Chengfu, he improved his energy significantly due to hard training. Once Dr. Huang pushed hands with Guan in the Taiji class, and Dr. Huang bounced Guan to fly and hit the wall continually three times. After that event, Guan resigned the teaching position in that school. Later, Chengfu found out about that event and seriously admonished Dr. Huang. "When Taiji brothers exchange skills privately, you may completely issue energy toward your brothers. You don't have to feel sorry. Otherwise, you'll never learn the real martial arts. However, when you exchange skills with others, you have to keep a low profile and never ever try to destroy others' jobs. Besides, Wu and Yang Taiji actually are one family. How could you be so rude? Considering

that you are still young as well as innocent and have no idea of the rules of the martial community, I won't punish you this time. If you make the same mistake again in the future, I definitely won't forgive you." After that, Dr. Huang kept Chengfu's admonishment in mind all his life.

Due to the hard training at the Yang family compound, Dr. Huang sweated a lot and so he prepared two sets of clothes to change into daily. In 1931, Dr. Huang graduated from the Art College of Shanghai, but he couldn't find a job right away. Chengfu requested Dr. Huang to be the partner of Uncle Yang Shouzhong (楊守中), Chengfu's son, for practicing push hands, free boxing, two-person dueling sword and spear. Mr. Jin Renlin (金仁霖) questioned that in his article. "Unlike Zhang Qinlin (張欽霖) and Tian Zhaolin (田兆霖) who had paid the Yang family with their labor and work, how could Dr. Huang have free meals in the Yang family?" Actually, When Dr. Huang got into Yang family, Uncles Qinlin and Zhaolin had finished their learning and were independent from the Yang family. On the other hand, those who had free meals in the Yang family were junior disciples and lineage-holders. After Dr. Huang became Chengfu's disciple, he had to take charge of numerous work duties in the Yang family. When Chengfu got an edema, Dr. Huang was responsible to first greet Chengfu's doctors who were Mr. Cheng Dexiang (程德襄) and Mr. Huang Taiheng (黃泰亨), and also see them out. Chengfu was not good at writing, and all his letters were written by Dr. Huang. Both Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang were responsible to take down what Chengfu said for his book "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan." In addition, Dr. Huang was responsible for the proofreading of that book. I have mentioned those facts in Chapter One. Uncle Shouzhong was younger than Dr. Huang by one year, but Dr. Huang became a disciple of Chengfu later than Shouzhong. Therefore, Dr. Huang called Shouzhong "elder brother." When Chengfu was seriously ill and about to die, Uncle Shouzhong resided in Guangzhou, and his three half-brothers were too young to take care of their father. At that time, Dr. Huang took responsibility to take care of Chengfu without complaint. Regarding the relationship between Dr. Huang and Chengfu, you may discover that it is similar to the relationship of a son and father.

Regarding when a disciple has finished learning Taiji, the teacher definitely thinks about it very carefully. If a disciple is defeated by outsiders due to his martial arts not being good enough yet, the teacher must feel insulted. The Bagua Master Dong Haichuan (董海川) put a stele in the courtyard of his house. No disciple of Dong's could be accounted as having

completed his learning until he could strike the stele and make it fly upward in the air, instead of just knocking it down. In 1933, Da Xia (大夏) University of Shanghai invited Chengfu to be the teacher of Chinese martial arts, before he went to Guangzhou. Considering that Dr. Huang not only had reached a certain level of martial arts skill, but also was diligent and discreet, Chengfu recommended Dr. Huang for this teaching job. On the first day of class, the students laughed at Dr. Huang's somewhat unkempt clothes and accent. One of the students who was good at western boxing challenged Dr. Huang. Dr. Huang accepted his request and let him stand in front of a white poplar tree. The student threw furious punches, and Dr. Huang employed the technique, "Deflect Downward, Parry and Punch" to deal with him. Finally, the student was bounced out and flew toward the white poplar with such force that, unexpectedly, the tree was broken by the hurtling body of the student. From then on, all of the students paid profound respect to Dr. Huang. After that, Dr. Huang received successive invitations from other institutions, such as Fudan (復旦) University, the Art College of Xin-Huang (新華藝專), the Female High School of Bo-Wu (博物女校) and Hong-Qiao Sanatorium (虹橋療養院). Having so many classes in various locations made Dr. Huang exhausted from running around. Since some students who had learned Shaolin, Xing-Yi, Judo or western boxing were eager to challenge Taiji boxing, Dr. Huang employed Taiji free boxing to deal with them. Because of these challenges, Dr. Huang gained a lot of fighting experience. After the Japanese army occupied Shanghai, Dr. Huang was harassed for his teaching Taiji by various gangsters, traitors and secret agents. In 1940, Dr. Huang decided not to teach publicly, and to rather only teach privately in the student's houses. After 1949, Dr. Huang didn't teach Taijiquan any more, rather he worked as a traditional Chinese doctor.

One day in 1957, Dr. Huang summoned me with a solemn look. He said, "Please don't tell others that you are learning Taiji in my house. If you see people who practice Taiji and push hands in the parks, you should never comment on their skills. Since you have learned Taiji spear, you should never push hands with outsiders. In the case that someone entangles you for exchanging skills, you should pretend to be bewildered, and never show people your ability of issuing energy." Dr. Huang used to often exchange Taiji skills with Uncles Tian Zhaolin and Chen Weiming. However, after that day, he started to isolate himself from most of his Taiji brothers and friends, and stopped talking anything about Taiji. Occasionally, only Miss Pu Bingru and Mr. Zhang Yu visited Dr. Huang. However, Dr. Huang constantly practiced the Taijiquan form and spear daily, and he, even at age 80, still maintained an amazing level

of Taiji skills.

Dr. Huang loved painting and calligraphy very much. He often invited me to appreciate painting and enjoy teatime. He used to hang his latest painting on the wall, and look at it from every angle. It seems that appreciating paintings made him very happy and comfortable. One day, when he was age 81, Dr. Huang was home alone, and he climbed to the top of a ladder in order to appreciate a painting. He enjoyed it so much and forgot that he was still on a ladder. Suddenly, he fell from the ladder, and broke the femur in his thigh. To make matters worse, the broken bone wasn't set correctly during the treatment. From then, Dr. Huang was not able to practice Taiji which had been his daily routine for decades. As a result, his physical condition deteriorated significantly within few years. Sadly, Dr. Huang passed away on January 6, 1993. He had lived 84 years.

When Dr. Huang was about to die, he told me the truth about the following event. In 1957, the People's Sports Publishing House (人民體育出版社) prepared to republish Yang Chengfu's "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan." When the publisher found out that Dr. Huang, who was one of recorders and the proofreader of that book, was still alive, they invited him to discuss the publishing. During the discussion meeting, one of Chengfu's distant relatives mentioned the inscription written by Chiang Kai Shek (蔣介石) in that book, and accused it of being anti-revolutionary. All those present at this meeting agreed to remove all inscriptions from that book. However, the names of the authors, Yang Chengfu and Zheng Manqing, and the proofreader, Huang Jinghua were still printed on the last page of that book. Consequently, this distant relative of Chengfu's also accused Uncle Manqing of being anti-revolutionary. Dr. Huang contended that Manqing was renowned for his "Five Excellences" : painting, poetry, calligraphy, medicine and martial arts. Moreover, Manqing was never involved in politics. Therefore, Dr. Huang could not see any involvement of Manqing in any anti-revolutionary activity. Apparently, what this distant relative of Chengfu wanted was something else beyond merely accusing Manqing. Dr. Huang immediately suggested that they remove both his name and Manqing's from the last page of that book when it was republished. So from that event in 1957, Dr. Huang isolated himself from the martial arts community.

Dr. Huang mentioned that Chengfu had a lot of disciples, but only Uncles Chen Weiming, Dong Yingjie, Zheng Manqing and Dr. Huang had written books for Chengfu. In 1957 both Dong and Zheng lived abroad, and they, of course, couldn't be directly affected by the events in that meeting. However, Uncle Weiming lived in Shanghai, and he was severely humiliated and criticized as being member of the boxer community of the "feudal society" . When Dr. Huang saw those brutal facts, he could not help but retreat himself from those disputes. Dr. Huang admonished me that, "Fame, wealth and honor are external things. To get along with people, you should treat fame and wealth as nothing, insist on keeping your integrity and not be ashamed of facing poverty. If you get a chance to meet the lineage-holders of Brothers Shouzhong and Manqing in the future, you must give my regards to them. For so many years, I have not had any contact with them. It is not because I am unfaithful and heartless; rather the external situation does not allow me to do so." Nowadays, since Mr. Deng Xiaoping initiated the "economic reform," the Yang Taiji lineages may get together again, revive the old brother-relationships, and exchange Taiji skills.

Chapter-9: "Yang's Taiji in Shanghai"

Those who are from the Yang lineages and live abroad often question why is it that Taiji "boxers" are rare even though there are so many Taiji "exercisers" in Shanghai. Regarding this question, we need to review the historical events, and then it is likely to be clarified.

I have practiced Taiji for 58 years in Shanghai, and have personally been through a lot of historical events concerning Taiji here. There are numerous people who learn Yang family Taiji. These can be categorized into three kinds of practitioners. The first kind are the so-called "students" ("Xuesheng"). These "students" ; dominate the numbers of all who practice Yang Taiji. However, they merely practice the form without any Neigong training. Taijiquan is a kind of internal boxing. If one practices Taiji without Neigong training, such practice cannot be considered as the real Taijiquan, rather it is just merely a kind of exercise. What they practice is primarily for health instead of martial arts. Therefore, they belong to the class of Taiji "exercisers". The second kind of practitioners are the so-called "disciples" ("Tudi") who are fewer than the number of "students" ;. They have been through the Bai Shr Ceremony and are specifically trained in Neigong and martial arts skills. They are considered as real boxers. The third kind are the so-called "lineage-holders" ("Chuanren"). The master sifts through a few of his more skillful and talented disciples to find the potential lineage-holders, and these few disciples may inherit the high level of martial arts skills from the master. The lineage-holders of the Yang family are rare, and there are only just a few in each generation.

Among Grand Master Yang Luchan's (楊露禪) disciples, only Wan Chun, (萬春) Quan You (全佑) and Ling Shan (凌山) can be considered as lineage-holders apart from the family members. However, these three masters only obtained just a part of Luchan's skills. Only Banhou and Jianhou obtained all of Luchan's martial skills. These are undeniable historical facts. The methods that the Yang's used to teach Taijiquan were scientific for their day and fit in with society's demands for their time. Nowadays, the demand from most of society is that the people would like to learn a set of exercises for health in a short period of time. Yang Taiji

can provide this benefit for a lot of people in satisfying this demand. However, in practicing Neigong, there is no way to achieve results in a short period of time. Traditionally, those who want to seriously learn internal boxing have to participate in a Bai Shr ceremony and become a disciple of a master. For disciples of the Yang Family, there is a set of training procedures to gradually build a solid foundation for practicing Neigong. After a long time of observing and assessing these disciples in their training, the master will pick out a few disciples who possess a moral and decent personality and who have developed excellent martial foundations as potential in-door disciples or lineage-holders. Then, the master specifically instructs them in Neigong, and trains them intensely, without holding anything back. Although only a few disciples can become lineage-holders, they will have real martial arts skills. For example, Uncle Tian Zhaolin became famous overnight during the National Martial Arts Championship in Nanjing (南京) because of his martial skills. Uncle Dong Yingjie was renowned in the martial arts community in Thailand because of his fighting skills. Uncle Zheng Manqing successfully defeated British and American boxers, as well as an international fencing champion. Based on these facts, it clearly shows that the Yang family training methods are scientific and successful.

Unfortunately, this tradition of hard training that can nurture and develop a real boxer with a high level of skill was interrupted and destroyed by the extreme leftists. In Shanghai, there was a famous Taiji person who was a proletarian revolutionist instead of a boxer. During 1927 and 1928, he once learned Yang Taiji for health at Uncle Chen Weiming' s Zhirou (致柔) Taiji School and Uncle Wu Huichuan' s (匯川) Taiji School respectively. Then, he joined the Jingwu (Elite Martial) Athletic Association (精武體育會) as a general member to learn Wu Taiji for health as well. After 1949, he took Chen Taiji classes with Chen Fa Ke (陳發科) twice, but each time was for only a half month long. He had never participated in a Bai Shr Ceremony for learning Neigong, and he actually was simply a Taiji exerciser. Unexpectedly, this man became the Chairman of Martial Arts in Shanghai. He wrote a book, and advocated that it was just a feudal superstition that Zhang San Feng (張三丰) was the Founder of Taijiquan. Moreover, he trumpeted an absurd theory that Taijiquan was created by Chen Wang Ting (陳王廷). This man controlled the martial arts community for a long time, and he confused Taiji exercise with real Taiji boxing. However, what he did and said about Taiji really was not persuasive to real Taiji boxers. Therefore, any Taiji friend who would like to exchange martial skills in Shanghai, should not just make "official" ; contacts, but they should also

deeply search for Taiji friends among folks in the Taiji community. To help facilitate this, I will provide certain historical development clues about Yang Taiji in Shanghai for those friends who are from abroad.

Regarding the lineage-holders of Yang Taiji, the easiest one ignored is Uncle Zhang Qinlin (張欽霖) who lived in the years 1887-1967. Uncle Qinlin earned a special position in the Yang family. He served in the family as a labor worker when he was 15 years old. But he was diligently trained by Grand Master Jianhou. Therefore, he had a very solid foundation in martial arts skills. When Jianhou died, Chengfu's martial arts skills were not at a high level. Uncle Qinlin, following Jianhou's dying words, took on the responsibility of secretly acting as Chengfu's bodyguard, but with a very low profile. A Mr. Wan who was in the lineage of Du Xinwu (杜心五) once surprise attacked Chengfu, and luckily Uncle Qinlin came to rescue Chengfu in time. From that event, Chengfu privately instructed Qinlin in the Yang family Neigong. Eventually, Uncle Qinlin's level of martial arts skills developed beyond that of the more famous Uncles Tian Zhaolin and Wu Huichuan. Under Chengfu's orders, Uncle Qinlin was called back from Shanxi (山西) Province in order to instruct Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang in Neigong. Moreover, Uncle Qinlin became the disciple of Zuo Yifeng (左一峰) in Shanxi in order to learn and cultivate the Neigong of Daoism. Eventually, Uncle Qinlin joined a Daoist sect and disappeared without any information as to his whereabouts. Mr. Hu Yaozhen (胡耀貞), who was a famous Xingyi boxer, once challenged and lost to Uncle Qinlin, and later Hu became the disciple of Qinlin in order to learn Taiji Neigong. After 1949, Mr. Hu acted as a doctor at the Qigong Sanatorium in Beidaihe (北戴河). In 1953, Mr. Hu and Chen Fake co-founded the Capitol Martial School in Beijing, and acted as Deputy Chairman and Chairman respectively. Both Li Jingwu (李經梧) and Feng Zhiqiang (馮志強), who were famous disciples of Chen Fake, asked to learn Yang's Neigong from Hu. Once, when Hu was dining with his disciples, he threw a chopstick toward a door. That chopstick penetrated the door so deeply that no one was able to pull it out. This incident illustrates just how formidable Hu's martial skills were. It is unknown if either Uncle Qinlin or Hu Yaozhen have any successors in their lineages.

Uncle Tian Zhaolin taught Taijiquan for decades in Shanghai, and he had a lot of disciples. Among Tian's disciples were: Mr. Ye Dami (葉大密) who founded the Wudang Boxing School, Mr. Chen Zhijin (陳志進) who once acted as an assistant instructor of the Zhirou Taiji School,

Mr. Zheng Zuoping (鄭佐平) who once studied Wudang sword with Mr. Li Jinglin (李景林) and Mr. Shen Yongpei (沈永培) who once acted as an instructor at the Traditional Chinese Research Institute of Shanghai. All of those mentioned above obtained real martial arts skills. Uncle Manqing, Dr. Huang and Pu Bingru (濮冰如) once were members of Mr. Ye's Wudang Boxing School, and later they became disciples of Chengfu. Mr. Ye also had a lot of disciples, such as Mr. Ding Ranqing (丁然清), Mr. Li Changzhi (李長智), Mr. Jiang Xirong (蔣錫榮), Mr. Jin Renlin (金仁霖), Mr. Cao Shuwei (曹樹偉), etc. Both Mr. Cai Songfang (蔡松芳) and Mr. Qi Yuxian (齊毓賢) who were in the lineage of Jin Renlin, were good at push hands. Even today, the lineage of Uncle Tian Zhaolin still flourishes in Shanghai. However, Tian Yingjia (田穎嘉), Uncle Zhaolin's son, never achieved the same skills in martial arts as some of his father's disciples, although he practiced Taijiquan, too. So, it is clear that martial arts skills only come from hard training, rather than just having a blood relationship with the master.

Uncle Wu Huichuan was a big guy whose weight was over 120 Kilograms (264 1/2 lbs), and he was very good at issuing short energy that could penetrate an opponent's body. Uncle Huichuan enjoyed the same reputation of Taiji skills as Uncle Zhaolin, and both were famous as excellent Yang Taiji boxers in Shanghai. The Huichuan Taiji School at one time had more than one thousand students. Mr. Zhang Yu (張玉) and Mr. Wu Yunzhuo (吳雲倬) were the lineage-holders of Uncle Huichuan. Zhang Yu was very good at issuing powerful energy, and his oldest disciple, Wang Zhongliang (王仲良) died so early that he didn't have any lineage successors. Rao Shaoping (饒少平), the disciple of Wu Yunzhuo, is good at issuing short energy and once won the push hands championship in Shanghai. Both Ji A-dong (吉阿冬) and Shou Guishun (壽歸順), the disciples of Rao Shaoping, are good at push hands, and they teach Taiji at Zhong Shan (中山) Park. Wu Guiqing (武貴卿), Uncle Huichuan's nephew, once taught Taiji at Xiang Yang (襄陽) Park, but his level of martial arts is much inferior than that of Zhang Yu's and Wu Yunzhuo's.

Uncle Chen Weiming (陳微明) founded the Zhirou Taiji School. He was the pioneer of teaching Yang Taiji in Shanghai. Uncle Weiming looked like a scholar who could merely write articles and tell stories, but he actually was a real boxer. After Uncle Weiming defeated the Shaolin boxer, Xu Wenfu (徐文甫), he firmly stood in the community of martial arts in Shanghai. Zhao Diqi (趙敵七), Uncle Weiming's first disciple, defeated several top judoka in Shanghai. Once, Chen Duoming (陳鐸鳴), who was Zhao's disciple, being unarmed himself, captured a gangster

who was brandishing a pistol, and was publicly praised by the Shanghai Police Department for his heroism. Lin Bingyao (林炳堯), Uncle Weiming's in-door disciple, performs the Taiji form quite softly, and he is also good at push hands as well, being adept at issuing powerful energy. Brother Bingyao achieved significant improvement in his martial arts skills late in life, and he went back to his hometown of Ningbo (寧波) to teach students there. Those who are interested in the lineage of Uncle Weiming have to visit Ningbo.

Uncle Tian Zuolin (Not to be confused with Tian Zhaolin) once was the disciple of Mr. Zhang Ce (張策), a Tongbei master. Uncle Zuolin took Zhang's advice to learn Taijiquan with Grand Master Chengfu, and he was very good at actual combat. Zuolin's Taiji boxing style was to move fast and be powerful, using those features of Tongbei. He taught martial arts at Fu Xing Park for decades. After Mr. Xue, who was Zuolin's disciple died, none was able to continue the lineage transmission of Zuolin.

Uncle Dong Yingjie became the disciple of Chengfu in 1926, and he won 9 fights in a row to become the champion of martial arts in Hangzhou (杭州) in 1928. In 1931, Dong recorded Chengfu's narration and then published "The Applications of Taijiquan". It is an important document for studying Yang Taiji. Dong exchanged martial skills with a lot of boxers from Southeast Asia, and no one was able to defeat him. Dong's son, Huling (虎領), and daughter Moli (茉莉), taught in the USA and Hong Kong respectively. Mr. Yue Huanzhi (樂煥之) was the disciple of Dong, and his level of martial arts was nothing short of amazing. Dong Shizhuo (董世倬), Yao Zongnai (姚宗綦) and You Pengxi (尤彭熙) are Yue's disciples, and all of them have excellent levels of martial arts skills. Shizhuo passed Taiji on to Dong Bin (董斌) who died, and Bin passed Taiji on to Ren Gang (任剛) who is good at push hands. Ren still exchanges martial skills with different styles of boxing near the Museum of Shanghai .

Uncle Chu Guiting (褚桂亭) learned Xingyi and Bagua with masters Sun Lutang (孫祿堂) and Li Cunyi (李存義). In 1929, Uncle Guiting became the disciple of Chengfu. After 1949, he taught Taiji for decades in Peoples Park and in the Min Xing (閔行) District in Shanghai. Uncle Guiting had great martial arts skills, and moved quickly. Also, he was excellent at employing different skills consecutively, which can be found in certain styles of Xingyi. Brother Wang Zhuanghong (王壯弘) is the lineage-holder of Uncle Guiting. Brother Yan Chengde (嚴承德) who is another disciple of Uncle Guiting, is in charge of the Internal Boxing Research Association in Shanghai.

Miss Pu Bingru (濮冰如) who lived from 1907-1998, was the only female disciple of Chengfu. In 1926, Miss. Pu, Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang joined Ye Dami's Wudang Taiji School. In 1930, she became a disciple of Chengfu. Miss Pu's form was quite beautiful and extended. In 1957, she won first prize in the National Exhibition of Martial Arts. In 1959, she won first prize in the two-person martial matching skills division of the National Athletic Games. Miss Pu was a schoolteacher by profession, and insisted to be merely an amateur instructor of Taijiquan all her life. She put in a lot of effort to promote Taiji exercise, and taught Taiji at various locations such as Yang Pu (楊浦) Park, Xiang Yang Park, Tong-Ji (同濟) University, etc. Both Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang became disciples of Chengfu due to the recommendation of Miss Pu's father who was a Taiji enthusiast and patron. When Uncle Qinlin was summoned back to Shanghai in order to teach Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang Neigong, all of his expenses were met by Miss Pu's father.

My Teacher, Dr. Huang Jinghua (1909-1993), joined Mr. Ye's Wudang Taiji School in 1926, and he met Grand Master Chengfu in 1928. In 1931, Dr. Huang became the Taiji partner of Uncle Yang Shouzhong. In 1932, he became the disciple of Chengfu, assisted Uncle Manqing to record "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan", and was in charge of proofreading the text. In 1933, Chengfu recommended Dr. Huang as a Taiji teacher in Daxia University. Since then, Dr. Huang taught Taiji in certain places, such as Fudan University, the Art College of Xinhua, the Female High School of Bowu and the Hongqiao Sanatorium. After 1949, Dr. Huang retreated from the community of martial arts, and started to act as an educator. After Dr. Huang participated in the discussion of republishing "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" in 1957, he ceased having any more contact with most of his Taiji friends, and he stopped talking publically about anything concerning Taijiquan. Although I am the only disciple of Dr. Huang, I am short of talent, in poor physical health due to cancer, and do not have a great achievement in Taiji. I feel shame in falling so short of the teaching of Dr. Huang.

Brother Fu Zhongwen (1908-1994) was the son-in-law of Chengfu's niece. During the 1920's, Fu worked as a laborer at the Shenghe (盛和) Cotton Store in Shanghai. Fu would come to the

Yang's household and stay there for a night every Saturday. Then, Fu practiced Taijiquan the whole day on Sunday with Cui Yishi, who was requested to teach Fu by none other than Chengfu. Uncle Chu Guiting, Dr. Huang and Brother Zhang Yu all revealed the above story to me regarding Fu. Also, Brother Yan Chengde, who was the disciple of Chu Guiting, once mentioned this story in his article that was published in the "Wu Lin (武林) Journal". In 1934, Dong Yingjie and Cui Yishi accompanied Chengfu on his teaching tour of Taijiquan in Guangzhou, and Fu also came along with them. After 1949, Fu taught the Yang form, without Neigong, for a long time at a public gym in Shanghai. Now, Shanghai is full of Taiji exercisers. There is no doubt that this is due to Fu's contribution and influence.

Since Uncles Niu Chunming (牛春明), Li Yaxuan (李雅軒), Cui Yishi, Zheng Manqing and Yang Shouzhong (楊守中) didn't teach Taiji for long time in Shanghai, I didn't describe their stories in this chapter.

Chapter-10 "Taiji Boxing and Taiji Exercise"

According to the chapter “Explanation of the three levels of the Civil and Martial in Taiji (太極分文武三成解)” found in the hand-written classics of the Yang family, speaking of Dao must start with cultivating oneself. Otherwise, eventually it will be a fruitless endeavor. The achievements of cultivation can be categorized into three levels. The civil part is cultivated internally and the martial part is trained externally. One who successfully cultivates both the internal and external together can reach the highest level. One who begins cultivating the internal and then gradually reaches external success, or vice versa, can be categorized as the middle level. And those who one-sidedly emphasize either the internal or external belong to the lowest level of cultivation.

But suppose one has studied the Yang long form for a couple of years and can perform all of the movements quite well. Can he or she also be considered sort of a low-level practitioner? Not necessarily!

According to “Explanation of the Civil and Martial in Taiji (太極文武解)” in the hand-written classics handed down through the Yang family, the civil is form (體) and the martial is application (用). “The civil may apply to the martial through Jing (vital essence 精), Qi (氣) and Shen (spirit 神). The martial may integrate with the civil by harmonizing spirit and body.” Thus, regarding the civil aspect of Taijiquan, not only is it merely practicing the form, but it must also include internal cultivation (Neigong 內功). What is internal cultivation? As the air is inhaled from the atmosphere, it gradually can connect to the Qi in the Dantian through constant practicing. Then the Qi may circulate in the body continuously, and the practitioner may even control Qi to stop here or go there using his/her mind. Contrarily, only practicing the form without also practicing internal cultivation is just a sort of Taiji exercise, rather than Taiji boxing. Nowadays, hundreds of thousands people practice “Taijiquan” in parks, but most of them actually are those who practice Taiji exercise instead of Taiji boxing. Thus, Uncle Li Yaxuan (李雅軒) lamented over the fact that, as more people learn Taijiquan, the more traditional Taiji boxing fades.

However, Taiji exercise can still provide an immense contribution towards public health. For example, the 24-posture Taijiquan that was broadcasted on the “Early Morning Exercise Show (聞雞起舞)” on China Central Television in Beijing only focused on practicing the external form and excluded any internal cultivation. This was only for exercise and not for boxing purposes.

Nevertheless, such an easy-learned exercise brought to those who suffered from chronic diseases tremendous benefits for their physical health, and its therapeutic effects were quite amazing. Based on keeping most of the weight on one leg at a time for each posture, Taijiquan may strengthen the legs and improve balance. Thus, even Taijiquan practiced as mere exercise can help prevent senior citizens from suffering falls. People should keep in mind that such relaxed exercise may significantly improve physical health, but they should also realize that it has nothing to do with either internal cultivation or martial arts. Please be sure not to be confused about this.

In 1951, Dr. Huang Jinghua began to teach me Yang Taijiquan. Every movement or posture had to be in accordance with Master Yang Chengfu’s “Ten Important Points (太極拳十要)” namely: Keep the head upright to let Qi and Shen rise to the top of the head (niwan); Relax the chest and straighten the back; Relax the waist and hips; Differentiate between insubstantial and substantial in the limbs and body; Relax the shoulders and let the elbows hang; Use mind instead of physical force; Coordinate the upper and lower parts of the body to move together as one; Harmonize the internal and external; Move smoothly with continuity; Seek internal stillness in external movement.

Dr. Huang asked me to look at and imitate the Taiji photos of Master Yang Chengfu every day. And when I practiced the form, I had to try to follow all of the Taiji principles, and especially be as relaxed as possible. But as a beginner, my movements were of course not very smooth or even, so Dr. Huang did not insist that I had to coordinate my movement with the breath. After one year of practicing, I finished learning the whole set of the long form.

During the second year, Dr. Huang instructed me to cultivate Qi and coordinate the breath with the postures of the form. Cultivation of Qi must be slow, soft, tranquil and deep. Practice of the form must be soft, relaxed and sunk. It takes at least one year of practicing in this manner to allow the Qi to gradually coordinate with the form.

In the third year, I started to learn push hands with fixed steps (四正推手). When I performed “ward off”, “roll back”, “press” and “push” I had to strictly follow the principles of sensing and yielding to the opponent’s force with my waist and feet, rather than with my hands.

Also, regarding my practice of push hands, I had to be not only familiar with the movements, but I also had to coordinate the movements with Qi. Ward off and roll back coordinated with inhalation; press and push coordinated with exhalation. In practicing push hands, I tried my best not to use any force in my arms or hands, rather I tried to control my body with my waist, relaxing both my waist and hips and harmonizing my waist and feet. Practicing push hands may verify whether or not your form is correct. If your form is incorrect, the whole body will be disordered. Also, if you are not totally relaxed and instead use muscle strength in push hands, you won’t be able to discharge force, and it will be impossible to take any advantage of an opening. Therefore, learning Yang Taiji boxing should not be without learning and practicing push hands correctly in this manner.

In 1954, I became Dr. Huang’s in-door disciple and he told me that day the following, “Over the past three years, you have finished learning the Yang long form. Your body has been softened and your Qi circulation has become smooth. You have built the foundation of a healthy body successfully. However, now as my formal disciple, you have to begin learning the martial arts step by step in accordance with Master Yang’s principles. To build the foundation for martial arts, one has to start by holding postures, primarily the ma bu (horse stance) and the chuan bu (used in Lift Hands and Play Guitar). The essentials of holding a ma bu stance are to lift (提), sink (沈), open (開) and close (合). The purposes of holding a ma bu stance are to circulate Qi within the body, improve the internal energy (內勁) and realize the change of both yin jin (陰勁) and yang jin (陽勁) thoroughly. The essentials of holding a chuan bu stance are to align the body, lead Qi to corresponding points throughout the body and load the center of gravity directly through the Yongquan (湧泉) of the weighted back foot. The purposes of the chuan bu stance are to differentiate between insubstantial and substantial

and practice the shift of the body's gravity between the Yongquan of the two feet as you change from a weighted rear left leg to weighted rear right leg chuan bu. Regarding this practice of holding postures, without the demonstration and explanation from an instructor who really understands Taijiquan, one is unable to realize what is internal energy and how to differentiate between insubstantial and substantial. Removing the core contents of holding postures mentioned above, even if one's feet and legs are trained until they become like iron, such holding training can only be referred to as rigid holding rather than lively holding. One must practice lively holding and never ever train holding postures rigidly."

After a half year of training in holding the ma bu and chuan bu stances, Dr. Huang re-trained me in the form posture by posture. The essentials of the ma bu and chuan bu stance training were strictly applied to each posture. Moreover, this time he also taught me the applications of each posture. Taijiquan emphasizes to give up oneself to follow others, and to harmonize yin and yang. The movements of each posture have to yield to the opponent's postures. Then, one has to make the proper responses in accordance with the opponent's postures and timing, and never ever move your hands and feet purposelessly. If Dr. Huang wasn't satisfied with my practice of the first posture, he definitely would not teach me the next. Also, each posture had to be practiced in four directions (right, left, forward and backward). Each movement had to be in accordance with the Taiji principles. Basically, the connection and shift between movements had to be smooth, and only when I could accomplish this was I then allowed to practice the whole long form posture by posture. At that time, Yang Taijiquan was referred to as "two-player boxing", rather than the so-called "single-player boxing." Why was this so? As the form was practiced, from the beginning till the end, you had to imagine an opponent was in front of you and that their movements corresponded with your every movement. As you were yang (moving forward), the opponent was yin (moving back), and vice versa. On the other hand, in regards to the application of boxing in a real bout, Dr. Huang advised you should imagine that no one was in front of you!

Dr. Huang asked me one day, "What is the insubstantial form (空架子)?" When I had no answer, he continued, "Only practicing the form externally, without cultivating Qi internally, having no idea about where the energy (jin) is coming from, without differentiating between insubstantial and substantial, and without imagining an opponent when practicing the form, eventually one couldn't face a real opponent and yield to any incoming energy from the

opponent. That is an insubstantial form. In the past, the form you practiced was almost the same as the Taiji exercise that is practiced at many parks. Now, since you are my formal disciple, you should make your best efforts to practice real Taiji boxing in accordance with the instructions of "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" . (by Yang Chengfu) ”

According to the tradition of the Yang family, the Taiji boxing that Dr. Huang taught me can be categorized into three levels of form training: heaven (high), human (middle) and earth (low). Although the form has three levels of training, basically their distinctions are not their external framework (e.g. long, short, lower or higher), but rather they are methods, as well as goals, of training the internal energy. As a beginner, one must start learning the low frame method which focuses on breathing and realizing the Yongquan as a source of internal energy. When this is fully accomplished, one can then be trained using the middle frame method which focuses on the training of the dantian, and realizing the “life-door (mingmen 命門)” that is located at the back in line with the navel as a source of internal energy. The high frame method is the last one to be trained. It focuses on opening the “three-gates” (通三關)” and realizing the “Jiaji” (夾脊)” between the shoulder blades as a source of internal energy.

After I was familiar with the three levels of form training, Dr. Huang taught me Yang Taiji fast boxing. The fast boxing form that Dr. Huang taught had only 60 postures. Its framework was a little bit smaller and more "contracted" (收斂) than the Long Form. And the stepping was very swift as well as slippery (滑步). Each posture consisted of yielding and fajin (issuing energy). In issuing energy, one had to exhale and make a sound simultaneously. After a few years, I had a chance to exchange boxing experiences with Brother Lin Bingyao (林炳堯), and I asked him about the fast boxing Uncle Chen Weiming (陳微明) taught, and he told me it had 108 postures. Later, I asked Dr. Huang that since the fast boxing that Master Yang Chengfu taught had 60 postures, why did Uncle Weiming teach 108 postures of fast boxing? Dr. Huang told me, “The original fast boxing of the Yang family had 72 postures. But Master Chengfu’s body was big and corpulent, and he was getting bigger and fatter even late in life, so the 72-posture fast boxing was not suitable for him to practice anymore. Therefore, Master Chengfu eliminated some repetitions of the 72-posture fast boxing which shortened the form, and he only taught disciples single postures of this form for free boxing. (散手) What Elder Brother Weiming taught in his fast boxing form also included some Bagua and Xingyi postures. That was why the fast boxing of Elder Brother Weiming had 108 postures. Another Elder

Brother, Dong Yingjie, (董英傑) taught 23 postures in his fast boxing form which were extracted from the best parts of the 72 posture fast boxing form. Each one of my Brothers learned the postures and forms of Yang Taiji boxing, but the way each one performs and what they teach might be different. However, the internal cultivation (neigong) must be in accordance with Yang's principles. Otherwise, what one practices and teaches doesn't belong to Yang's boxing!"

Not only did Dr. Huang teach me holding postures and the Taiji forms, but also Quiet Sitting with mediation. He once told me, "Neigong is the basis of internal boxing. Externally, in the practice of Quiet Sitting and holding postures you don't move the body, but the internal Qi is circulating within your body. Qi-circulation without body movement is real movement. You may stop practicing the Taiji form temporarily due to limiting circumstances or situations, but you have to practice Neigong constantly."

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), I was re-educated as a laborer, peasant and soldier. At that time, I actually didn't have time to practice Taiji boxing. However, when it was my turn for guard duty, I took the chance to practice holding postures. During the supervisor's speeches, I practiced Quiet Sitting. Externally, people couldn't really see what I was doing, but I actually never stopped practicing Neigong.

In 1983, I suffered from cancer. My body was damaged seriously by having over 60 Cobalt radiation treatments. My doctor considered that even if I survived from such radical and unreasonable radiation treatment, my body wouldn't be able to recover fully. Nevertheless, I am still healthy even until now, and able to climb stairs to the top of a 10 story building without losing my breath, or even panting. How could I have survived from such ill luck without my continual practice of Neigong that I was taught in the past? So, regarding the effectiveness for physical health, it does matter, as one learns Taijiquan, whether it is with or without Neigong.

In the parks, many friends do Taiji exercise. If they can search for instructors who are truly knowledgeable in Yang Taiji, and who practice Taijiquan with Neigong, even if they don't learn the martial aspects of boxing, their physical health may be improved, and the goal of longevity may be realized.

Chapter-11 "Push Hands vs "Old Ox Power"

Master Yang Chengfu once said, “There are a lot of people who practice Taijiquan in our society. Do you have any idea how to tell which one is real? As a true Taiji boxer, one’s arms seem to be like iron rods wrapped with cotton. You may feel they are soft outside, but quite heavy. When pushing hands with a true Taiji boxer, you may feel the touch is very light, but you cannot push or press him over with force. Issuing energy toward the opponent is as quick as a bullet shot from a gun, without requiring any strenuous effort. The launched opponent just feels a light movement on his body, and no pain, and yet he will find that they have been pushed over 3 meters. The true Taiji boxer doesn’t grasp the opponent by force, but lightly sticks to the opponent. The opponent feels as though he is glued to the Taiji boxer, and feels very uncomfortable, and finds he couldn’t escape from being controlled by the Taiji boxer. That is a real Taijiquan.”

During the 1950’s, I went to the park to watch Uncle Tian Zhaolin’s (田兆麟) push hands and Taiji skills every weekend. Uncle Zhaolin’s Taiji skills were exactly as what Master Chengfu described above. He was a true Taiji boxer. Nowadays, you can barely find anyone who has such wonderful skills. I love Taiji boxing very much. Once I hear where I can find a so-called “Taiji Master,” I feel must honestly try to visit and learn something from him or her. Unfortunately, as I have visited many so-called “Taiji Masters” with eager anticipation, I usually come back disappointed. The skills the so-called "Taiji Masters" displayed are far from what Master Chengfu talked about. Under Dr. Huang’s teaching, I didn’t have a partner for pushing hands, since I didn’t have other in-door Brothers. Thus, Dr. Huang asked me to learn push hands for 10 months at Brother Zhang Yu’s (張玉) boxing place, and then exchange skills with Brother Lin Bingyao who is Uncle Chen Weiming’s in-door disciple. “You should not arbitrarily push hands with strangers in the parks. It is easy to learn Taijiquan, but very difficult to correct bad habits. Once you push hands with strangers and try too eagerly to beat the opponent, you will get too many bad habits, such as pushing and pulling with force, using a surprise attack and so on. Then, you might never correct such bad habits and will be even further away from the true Taiji boxing” Dr. Huang said.

When Dr. Huang taught me Taiji skills, push hands with fixed steps, Da-Lu and free boxing, he always demonstrated those operations by himself. He also explain receiving jin, (接勁) leading jin, (引勁) yielding jin (化勁) and catching jin (拿勁). However, Dr. Huang wouldn't teach me how to issue energy (fajin). I was initially somewhat confused and questioned his method of teaching. But Dr. Huang made everything clear one day when he told me, "In push hands of Taijiquan you don't use force from your hands; if you use hand force, it is not the push hands of Taijiquan. When you push the opponent out, the energy used is actually not the force from your hands, but is the energy from the Dantian. Wherever the opponent touches you is where the opponent is pushed out by you. Every part of the body is like a 'hand' that can issue energy on the opponent. The level of your martial arts still is low and the Qi in your Dantian is not sufficient. Once I teach you how to issue energy, you must not use the force of your hands. If you become used to such bad habits, you might barely learn the true Taiji boxing. Now, you should try your best to hold postures and practice the form as soft as possible. Gradually, once the Qi in your Dantian is cultivated sufficiently, you just need a hint and then you will know how to issue energy. Remember, regarding Taiji boxing, you should never ever try to learn it by the quick way."

I honestly followed Dr. Huang's instructions and, step by step, learned Taiji boxing, and slowly but steadily made progress. One day, I was working in my office at the school where I taught. There were two students who were chasing each other in and out of the hallway and empty classrooms and offices. Suddenly, they both ran through my office, and one collided with the other and fell down onto my lower belly. Simultaneously, he was bounced backward and fell down on the ground. Surprised, he yelled, "Mr. Qu! Your belly's got a spring inside!" Suddenly, I realized that the Qi in my Dantian had become sufficient. After that, I invited my brother-in-law, Lu Qinyuan (陸欽源) and his classmate, Zhou Xinwu (周信武) to be my push hands partners in order to have someone to practice issuing energy with. I kept my arms and hands soft, without much movement, and just lightly touched my partner. Then I exhaled lightly and my partner was bounced backward at the same time. An old martial arts saying declares, "One who has been trained in Xingyi for 3 years can kill people, but a Taiji boxer cannot fight with opponents until at least 10 years of training." In my case, I couldn't bounce the opponent backward with my internal energy until I had practiced Taijiquan for 23 years! I am not a Taiji talent and never practiced hard. Thus, my progress in learning Taijiquan was

very slow.

I am a short guy, only around 160 centimeters tall. My push hands partner, Zhou Xinwu, is a strong and big guy. Once, when we practiced push hands together, I yielded to his incoming force, touched him lightly and issued energy; he immediately fell down. I then asked Dr. Huang if I could push hands with strangers in the parks. “You may try it,” he said, “But, remember, you have to let yourself lose instead of win!” So I asked him, “Why do I have to lose? Most people would like to win when competing skills with others?” Dr. Huang explained, “The fighting skills in Taijiquan is developed in free boxing (san shou), rather than push hands. The purpose of push hands, among brothers or classmates, is to build the ability of sensing and testing energy or force.. The training of push hands can be the foundation of Taiji free boxing. In practicing push hands with your Taiji brothers or classmates you may improve each other’s skills. That is a win-win situation. If you can’t fully yield their incoming force, you may just take the chance to jump out. In doing so you wouldn’t lose face. However, if you go to other’s training places and try to exchange skills, you have to respect the host teacher. Even if your skills are better than the host teacher’s, you still have to give precedence out of courtesy and never hurt the host teacher’s dignity. I know that you have a good understanding of Taijiquan, but you didn’t practice very hard. After all, you are trained in accordance with Grandmaster Yang’s principles, and you are different from those who practice Taiji exercise in the parks. But when you compete with Taiji exercisers in the parks, and win, you actually are not the winner. If you have a chance to exchange skills with Taiji exercisers, you should voluntarily take the loss in order to escape from disputes. Also, if you exchange skills with Taiji exercisers often, you will easily pick up bad habits. And even if you become well-known for your push hands skill, actually it is harmful rather than good for you. You should keep a low profile and try to find a few Taiji boxers as your friends and push hands partners; then you may expect to improve your skills through exchange. Once you meet Taiji boxers who are trained by truly knowledgeable Taiji teachers, you should be humble and ask to exchange skills with them in order to strengthen your weaknesses.”

I honestly followed Dr. Huang’s instructions to search for Taijiquan friends among the hundreds of thousands of people in the parks here in Shanghai. Finally, I found a few real Taiji boxers. Mr. Jiang Changfeng (江長風) who, even though he is quite elderly, can lead his internal energy out of his body. Although his energy is not tremendously strong, it is definitely

different from the dull force I feel from others. Mr. Jiang is an in-door disciple of Master Wu Jianquan (吳鑑泉). Brother Hong Wenda (洪文達) can take any incoming force from the opponent without resorting to grabbing. Brother Hong is Uncle Tian Zhaolin's disciple. In addition, I met an elder Taiji boxer who has excellent skills of yielding and issuing energy. He is Mr. Hao Shaoru's (郝少如) disciple, but he wouldn't tell me his name. Regarding many other Taiji exercisers who don't use real Taiji skills, when I touch their hands for exchanging skills, I quickly give up in order to be free from any disputes.

Nowadays, push hands is being promoted as a championship event in the martial arts community. The point system used in refereeing these matches are short of reasonableness. In observing these events, you may find two unusual phenomena. The first phenomenon is that push hands has become the art of resisting and wrestling. If you watch a push hands championship on TV, you can usually predict who will be the winner as the athletes appear. Usually, the heavier will beat the lighter. Both Master Yang Shaohou (楊少候) and Sun Lutang (孫祿堂) were short as well as skinny. Their amazing Taiji skills were based on Neigong. Nowadays, this so-called "push hands" actually is simply resisting and wrestling. The winners rely on their weight and muscle power, and the skills and techniques they use belong to wrestling. It totally has nothing to do with using the Taiji Neigong. These "Taiji" athletes train by weight lifting, or practice wrestling skills. These sorts of athletes are known as "Tanks," and they can defeat most challengers. However, unexpectedly one year, Rao Shaoping (饒少平) who is from Uncle Wu Huichuan's (武匯川) lineage, joined one of these push hands championship events. A "Tank" tried to hold and throw Rao down, but Rao took in the incoming force, stuck and pressed the "Tank" using short energy. The "Tank" immediately collapsed and was unable to defend against Rao. Other "Tanks" were shocked by such amazing skills, and as the day progressed and they continued to see Rao's ability, most of them gave up any hope of winning the championship. Rao won the championship handily.

The second phenomenon is mixing the spurious with the genuine. Unlike external boxers, who can finish their training in their art rather quickly, it takes many years to train a high-level Taiji boxer. However, some instructors recruited wrestlers or other external boxers and trained them in a Taiji form for a few months. After that, they would enter their "Taiji" students in a Push Hands Tournament. Once they meet their opponent in the ring, immediately they use their original external boxing skills, rather than Taiji skills. Years ago,

the martial arts community in Japan invited Yang Style Taiji boxers in Shanghai to exchange skills and teach push hands. At that time, the Chairman of the martial arts community in Shanghai asked Mr. He Bingquan, (何炳泉) who was a senior external boxer, to practice push hands with fixed steps. Then, as a so-called “Taiji expert”, Mr. He visited Japan. Mr. He actually was a very good external boxer, but the Japanese boxers had no idea how to tell the real Yang Taiji from the false. Mr. He unexpectedly conducted Push Hands seminars seven times in Japan. When Brother Zhang Yu heard about this he just sighed and said, “The Yang family never taught the form without push hands. If the Yangs had never exchanged skills with others, how did they gain their reputation as being unbeatable? The Japanese honestly invited Yang Taiji boxers to exchange skills, but an external boxer appeared as a substitute instead. This is one of the strangest stories of the ages! ”

Now, not only do weight lifters and wrestlers enter Taiji Push Hands Tournaments, but also western boxers, and a variety of external boxers join these events. Their skills are a miscellany of various martial arts. Now I quite understand that each branch of martial arts has its own strong points, and I don’t have any intention to discriminate against them. However, each branch has its own characteristics and it should not be confused or mixed with another branch. So, when pushing hands with others, you can tell by their techniques if the opponent’s boxing belongs to true Taijiquan or not.

Master Chengfu once said, “Although you can use powerful force to push an opponent down, it is inevitable that you will feel strain and the opponent will also feel pain; such a push won’t be smooth. Contrarily, if you try to grab a Taiji expert by force, it’s like trying to catch wind or shadows. You will get nothing because you cannot borrow or detect any force from a Taiji expert. That is real Taiji boxing!”

Friends, if you can firmly keep in mind what Master Chengfu said, it is very easy to tell the real Taijiquan from the false.

Chapter-12 "Please Love and Treasure Taiji"

One of my friends sent me an article which was written by Mr. Lu Dimin (路迪民) and published in the "Wu Lin"(武林) Journal. After reading Mr. Lu's article, I would like to say a few words about some of his statements.

"The writing style of a novel"

Mr. Lu considered what I wrote about Master Chengfu's tremendous appetite and powerful dantian was an exaggeration, and he declared that such a writing style belonged to that of a novel. I was wondering if Mr. Lu had ever seen the "Gao Zhuang steamed bun (高莊饅頭)" in Shanghai before 1949. This type of steamed bun actually wasn't very big, and it was very soft and elastic. When you pressed this type of steamed bun with a finger and then released it, it quickly recovered its original shape. However, the current steamed bun is two times the size of the Gao Zhuang steamed bun. According to a recent story in the newspaper, it said that the members of the police special forces unit have tremendous appetites. A new trainee may eat 10 steamed buns for a meal. I served in the army in the past, and I knew that the steamed bun made in the army was two times the size of the Gao Zhuang steamed bun. If you practice the Yang long form several times, you will sweat plentifully. And if you add to your form practice the push hands and spear drills, your appetite will definitely increase significantly. Master Chengfu was a big man. Based on his serious and profoundly disciplined daily practice of Taiji, Master Chengfu's appetite was no different than a Japanese Sumotori. I don't think what I wrote about Master Chengfu's appetite is exaggerated. Yang Taiji belongs to the internal boxing of Wudang (武當). It emphasizes the mind and Qi, rather than the external body (i..e. bone and muscle). The Dantian is the home of the Qi.

When practicing continuously year after year, one's Dantian may be full of Qi and can bear tremendous pressure. I believe that anyone who has practiced Neigong long enough can experience what I say.

Dr. Huang Taiheng, (黃泰亨) who was called the "Golden Needle," was a famous traditional

Chinese medical doctor in Hangzhou (杭州). The special type of needle he used in acupuncture was made of an alloy of gold and silver. Unlike the stainless steel needle used currently, the alloy needle is softer, and it is reasonable that such a needle was bent by Master Chengfu's Dantian. Yang Taiji emphasizes Neigong, mind and Qi. So, it is perfectly suitable to discuss the subjects of the Dantian and appetite when we talk about Yang Taiji. However, once you skip Neigong and then try to talk about Taijiquan, I don't see any difference between any other kind of soft exercise and this type of Taijiquan. So, after reading Mr. Lu's article, I feel somewhat confused. Mr. Lu is a young man, and it is reasonable that he doesn't have any idea about the Gao Zhuang steamed bun and the alloy needle. However, Mr. Lu has practice internal boxing for many years. Knowing this, I couldn't believe that Mr. Lu's Dantian and appetite has not had any change. If the Yang Taiji that Mr. Lu practiced is without Neigong, then what he referred to as "Yang Taiji" was different from mine. What we mention as Yang Taiji respectively is actually different, and thus it is very difficult to communicate with each other.

When reading popular Gongfu novels, usually you can find a "Big Brother" character who becomes in charge of the martial arts school after the master dies. I don't know if Master Chengfu designated anyone as the "Big Brother" of Yang Taiji. However, those Uncles Zhang Qinlin 張欽霖, Niu Chunming 牛春明, Li Yaxuan 李雅軒, Tian Zhaolin 田兆霖, Wu Huichuan 武匯川 were the early disciples of Master Chengfu, and Dr. Huang admired their excellent Taiji skills and respected them as Big Brothers. Also, Dr. Huang often mentioned many wonderful stories of other Uncles. For example, Uncle Dong Yingjie repeatedly won, nine times in a row, the championship of Hangzhou, and defeated numerous Thai boxers as well; Uncle Chen Weiming defeated the Shaolin boxer, Xu Wenfu (徐文甫). Dr. Huang admonished me many times that, "Taijiquan is one of the martial arts; you have to practice very hard, and then you are capable of competing with external boxers." Dr. Huang often lamented over the fact that my practicing was not hard enough, and he considered that I wasn't qualified to be a Taiji boxer.

Mr. Lu also indicated some wording mistakes in my article of "Taiji Master - Yang Chengfu" published in a magazine. That is true! Before the "Taiji Master" article was published, I modified some of the contents. Since the modifications had been hand-written, some words were probably not clear for the publisher. Finally, when this article was published, I found

some mistakes in the wording used. However, I didn't ask the publisher to correct them. That is my responsibility and my fault. I really appreciate Mr. Lu's corrections.

"Shutting the door and refusing visitors"

According to Chinese tradition, scholars like to appreciate each other articles, and martial artists like to exchange boxing skills. Yang Taiji has developed significantly due to continuously exchanging skills with other boxers. Thanks to taking numerous challenges of outsiders by the three generations of the Yang family, they were honored as "Unbeatable Yang." Yang Taiji has been so popular due to the contributions of Master Shaohou, Master Chengfu and many Uncles (including Tian Zhaolin, Wu Huichuan, Li Yaxuan, Dong Yingjie, Chen Weiming and Zheng Manqing) who acquired excellent skills and took numerous challenges from domestic and foreign martial artists. Thus, there were three traditions regarding the practice of exchanging skills that gradually developed in the history of the Yang family.

The first one is that the father takes the place of the son's teaching. Wan Chun, (萬春) Quan You (全佑) and Ling Shan (凌山) were taught by Grand Master Yang Luchan (楊露禪), but they all were asked to be the disciples of Grand Master Yang Banhou (楊班候) who was Luchan's elder son. Zhang Qinlin, Niu Chunming, Tian Zhaolin and Li Yaxuan were taught by Grand Master Yang Jianhou (Banhou's younger brother), but all of them also were asked to be the disciples of Master Chengfu who was Jianhou's son. In 1902, Uncle Niu Chunming became the formal disciple of Master Chengfu who was just a young guy of 19 years old and hadn't gained great skills. After some years, Master Chengfu became famous in the Taiji community. Uncle Tian Zhaolin learned this news, came back to Beijing and tried to test Master Chengfu's skills. However, Uncle Zhaolin lost, and so he re-kowtowed to Master Chengfu as his teacher. A lot of people knew this story.

The second tradition is that, as the Master taught outside, there must be some disciples who would accompany him. If there was any visitor who would like to exchange skills, the Master would let his disciples take this challenge first, watch them nearby, and then decide if he would like to take this challenge by himself, too.

The third tradition is that of opening the door of the school and welcoming visitors for exchanging skills. It often happened that a lot of boxers came to the Yang's practice site to ask for a chance of exchanging skills. If the Master exchanged skills with visitors and they hadn't been satisfied by his display, he would invite the visitors to come to his house later for further exchange. When Grand Master Jianhou was alive, the Yang household was like a market crowded with people who continuously visited and asked for exchanging skills. After Grand Master Jianhou died, Master Chengfu refused to exchange skills with visitors during the time he was in mourning for his father. However, when I said that Master Chengfu refused to take visitors, I didn't mean that he wouldn't take any new disciple at that time. There is evidence in my prior article in which I mentioned one new disciple honorably offered 30 silver coins for Master Chengfu's tuition. I never said that refusing visitors was the same as turning down new disciples. Not only did Dr. Huang say that Master Chengfu refused visitors and practiced Taiji extremely hard after Grand Master Jianhuo's death, but Elder Uncle Tian Zhaolin, Elder Uncle Tian Zuolin, Elder Brother Zhang Yu, Hong Wenda and Lin Bingyao also said so. Moreover, Mr. Jing Changfeng, Professor Tan Dahua (談達驊) and other Taiji friends knew about Master Chengfu's stories. To be a good Taiji boxer, one must have a knowledgeable teacher, practice very hard, and have a good understanding as well as good partners.

Although Master Chengfu was the descendant of the Yang family, he didn't reach the highest level of martial arts until his middle age. Mr. Ma Yueliang, (馬岳梁) Master Wu Jianquan's son-in-law, was the real lineage-holder of Wu Taiji. Mr. Ma's skills of push hands was good, but he wasn't at the highest level even in his middle age. However, Mr. Ma finally achieved the highest level in his late age. The real martial arts come from practicing hard, not just because you have a blood relationship with the Taiji Master. Some seem to think that just by taking a photo with a Taiji Master, then one can inherit the real Taiji boxing. If that is true, I don't see any difference between Taiji boxing and a contagious disease! (such as SARS.)

"The battle between two branches"

In 1928, the Central Martial Arts Organization (CMAO) in Nanjing offered 500 silver coins as monthly payment to Master Chengfu for the positions of the Taijiquan instructor and for being

the Chairman of the Wudang Branch of the CMAO. In addition, the CMAO offered 300 silver coins as monthly payment to Master Sun Lutang as the Xingyi instructor. Since Master Chengfu was delayed in taking this position, Mr. Li Jinglin (李景林) asked Master Lutang to be the Deputy Chairman of Wudang, and so the position actually wasn't taken by Mr. Gao Zhendong (高振東) as Mr. Lu said in his article. At that time, either Master Chengfu or Master Lutang was in the CMAO, and as a member of the junior generation, Mr. Gao Zhendong was therefore unqualified to take the position as the Chairman of Wudang. When Master Chengfu arrived in Nanjing, it was obviously unsuitable to have two chairmen of Wudang at the same time. According to tradition in Chinese martial arts, the chairman was decided by a victory in battle between the candidates. Therefore, Mr. Zhang Zhijiang (張之江) initiated a contest between Master Chengfu and Lutang in order to decide who would be chairman. However, Mr. Zhang never thought about the fact that Master Chengfu had a very close relationship with Master Lutang. Because of their such close relationship, Master Chengfu wouldn't battle with Master Lutang for the sake of taking the position as the Chairman of Wudang. As a result, Master Chengfu didn't stay in Nanjing for long. Following Master Chengfu's leaving, Master Lutang also left and recommended Mr. Gao as the Chairman of Wudang. So, Master Chengfu and Lutang actually never fought. There are many Yang Taiji boxers in Shanghai who know this story. I don't believe that the event of these two Masters having a battle was recorded in the history of the CMAO. However, given this fact that a lot of "histories" were lacking actual records, the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences exerted great efforts to make an oral survey of the CMAO history in order to get some facts. Mr. Lu never checked if the battle between these two Masters was true, and so he presumed there were mistakes in my article. I really can't understand Mr. Lu's logic. Moreover, Mr. Lu said that the event of Mr. Zhang Zhijiang initiating a battle between Master Chengfu and Lutang, which was written in my article, was incorrect. Rather, he considered that the battle I mentioned was the one between Mr. Wang Ziping (王子平) and Mr. Gao Zhendong. Again, I really cannot understand Mr. Lu's thought. Master Chengfu and Lutang are of a different generation from Ziping and Zhendong. How is it possible that I can mismatch the events of different generations?

"Hierarchy and martial arts"

There are three kinds of people who learn Yang family Taijiquan: "Students", "Disciples" and "Inheritors". An Elder Brother who leads a group of people to practice a long form, for merely

health, without teaching Neigong nor martial arts, those people are so-called “students.” Since students never formally kowtow to the Master, they don’t have to care about their position in the hierarchy. As for “disciples” who kowtow to the Master, they have to strictly follow etiquette since they have become members of the Yang family. The hierarchy of disciples is very strict, and should never be confused. The relation between the Master and disciples is similar to that between father and sons. Not only does the Taiji family emphasize such tradition, but other external branches of martial arts also have the same culture. As a formal disciple, not only does one learn Taijiquan for health, but also for martial arts. The disciple has to practice holding postures, learn the fast form, spear and free boxing and so on. The number of disciples is, of course, much less than that of students. The disciples of Grand Master Yang Luchan, Banhou, Jianhou and Master Shaohou are less than ten respectively. Uncle Yang Zhenming (Master Chengfu’s first son) has only 4 disciples.

The Yang disciples have to practice a variety of Yang Taiji basics, but not each disciple is capable of being an “inheritor”. The Yang’s Neigong was taught only to disciples through the Master’s demonstration and explanations. Whereby, an inheritor was sifted from these disciples and assessed by the Master over a long period of time. The inheritor must not only be a Taiji talent and a lucky guy who has a chance to meet with the Master, he also has to practice very hard. Only a few people were Grand Master Luchan’s inheritors. Wan Chun, Quan You and Ling Shan inherited part of Luchan’s martial arts; only Banhou inherited all; Jianhou inherited a little less than Banhou. Among the Yang Masters, Chengfu had the most number of disciples, but his inheritors still were limited.. The hierarchy in the Yang family was decided by the timing of kowtowing to the teacher, rather than by who taught the disciple. Quan You was taught by Grand Master Luchan, but he called Luchan and Banhou as “Grand Teacher” and “Teacher” respectively. Thus, Banhou’s position in the hierarchy is higher than Quan You. Yang Zhaopeng (Banhou’s son) was taught by Master Chengfu, but Zhaopeng and Chengfu had the same position in the hierarchy according to their blood relationship. Thus, Zhaopeng wasn’t Chengfu’s disciple and cannot kowtow to Chengfu, otherwise the family ethics will be seriously confused. Fu Shengyuan (傅聲遠) is Fu Qingquan’s (傅清泉) father. They both were taught by Fu Zhongwen, (傅鐘文 Shengyuan’s father.) Qingquan cannot kowtow to Zhongwen as “Teacher,” nor can he call his father as “Brother.” The hierarchy in the Yang family is very strict, and it isn’t allowed to be confused. Mr. Zheng Zuoping (鄭佐平) once was Uncle Tian Zhaolin’s disciple. But after kowtowing to Master Chengfu, he called Tian as “Elder Brother.”

Miss Pu Bingru (濮冰如) once learned Taijiquan from Chen Weiming and Ye Dami. (葉大密) But after kowtowing to Master Chengfu, she called Chen Weiming as “Elder Brother.” Although Ye is older than Pu, Ye’s place in the hierarchy of the Yang family is lower than Pu’s and Pu cannot call Ye as “Elder Brother,” rather as “Mr. Ye.” However, the hierarchy is rigid and martial arts are lively. Even though you kowtow to the Master, you are not necessarily able to inherit the Master’s martial arts skills if you don’t endeavor to seriously practice Taijiquan. Therefore, I always emphasize martial arts instead of hierarchy. There are two Taiji boxing friends whom I most respect, and their positions in the Yang family hierarchies are not high. However, they both can issue real internal energy and I really respect their martial arts skills. People said that Fu Zhongwen was an excellent boxer, but he had never publicly showed his boxing skills. During his teaching in Shanghai, what he taught was merely the form and some push hands. A lot of Taiji friends in Shanghai feel very bewildered about this.

"The importance of historical truth"

Mr. Lu also said, “The truth of history won’t be changed by anyone’s wish.” How wonderful is his saying! In 1944, I learned Taijiquan from Mr. Tian Zuolin (田作霖) for one year, and in 1951, I started to learn Taijiquan from Dr. Huang. Over the past several decades the transitions of Taiji history have been so clear, and it seems like they happened only just days ago. In the early 1950’s, there were a lot of Yang Taiji lineage-holders in Shanghai, such as Tian Zhaolin, Tian Zuolin, Chen Weiming, Chu Guiting ,(褚桂亭) Pu Bingru, Huang Jinghua, Ye Dami, Yue Huanzhi,(樂煥之) Dong Shizhuo (董世倬), Zhang Yu, Wu Yunzhuo (吳雲倬), Wu Guiqing (武貴卿) and Hua Chunrong (華春容). As a junior member in the hierarchy of the Yang Taiji family at that time, Fu Zhongwen and his brother taught Taijiquan on the sidewalk of the Xianle Exhibition Hall. Meanwhile, Mr. Gu Liuxin (顧留馨) acted as the Chairman of the Martial Arts Association, and he couldn’t control those senior Yang Taiji lineage-holders mentioned above. Mr. Gu had no choice but to choose Fu Zhongwen to be the official representative of Yang Taiji. Because of this event, Fu’s political position was promoted quickly. What is unbelievable was that Niu Chunming, who became Master Chengfu’s disciple in 1902, was changed to be Fu’s “Younger Brother” according to Fu’s new position, declared by Gu Liuxin, in the Yang lineage. Mr. Lu questioned this event mentioned in my article by asking, “Which of Master Chengfu’s disciples did dare to declare that he was Fu’s teacher?” Currently, all of Master Chengfu’s disciples have passed away. Doesn’t Mr. Lu ask a question

he already knows that none is capable of answering? Unexpectedly, Mr. Yan Chengde (嚴承德), Chu Guiting's disciple, wrote an article published in volume No. 254 of the Wu Lin Journal in which he stated, "Fu Zhongwen kowtowed to Cui Yishi (崔毅士). When Cui came with Master Chengfu to the south for teaching, Fu accompanied Cui." Nowadays, a lot of friends who started to practice Yang Taiji in the early 1950's are still alive. Therefore, the truth of this history can be verified by those friends. I have asked some senior Yang Taiji boxers, and they all said that Fu never kowtowed to Master Chengfu as "Teacher". Because I don't have time to verify whether or not Fu is Master Chengfu's disciple, I am temporarily withholding any conclusion in this matter. Chinese always emphasize family ethics, so how can a grandson kowtow to his grandfather and call his grandfather as "Teacher?" Therefore, I really doubt that Master Chengfu can accept Fu as a disciple. Dr. Huang said that he once heard Fu call Master Chengfu "granduncle", but he never ever heard Fu call him "Teacher."

Thanks to the recommendation of Pu Bingru's father, Dr. Huang was able to become Master Chengfu's in-door disciple. Although Pu has passed away, she has some descendants alive now. In the 1980's, Dr. Huang asked me to write Uncle Yang Zhenduo (楊振鐸) twice to send Dr. Huang's regards. The first letter included the free boxing photos of Master Chengfu. The other one was also to ask Uncle Yang Zhenming's address. If I were not in the lineage of Yang Taiji, how do I dare to write Master Chengfu's son? Regarding Uncle Zhenduo's replies, I have still kept them until today. Pianist Li Mingjiang's (李名強) father knew that Dr. Huang was Master Chengfu's disciple and once invited Dr. Huang to teach Taijiquan for his family. Although Li's father passed away, Mr. Mingjiang still is alive. After Dr. Huang graduated from the Arts College in Shanghai in 1931, he still practiced boxing in Yang's house. Because Dr. Huang favored poetry, calligraphy, painting, traditional Chinese medicine and Kun opera, (昆曲) he obtained a high cultural education. Thus, Master Chengfu appointed Dr. Huang to be in charge of administrative affairs for the Yang family. Regarding Master Chengfu's book, "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan," it actually was initiated by Uncle Zheng Manqing and Kuang Keming (匡克明) and Uncle Manqing's preface in that book also mentions this. Because Kuang was busy at that time, he couldn't participate in the composition. When Master Chengfu explained the boxing techniques, he needed a partner to cooperate with for the demonstrations. As a secretary, Dr. Huang daily worked in Yang's house, and he also had a close relationship with Uncle Manqing. Dr. Huang and Uncle Manqing took turns in being Master Chengfu's partner, and recording Master Chengfu's explanations. Uncle Manqing and

Dr. Huang acted as the recorder and proofreader respectively. According to Mr. Lu's article, when "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" was prepared to be published, Fu Zhongwen was in charge of miscellaneous matters and the copperplate printing of that book had been under Fu's custody. I really cannot agree with Mr. Lu's argument. Master Chengfu's prior book, "The Applications of Taijiquan," (1931), was poorly written, so Master Chengfu wanted to find someone else to write another new book. That was why Master Chengfu asked Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang, who both had gained a high level of education, to help. Fu, who barely knew how to write, worked in a cotton store at that time. How was it possible, then, for Master Chengfu to ask Fu to participate in the matter of publishing "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan?" The "miscellaneous matters" mentioned by Lu above includes clarifying notes, communicating with the publisher, making the contract, proofreading and so on. Has Mr. Lu ever thought whether or not Fu was capable of handling those matters? When the first edition of "the Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" was published, Master Chengfu and Dr. Huang were listed as the author and proofreader respectively. However, as the second author, Uncle Manqing's name was neglected to be listed on that book. Fortunately, Dr. Huang was considerate, and he arranged to have Uncle Manqing's seal as the second author's signature. Such an arrangement was sufficient to be able to differentiate the positional hierarchies between Master Chengfu and Uncle Manqing, and they both were satisfied by such a clever measure. I doubt that Fu was capable of arranging so sophisticated a matter. One day in the 1970's, I was watching a boxing performance in Shanghai's Huai Hai Park. I accidentally spoke of my teacher's name. Unexpectedly, an older gentleman asked me, "Before Master Chengfu died, Dr. Huang served as the closest disciple and secretary of the Yang family. The hand-written classics of the Yang family and the copperplates for the printing of the "Essence and Applications of Taijiquan" must be under Dr. Huang's custody. Where is Dr. Huang now?" I immediately replied, "After Master Chengfu died, Dr. Huang handed all these materials over to Madam Yang, and he has already retired from the Taiji community." That older gentleman wouldn't let me go and tried to ask me more until I walked several blocks away. Mr. Lu, please try to understand it this way: Madam Yang has her own sons, so how is it possible that she would hand over the copperplates for the book to a grand-nephew-in-law? To illustrate, Mr. Ye mentioned at Fuxing Park that Uncle Manqing, Pu Bingru and Dr. Huang kowtowed to Master Chengfu through his (Ye's) recommendation. What he said is incorrect, and the fact of the matter should be based on Uncle Manqing's preface. What someone says is not necessarily true, and it should be checked carefully. Nowadays,

there are some elder Taiji boxers alive and they know the truth which can be cross-checked. Among Master Chengfu's disciples, only a few were good at writing. After 1949, Uncle Manqing went abroad, and both Uncle Weiming and Dr. Huang were criticized and threatened respectively and, as a result, they wouldn't talk about Taijiquan any more. However, those who don't know the truth publish a lot of articles talking about Yang Taiji. How sad! We should consult the rest of the Yang Taiji elders, cross check what they say and endeavor to preserve the truth of the history of Taiji.

Blurring the distinction between the truth and falseness

Mr. Lu also mentioned that I blurred the distinction between truth and falseness, because I identified the lineages of Uncle Yaxuan and Manqing with that of the Yang family. Why not? Both Uncle Yaxuan and Manqing are excellent disciples of Master Chengfu. The uniting of the Yang's lineages across the Taiwan Straits is the eagerest expectation in my life. Because Uncle Yaxuan changed a posture name from "Bai She Tu Xin (白蛇吐信)" to "Chuan Zhang (穿掌)", Mr. Lu considered that Uncle Yaxuan altered Master Chengfu's form. However, in my view, Uncle Yaxuan didn't alter Master Chengfu's form, even if some names of Yaxuan's form are different from that of Chengfu's. Uncle Yaxuan's form is totally relaxed as well as soft, his internal energy can go through the whole body, and his form is quite close to Master Chengfu's both externally and internally. Even if in learning Taijiquan which posture names and forms are the same as Master Chengfu's, this doesn't include learning Yang's Neigong. I would say that such "false" Yang Taiji is far from the true one, and nowadays a lot of people learn this false Taiji. Among the various lineages of Yang Taiji, we should focus on the internal aspects and respect minor external differences others learn. If you take someone's card that reads, "The Inheritor of Yang Taiji," the so-called inheritor is not necessarily a true one. The "students" ; of Yang Taiji practice the form by just breathing naturally, but the "inheritors" have to practice Neigong and cultivate Qi in their Dantian. Both the form and push hands of Yang Taiji have internal energy. The path of issuing energy is the following: The feet, legs, waist, shoulder blades, hands and fingers. If the energy cannot go through the path mentioned above smoothly, it isn't the real Yang Taiji. The method of Yang Taiji defeating an opponent is different from that of western and external boxing. The Yang Taiji boxer bounces the opponent out by issuing energy, rather than by using hard force or wrestling. The minor use of issuing energy will make an opponent jump, but issuing energy

strongly will make the opponent fly away. Many lineage-holders of Yang Taiji had chances to experience Master Chengfu's skill in issuing energy, and not because of any "personal special treatment." During Master Chengfu's stay in Hangzhou, he often issued energy on his disciples toward a wall, until the wall collapsed by his disciples' numerous hits. Mr. Jiang Changfeng sighed again and again, "After Master Chengfu died, I have never seen anyone who was as capable of issuing such strong energy."

In earlier times, the elite military division of the Qing Dynasty hired a variety of excellent boxers including the Bagua Master Dong Haichuan (董海川), the Xingyi Master Guo Yunshen (郭雲深), the Master of Yue Free Boxing Liu Shijun (劉士俊) and the King of Wrestling Zhou Dahui (周大惠). How could Grand Master Yang Luchan honorably serve as the "Head" of the elite military division if he doesn't have strong internal energy and excellent martial arts skills by which he conquered other boxers?

Nowadays, so-called "Masters" are appearing more and more, but the real internal energy is seen less and less. Judo and Tae-kwon-do have been allowed to be included as sporting events in the Olympics. Unfortunately, Taijiquan wasn't allowed to be included as a sporting event in the Olympics of 2008. As I think about the fact that the development of Taijiquan has fallen far behind other sports, I feel very worried. I am old and unable to endeavor to promote Taijiquan. What I can do now is to just publicize Taijiquan by writing articles with my memories. One who can understand my feelings would consider that I worry too much. However, one who cannot understand my feelings will doubt what I want exactly, and even suspect that the martial arts skills I describe are those of just a Gongfu novel.. What can I say? What can I say?

Now, I sincerely wish that the young lineage-holders of Yang Taiji will love and treasure Yang's boxing, practice hard, and disregard fame as well as gain in order to develop and promote Yang Taiji all over the world.. If they do so, hopefully those young lineage-holders won't bring shame on their ancestors' endeavors in Yang Taiji.

Chapter-13 "Notes and Thoughts"

At this writing I am 73 years old. I have practiced Taijiquan for 58 years and have been the in-door disciple of Dr. Huang for 55 years. However, my level of martial arts is still is low. Recalling that I have wasted my life and have not practiced Taijiquan hard enough, I feel ashamed when I think of Dr. Huang's generosity in sharing his teaching. Nevertheless, I still received some good experiences from Taijiquan, so I would like to summarize some of my thoughts on Taijiquan for the readers. If there is any mistake, I will honestly appreciate correction.

1. "The authentic martial art comes from hard training"

Beginning with Grand Master Yang Luchan, the three generations of the Yang family enjoyed a great reputation because of their extremely excellent martial art of Taijiquan. However, their achievements undoubtedly came from intense hard training. Luchan visited Chenjiagou, Henan Province, China, three times in order to learn Taijiquan. Because of his hard training, Luchan eventually reached the highest level of martial arts and became famous all over the Capital City of the Qing Dynasty. Grand Master Yang Banhou and Yang Jianhou, Luchan's sons, when they were young, could not endure this level of intense hard training. One tried to escape from the family and the other attempted suicide. Luckily, their rebellious behaviors stopped and they continued their hard training. Even though they had not yet reached full maturity, they became famous Taiji boxers. Likewise, Master Chengfu started to teach Taijiquan publicly at age 20, but his martial arts skills were not at a good enough level. After his father's death, Chengfu immersed himself and started hard training for six years, and only then did he reach his incredible level of martial arts. As we review the history of the Yang family, it is clear that high level of the Yang's Taiji martial art comes from hard training, rather than just from boasts. Dr. Huang concluded that authentic and successful Taijiquan is composed of lineage, comprehension of the theory, hard training and practice partners. Not one of these four elements can be lacking. I am in my 70's, and still have to practice Taijiquan hard. Otherwise, I am afraid of feeling shame at falling short of Dr. Huang's

teaching.

2. "Lineage transmission and blood relationship"

Yang Taiji inherited the martial arts of Wudangshan Daoism, which is the essence of traditional Chinese culture. However, the preservation of such a traditional essence didn't rely just upon mere blood relationship. During the Cultural Revolution, the extreme leftists said that, "the son is good if his father is a hero and the son is a bastard if his father is "anti-revolutionary". Nowadays, this slogan is found to be a pitiful joke. In learning Yang Taiji, one has to experience hard training and deeply comprehend its nature, and only then is one likely to inherit the real Yang Taiji. Both Uncle Tian Zhaolin and Uncle Wu Huichuan inherited the real Yang Taiji, but both Tian's son and Wu's nephew didn't inherit their predecessors' skills. Based on the above facts, the lineage transmission of martial arts is from hard training, rather than blood relationships. Regarding the proliferation of Yang Taiji in the south and abroad, it can not be accounted for by just the achievement of Chengfu alone himself. Without the contribution of teaching, writing and constant devotion by Chengfu's disciples, especially Niu Chunming, Tian Zhaolin, Li Yaxuan, Zhang Qinlin, Chen Weiming, Dong Yingjie and Zheng Manqing, I am afraid that the Yang Taiji would not be so popular today. Therefore, I would like to record those Taiji Uncles' contributions in this book, in order to prevent those historic events from disappearing after long time. Nowadays, it seems that anyone who has tiny relationship with the Yang family, no matter how one's martial arts skills are, claims oneself as a "Taiji Master." Don't you consider that ridiculous? The tradition of Taiji culture is the treasure of the Chinese, rather than the private assets of one family. I honestly encourage the lineage holders of Yang Taiji to endeavor to maintain, transmit and exalt such a great tradition.

3. "Neigong is the core of Taijiquan"

Someone claimed himself as the Chairman of the Chinese martial arts community in Shanghai, and designated someone's type as the standard form of Yang Taijiquan. How strange! The five Grand Masters, Luchan, Banhou, Jianhou, Shaohou and Chengfu, each have their own type of form and those types are different. How could you define whose type is standard? If we take

Chengfu's type as the standard, can we say that other Masters' types don't fit the standard? Chengfu's form in his early age is different from that of his latter age. How could you judge which type of form is the standard based on age? If you believe that Chengfu's slow form is the standard, can you also say that his fast form fits the standard? Yang Taijiquan belongs to the internal boxing rather than the external. Neigong is the core of Yang Taiji. Externally, the types may not be exactly the same, but the internal parts have to fit the requirements of Chengfu's "Ten Important Points." Therefore, the key point is Neigong. Without profound Neigong, just the form can not be considered as genuine Yang Taijiquan. Looking at the forms between Chengfu's early and later disciples, we may find that they are different, but all of them are real Yang Taijiquan. Once there was an argument between disciples of Uncle Yaxuan and Uncle Manqing regarding their form postures, so I wrote an article, "Yang Style Taiji Is One Family," in order to reconcile their views. What is the meaning of "One Family"? It means that the Neigong they practice is the same.

4. "The difference between Taiji boxing and Taiji exercise"

Taijiquan is a kind of internal boxing, and its core is Neigong. The genuine Taijiquan must be in practicing the form with Neigong, otherwise it will be the "empty" form that is the so-called "Taiji exercise." However, even such an "empty" form still can bring people health. Those who only practice the empty form are categorized as "Taiji exercisers;" on the other hand, those who are masters' disciples, with hard training, can be categorized as "Taiji boxers." Although there are around 100 million Taiji exercisers in the world, Taiji boxers actually are rare.

5. "Push Hands vs Old Ox Power"

Push hands, a sort of basic training, was designed to sense and yield jin with Taiji friends, rather than for competitions and championships. Now, push hands is being promoted as a championship event, and the rules used in refereeing these matches are short of reasonableness. Therefore, you may see a lot of resisting and wrestling during the competition. Actually, it is not difficult to tell the genuine Taiji push hands. A real Taiji boxer touches the opponent very lightly, but the opponent can not escape from the Taiji boxer's control. Issuing energy toward the opponent is as quick as a bullet shot from a gun. The short

jin, a killing skill of Taiji boxing, can penetrate the body and hurt organs badly. When the opponent tries to wrestle the Taiji boxer with strength, the Taiji boxer can employ the short jin to conquer the opponent. However, the short jin is very dangerous to the opponent. I would not suggest that a Taiji boxer employ such skill for a win, rather they should pretend to give up.

6. "More haste, less speed"

There is no quick way to learn Yang Taiji. The proper process is to learn step by step. One has to thoroughly be clear on the theory and application of each posture, otherwise one should never ever learn the next one. Moreover, one has to practice Yang Taiji with Neigong. Without practicing Neigong, eventually it will be a fruitless endeavor. Uncle Chen Weiming designed a series of classes for his Taiji School. The Taijiquan form, push hands with fixed steps and Taiji sword were taught in the first year. The next year, the student learned the fast boxing form and push hands with active steps. Da Lu, free boxing, the two-person dueling sword and Taiji spear were taught in the third year. Students merely learned basic levels, since too many skills were being trained within three years. Remembering my practicing process of Taijiquan, I started the form without Neigong. Next, the form came with Neigong, and then the various heights of form training was divided into three levels: heaven (high), human (middle) and earth (low). Finally, the fast boxing form was the last one that was taught. I couldn't bounce the opponent backward with my internal (Dantian) energy until I had been Dr. Huang disciple for over 20 years. I am a clumsy guy and my progress in Taijiquan is quite slow. However, I complied with the traditional training of Yang Taiji from the beginning, and never mixed in weight lifting, wrestling or western boxing merely for coveting prompt results.

7. "Lineage holders are few"

There are many people who have learned Yang Taiji. However, the number of in-door disciples were limited, and especially those who inherited their master's Neigong training are few in each generation. Grand Master Yang Luchan had merely a few disciples, and only Banhou, Jianhou, Wan Chun, Quan You and Ling Shan can be accounted as Luchan's lineage holders. The last three were also named as Banhou's disciples. Nowadays, you may meet a lot

of so-called "Masters" or "Lineage Holders." Since I would like to learn more, I once met a so-called lineage holder and I modestly sought advice from him several times. Unfortunately, most of our meetings merely made me disappointed. Although I am Dr. Huang's disciple, I don't practice Taijiquan very hard and my comprehension is not good enough as well. Therefore, I don't dare declare myself as the fifth generation of Yang Taiji. Rather, I would say that I am a beginner in the fifth generation. Even until now, I still seek out highly skilled persons for instruction in order to learn more and make progress. Luckily, I feel that my form of this year is softer than that of last year, and my yielding skill seems to make progress as well. Being an eternal beginner of Yang Taiji, I discover endless happiness!

8. "There is a standard to verify the genuine Taijiquan"

The execution of the form is the only standard for verifying the truth. Those who practice the form without Neigong belong to Taiji exercisers. Who can be counted as a Taiji boxer? Those who practice the form in accordance with the "Ten Important Points," and whose jin can circulate throughout their whole body. The lineage holders are trained in Neigong, and they can perform such skills at will. As Chengfu mentioned before, the genuine Taijiquan can be verified by push hands. A real Taiji boxer touches the opponent very lightly, but the opponent can not escape from the Taiji boxer's control. Issuing energy toward the opponent is as quick as a bullet shot from a gun.

9. "A magnificent way of self-cultivation"

In 1933, Grand Master Chengfu accepted the letter of appointment issued by Daxia University in Shanghai. However, Chengfu also planned to visit Guangzhou. Therefore, he needed an in-door disciple to be the substitute teacher.. A senior Uncle recommended himself to take this job, but Chengfu didn't permit him to do so. Eventually, Chengfu bestowed this job upon Dr. Huang. Since then, Dr. Huang taught Taijiquan at many places. In 1957, people discussed re-publishing Chengfu's "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan." One of Chengfu's relatives accused Uncle Manqing of being an anti-revolutionary and wanted to eliminate his name from the text. Upon hearing this, Dr. Huang immediately asked that his name also be omitted as the proofreader of "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan." He also withdrew himself from the Taiji society since then, and never again talked about anything to do with

martial arts. However, Dr. Huang kept on training the Taiji form and spear all his life and his martial skills were still amazing. Dr. Huang was such a great man in that, although people did not know of his competence and skill in Taiji, he never felt bothered about this. Dr. Huang once told me the following, "The principles of push hands are to sense and yield to the opponent's force. The principles of being a human are the same as push hands. This Chengfu's relative would like to dominate the martial art community in Shanghai, and he is my Taiji nephew. How could I fight with him? I would let it be as he wishes."

What a great breadth of character! What Dr. Huang taught me was not only martial arts, but also his sense of decency and moral view of life, and his magnificent world perspective. I will remember Dr. Huang's teaching all my life.

Chapter-14 "The 'Mystery' of Yang Chengfu's Book 'The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan'"

In the 1940's, my father invited Mr. Tian Zuolin, who was the disciple of Tongbei Master Zhang Ce and Taiji Master Yang Chengfu, to teach boxing for the employees of the Qu Zhifu (瞿直甫) Hospital. Although I was in my youth at that time, I still practiced with them, and it inspired me so much that I developed a deep and abiding interest in martial arts from that time on. In 1951, my father invited Dr. Huang to teach me the Yang style long form. In 1954, I became the disciple of Dr. Huang. After then, Dr. Huang passed on his precious collection of Taiji books to me, and he admonished me to preserve them in a safe place and to study them diligently. The collection included: Sun Lutang's "The Knowledge of Taijiquan", Chen Ziming's "The Art of Chen Style Taijiquan Handed Down from Generation to Generation", Chen Weiming's "The Art of Taijiquan," "The Taiji Sword" and "Taijiquan Questions and Answers", Yang Chengfu's "The Application of Taijiquan" and Chen Yanlin's "Form, Sword, Saber, Spear and Free Boxing of Taiji". Along with those books mentioned above, the most special one he gave me was "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan - Volume I". This book was published in 1934 and printed by the Da Dong Book Store. On the copyright page, it has that the authors were Yang Chengfu and Zheng Manqing and the proofreader was Huang Jinghua. Moreover, on the same page, it states "all rights reserved" and Chengfu's seal was stamped on it. This book is unique because it is the original version. I have never heard that there was another version prior to this one!

Uncle Shouzhong took the copperplate of "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan - Volume I" to Hong Kong, and he re-published that book in 1948. Compared with the original version, the words "Volume I" on the cover page of the re-published edition was deleted. Because the material of the cover page on the original version was a piece of flimsy rice paper (宣紙), it was very fragile. Therefore, Uncle Shouzhong invited Mr. Ouyang Ju (歐陽駒), who was then the mayor of Guangzhou, to re-write the book's name in his own calligraphy. Moreover, the new version added a photo of Uncle Shouzhong and also added a preface written by

Shouzhong himself. Those people who wrote inscriptions for the frontpieces of this edition were the following: Jiang Zhongzheng (蔣中正), Wu Tiecheng (吳鐵城), Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培), Zhang Lisheng (張厲生), Zhang Naiyan (張乃燕), Wu Enyu (吳恩豫), Zhang Renjie (張人傑) and Pang Bingxun (龐炳勳). Along with the dissimilarities and additions mentioned above, the other contents of the new edition were the same as the original version. The other identical items include the sequence of inscriptions as well as the names of authors (Master Chengfu and Uncle Manqing) and the proofreader (Dr. Huang). It can be proven that the version I have kept all these years is the original one. How can we allow a false one pretend to be genuine?

The original version of “The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan - Volume I” was a traditionally bound book with strings, printed on rice paper, and first published in February of 1934. At that time, Master Chengfu was still alive. Moreover, the first page of the inscriptions was written by Jiang Zhongzheng (aka Chiang Kai-shek) who was a powerful man in politics and the military. Who would dare to risk one’s life in offending the two men’s authorities through publishing a fake book? The reader may just think a bit to understand what I am talking about.

My teacher, Dr. Huang assisted Uncle Manqing to transcribe and proofread “The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan - Volume I”. Moreover, when Chengfu was ill, Dr. Huang was in charge of taking care of him. The various contributions that Dr. Huang did for Chengfu was fully known by all of my Taiji Uncles and Brothers in Shanghai. Regarding these facts concerning Dr. Huang, those Uncles and Brothers of mine never had any dissent. Now, those Taiji Uncles have died, such as Wu Huichuan, Tian Zhaolin, Tian Zuolin, Chu Guiting and Auntie Pu Bingru. Moreover, some of my Taiji Brothers in Shanghai have died, such as Zhang Yu and Wu Yunzhuo. Mr. Huang Jiancheng (黃建成), who lives in Malaysia, accused me of “strongly promoting” my teacher’s contribution to “The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan - Volume I” in order to “gain fame by cheating the public”. (The article was published in the 12th issue of Wu Lin Journal, 2004). But wait a second! There are some disciples of Uncle Guiting who are still alive in Shanghai . Moreover, both Brothers Xu Yizhong and Benjamin Lo who are early disciples of Uncle Manqing currently reside in Taiwan and the US respectively. They personally came to Shanghai and examined my volume of “The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan - Volume I”. Both Xu and Lo verified that my volume is the genuine original version. On the spot, Brother Xu specifically stated that there indeed is a red seal printed

with Uncle Manqing's name stamped on the copyright page. Should the editors of Wu Lin Journal want to verify what I mentioned above, they may contact Brothers Xu and Lo. Mr. Huang is too impatient to be correct in his statements. Why doesn't he wait for a few years until all of the fifth generation of Yang Taiji have died? After then, he may say anything he wants.

Regarding the so-called "historical disputable event" written about by Mr. Huang in the Wu Lin Journal, I infer two possible reasons that may have caused Mr. Huang to say what he said. The first possible reason is that he could think that the copyright page of my copy could be forged by modern computer technology. The second possible reason is that the initial sample book printed by Da Dong Book Store had a lot of errata. Although the sample book had been collated by Dr. Huang many times, it still missed having Uncle Manqing's name. Under such a circumstance, it had to have the red seal of Uncle Manqing's name stamped in it. Mr. Huang's article in Wu Lin Journal mentioned that, "There are some errata in that book, but they all are rectified by Master Ye Dami and Mr. Jiang Xirong (蔣錫榮)." Therefore, what Mr. Huang saw and commented on was an un-collated sample book preserved by Ye Dami, rather than the original version verified by the Yang family. The original version printed the name of the publisher as Da Dong Book Store, but the photo of the copyright page provided by Mr. Huang in his article didn't have that information printed in it. This shows that the copy of the book that Mr. Huang mentioned in his article is merely the sample book prior to publishing.

According to Mr. Huang's article, there is a puzzle that I have not understood. There were just a few lineage holders under Master Sun Lutang, such as Sun Cunzhou (孫存週, son), Sun Jianyun (孫劍雲, daughter) and Zhi Xietang (支燮堂). On the other hand, there also were a few lineage holders for each generation of Yang Taiji. In my early years of Taiji study, Dr. Huang ordered me to practice Taiji at Brother Zhang Yu's place for ten months. Therefore, I know something about the lineage of Uncle Wu Huichuan. Uncle Wu's lineage holders include Hao Jiajun (郝家俊) in Tianjin, Zhang Yu and Wu Yunzhuo in Shanghai. Zhang Yu passed on Uncle Huichuan's Taiji to Wang Zhongliang, and Wu Yunzhuo passed it on to on Rao Shaoping. Although Wu Guiqing was Uncle Huichuan's nephew, his martial level was not as good as his Taiji Brothers'. For real martial arts abilities one needs to practice hard, and it has nothing to do with the blood-relationship.

A real Taiji lineage holder doesn't have to be afraid of western boxing, Judo, or wrestling at all. When they have a bout, the Taiji boxer will face the challenger confidently, and be able to lift (Ti) even a heavy opponent as though he were weightless. As a result, the opponent will be uprooted and fly through the air. The one whom I am talking about is a real Taiji boxer. Nowadays, a real Taiji boxer is rare to be seen. Should I luckily have a chance to meet one, I will definitely pay my highest respects to him and humbly ask advice. Some people are so-called "Taiji friends." For example, some have a chance to become a disciple of a Master, but they have not learned the real martial arts. Some have been through the training of holding postures, Taiji spear, the fast form and free boxing, but they have not reached the ideal level or don't have the good fortune to approach the real martial arts skill. Nowadays, the number of Taiji friends is even limited. Once I have a chance to meet "Taiji friends," I definitely respect them very much and would like to be their friend. Currently, there probably are millions of people practicing Taiji in parks around the world.

However, the majority of Taiji practitioners just focus on the external postures. They know neither lift, sink, nor open or close, nor understand the integration of yin and yang. They don't even have any Yi and Qi inside. However, they still claim that they are practicing Taijiquan. Actually, their practice has nothing to do with internal boxing, and it only can be called merely a soft exercise that might be beneficial for health. Therefore, they are not grouped with Taiji friends, rather I just consider them Taiji exercisers. I am really afraid of meeting Taiji exercisers. Although both use the same name of "Taijiquan," they actually are different, and both can hardly communicate with each other. Besides, the Taiji exercisers usually consider themselves in the right and they are very difficult to communicate with. Therefore, I just keep those people at arm's length in order to avoid disputes. Mr. Huang claims himself as an instructor of the Yongnian Taiji Association in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. According to Mr. Huang's status, I infer that his martial level must be great. However, when I read his article, the article seems to be written by a Taiji exerciser. I'm really confused whether or not Mr. Huang is a Taiji boxer, or just an exerciser. There is a long distance and a big ocean between Shanghai and Johor Bahru. I guess that I will never figure out my puzzle. The only thing I can do is to sigh against the ocean breeze.

Afterword

When Dr. Huang was about to die, he earnestly admonished me that, if I ever have a chance to meet the students of Uncle Manqing and Shouzhong in the future, I must give Dr. Huang's regards to them. For so many years, Dr. Huang had not had any contact with them. It was not because Dr. Huang was unfaithful and heartless; rather the external situation didn't allow him to do so. In 2009, I had a chance to visit Uncle Manqing's former residence in Taiwan. When I stood in front of the bronze statue of Uncle Manqing, I recalled my respected teacher's last words, as though Dr. Huang had just told me yesterday. I couldn't help it, but tears came streaming down my face.

During those early years in Shanghai, Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang first studied Taiji together at the Wudang Taiji School . Later, they both became disciples of Master Chengfu, one after another, and then assisted Chengfu to complete "The Essence and Applications of Taijiquan". After a couple of years, at Pu Qiucheng's house, they both took the Neigong training together, taught by Uncle Zhang Qinlin as a substitute teacher for Chengfu. How close the friendship between Uncle Manqing and Dr. Huang was!

Originally, the lineage of Yang Taiji across the Taiwan Strait is from the same family. We should continue to study Taiji together and promote the traditional Chinese culture mutually. Therefore, I have entrusted this book to Brother Xu Yizhong for publishing it as well as sharing it with the lineage of Yang Taiji in Taiwan. It is my desire not to receive any financial benefits from selling this book. Rather, I sincerely wish to donate all proceeds from this book to the Zheng Manqing Memorial Hall, in order to comfort the soul of Dr. Huang resting in heaven.

I am a clumsy man and my martial arts skills are meager. Should there be anything improper in this book, I will gladly take correction from any and all Taiji friends.

Qu Shijing

Summer, 2009

I sincerely hope that this rough draft of Prof. Qu Shijing's marvelous book has provided some insight into the Tai Chi environment that Prof. Cheng was a part of and trained in. And I also hope that it may have filled in some aspects of the history of our art and its practitioners that had not been available to English speakers before.

I again want to urge the members here to get a copy of the AUTHORIZED copy of this book! In comparing the two, I find that the rough draft is sorely lacking in many respects, while the AUTHORIZED version is MORE complete and provides even MORE information than what is presented in the rough draft. In many places the AUTHORIZED version sheds light on some murky places in the rough draft, and may answer some questions that the rough draft may have given you because of its inadequacies.

Please contact any friend you might have in Taiwan and ask them to see if they can get a copy for you!

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In friendship,

Danny Emrick