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## News

This edition we have Part 2 of Vince Hinde's Chinese Weapons article completing the four primary weapons, a fascinating article from Ronny Robinson of TCUGB and a reminder about the forthcoming Hammers Seminar with Lee Kam Wing.

## LAST CHANCE

It's not too late to reserve a place on the forthcoming Hammers seminar with Lee Kam Wing. The seminar takes place on May 27th at the Leicester Chinese Community Centre from 10.00-16.00.

The seminar will be the Chut Sin Sern Choy (Seven Star Double Hammer) routine from the Traditional Seven Star Praying Mantis system and there are a few places left.

This Choys seminar is open to all and is being taught openly outside the ITSWA association for the first time.



Chut Sin Sern Choy



Sifu Lee Kam Wing

### Each participant will receive a free set of Choys

The seminar will be just £75 including the free weapons. We can only offer this as they are genuine **WUSHU DIRECT** weapons as can be bought from our website at £39.95. Please send a cheque made payable to :

Wushu Direct  
28, Linden Farm Drive,  
Countesthorpe  
Leicester  
LE8 5SX

With the seminar just a few weeks away, we suggest you also let us know if you are attending by e-mail : [sales@wushudirect.co.uk](mailto:sales@wushudirect.co.uk)

**Tian Liyang Taoist Monk by Ronnie Robinson**



In late October last year I visited Germany for two days private training with Tian Liyang, a Taoist Monk, from Wudang Mountain, who was teaching a number of courses in the country. This unique and privileged opportunity was kindly arranged for me, by his host and translator in Germany, Marianne Herzog. Having visited Wudang Mountain in April 2000, and having met 'monks' and seen displays by one of the many burgeoning schools around this sacred area I wasn't too sure what my two days of training would result in but I went with an open mind prepared for the new experience.

Tian Liyang was extremely amenable and open in his teachings and conversations. On asking what I wanted to concentrate on I replied that I was very interested in developing my Tui Shou. Before proceeding he wanted to clarify the terms of our engagement in order to prevent misunderstandings and injury. In the past westerners were prone to trying to 'test' his skills when he understood their initial intention was to 'explore'. If this were my intention he would therefore react accordingly. I re-affirmed that I was there to learn and not to test or challenge him. We started with him gently pushing me to test my rooting and yielding abilities. Once he had the information required he then taught me a series of both soft and tough exercises designed to loosen and relax all areas of my body.



We worked from 9 - 6pm with a break for lunch and then talked until 12 that night. The next morning I woke early and tried to go through some of the more complex (to me - well simple things always are to start with!) exercises in the vain hope of familiarising my self with them. Like always I realised that many, many hours of practise would be required to perform them fluidly and smoothly.

After breakfast we started work once more with Tian Liyang asking Marianne to push with me. He felt that working with a woman might help to increase my softness and yielding abilities. He instructed Marianne to push me continuously and I was simply to offer least resistance, going with the flow.

After some time of pushing with Marianne the Master took over. What surprised or shocked me was that I had expected that once he pushed me over I would have time to compose and re-position myself for the next push - no chance! He just kept coming at me, pushing me around the room, bouncing me off the walls, applying Qin Na locks, pressing sensitive acupoints, pushing through his arms, shoulders, chest and God knows where! Fortunately I was also aware of the mischievous smile he constantly wore whilst I underwent this frantic encounter. Once my initial surprise was over I kept trying to neutralise or parry his attacks whilst remaining well and truly 'gubbed!'



A very concerned Marianne kept looking for re-assurance that I was really okay with this. I was fine and really enjoyed working with Tian Liyang. His openness and lack of pretensions were strong illustrations of his Taoist nature. During the course of our conversations I decided to take some notes for including in this magazine. I hope you find these extracts as interesting and stimulating as I did!

Taijiquan is a Chinese art rooted in Taoism which is a deep Chinese philosophy, can you help to increase a westerner's understanding of the relationship to Taoism? *In both the West and in the East we all have the same simple common aims, that is to have a healthy happy life with good relationships to others. Taiji and an understanding of Taoism can help to achieve this. It is very important to realise that Taoism is at the heart of Taiji and a really deep sense of it will help practitioners to attain a good level of Taiji.*

In the Taoist principles we aspire to achieving a state of Wu Wei. This comes from a state of quietness and clarity which means yielding to, and not reacting to, or dealing with interference from external forces.

The point of yielding to, and not reacting to outside sources are confusing to me. If a force comes surely we can, and do, make choices: we resist, we stay still and accept or we decide to yield. Each of these is a choice we make on a mental level. Are you talking about the idea of Wu Wei as being something beyond this, something which happens without the mind coming between the action (or non-action) by making the conscious decision on how to react?

*In the 1970's there was the famous Chinese master Bruce Lee who was working in America and Japan. He was referred to as the "Gong-fu King". He used the saying, "Face the limit with the unlimited and face action (wei) with non-action (wu wei)." This saying illustrates the point I'm talking about. I'm not talking about doing nothing, I'm talking about going with whatever comes. Or with other words: In action don't strive for anything, (and) don't be inordinate /excessive in your actions.*

Yes, but it is not something that is merely intellectual, physical or emotional so what is it in the human body or spirit that can bring this about? *It is a combination of Shen (Spirit) and Xin (Heart). When they both come together Wu Wei can be found. When the heart and the body are in unity, and the outer and the inner are being cultivated together, and the appearance and the spirit appear together / are both there at the same time, then unity with heaven and earth, with nature can be found.*

How can we achieve this through the practice of Taiji?

*First you need a good teacher who has a deep understanding of the Taiji principles and theory which he or she is applying on a physical and intellectual level. The teacher must also be of high character /have a high level of (personal, moral) cultivation and have a good technical and artistic level.*

How many teachers do you know have this?

*There are many good teachers, who have also attained a high level of personal cultivation and if one is fortunate one can find one.*

At this point Chiang Liang adopted a Taoist approach and said that he couldn't talk about it. (The mutual feeling between Marianne and I was that he felt it improper to discuss the character of others, particularly in print.)

So if we feel we do not, or cannot have access to such a teacher are all our efforts then not in vain?

*Firstly, no one would say they had this, if they did, then they don't have it. Normal people can't reach this. To do so they would have to ignore everything else to pursue it. A teacher can only help you to achieve a basic or mid-level. It is not only a matter of your ability in Taiji, but also your state of mind and character. You should just try to develop what you can with a happy mind as you work along your path or way. To really deal with, or consider this question we need to have a long time in a quieter place. The intellect gets in the way of things. It is very difficult to translate into words and it is of an extremely high level, but ultimately very simple.*

(It seems he is suggesting that long periods of meditation are really required for us to achieve any real sense of what it is).

*Learning a form is not really learning Taiji there is much, much more to it than that. Whatever the style we must always understand that the*

movements all stem from the basic 13 postures that Chang San Feng created on Wudang Mountain. There is a well-known saying in China that illustrates this point, "10,000 changes won't ever leave their root." In the final analysis the higher the level, the greater the simplicity.

If everything stems from the basic 13 postures why create 108 posture forms of 24 and 48 postures etc. If everybody really practices and fully understands these 13 postures wouldn't they gain most of the information that was required?  
This is only a basic exercise routine, not the art as such.

How do you feel about the development of Taiji in the West?

I've seen Taijiquan in many countries. To me it is of less importance / of secondary importance to talk about the level of Taijiquan. The most important is, that Taijiquan opens the muscles and bones, helps to let Qi and blood flow freely and that it makes the spirit happy\* (jingshen yu kuai). Moreover one can make a lot of friends through it. In these times, currently the world is in peace and people are relatively cultivated - to be able to strengthen ones body and attain a good health is already very good. But if you want to reach a high level you need good training from a good master. Taijiquan unifies the aspects of health and self defense in one. In former times until today the masters of Taijiquan all had, in the main, very healthy body and an extraordinary level on the martial plane at the same time .

You say we all know that it is good for our health but do we? We all believe it has very strong health benefits but in Western culture we like to have strong scientific evidence.

First of all: Life relies on movement and the slow and soft movements of Taijiquan suit people of all ages. Through these kinds of movements, you can feel the flow of qi. For example the push hands in Taijiquan uses the [scientific] principle of mechanics and leverage. But concerning content on a deeper level, it is impossible to use modern scientific means and language to explain the results clearly.

In the Ming Dynasty a doctor called Li Shizhen said that practicing Taiji, with an inner aspect, and the use of Yi opens the channels and promotes a healthy flow of Qi and blood, which in turn, helps to prolong life. By bringing the mind, body & spirit together to can [???]also develop and improve your immunity.

What is the ultimate aim of Taiji for you?

Three things:

1. A healthy body.
2. Cultivating my character, inner nature and lifeforce.
3. That this culture of Taiji will serve me and mankind.

## Chinese Weapons Part 2

By Vince Hinde

### Sword

The double edged straight sword is known as the 'Gentleman of Weapons'. Most novices can pick up a broadsword and hack and slash away. To use a sword properly though requires more finesse. Most styles teach broadsword before sword for this very reason. A notable exception to this is Tai Chi where the sword is often taught first.

The sword developed from the dagger and by the Shang Dynasty(1751BCE-1111BCE) was starting to be made of Bronze. This continued through the Shang until, then as now, advances were driven by warfare and by the Shang's end, Ironware had started to come into use.



Bronze Swords

Relative peace broke out after brutal wars and continued through the Zhou Dynasty(1111BCE-771BCE) until the violent Spring and Autumn period(770BCE-476BCE) and Warring States Period(475BCE-221BCE).

Sword makers of the day were held in the highest regard and legends began to spring up around them. Three of the most famous were Ou Yezi and husband and wife team, Gan Jiang and Mo Ye. Gan Jiang studied under Ou Yezi.

Legends tells us that Mo Ye obtained two gold nuggets and Gan Jiang decided to forge them into a pair of swords. Gan Jiang heated the gold night and day but they failed to melt. Mo Ye stated that there wasn't enough human chi in the furnace so Gan Jiang threw himself in the furnace, one nugget melted and the Gan Jiang Sword was forged. Mo Ye was beside herself and to be reunited with her husband, she too leapt into the furnace, the other nugget melted and the Mo Ye Sword was forged. The couple and their swords became famous throughout China. Of course there are many variants of this story.

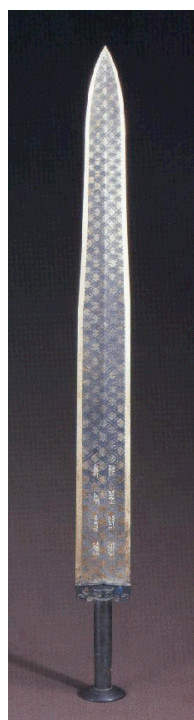
The legend continues with the swords being given to the Wu Emperor, Helu who buried them with him. They remained hidden for 600 years until they were found by Zhang Hua in a well at the bottom of a garden. The Mo Ye sword was given to a friend to take to a swordsmith at Louyang to have two similar swords made. On the way the boat the sword was traveling in capsized and the sword was lost. Three years later Zhuang Hua, carrying the Gan Jiang sword, visited Louyang traveling the same river where the Mo Ye sword was lost. Suddenly the Gan Jiang sword flashed out a brilliant light and leapt out of his hand into the river reuniting the two swords. Thus the rather improbable tale is completed.



Ou Yezi making a sword



Ou Yezi



Goujian Sword

Discovered in 1965 this 'Treasure of China' was not rusty and still very sharp even after having been buried in a tomb for over 2000 years. Much debate has taken place over the years and consensus has now been reached that deciphering the script on the sword points to the sword belonging to Goujian, the King of Yue. Is one of Ou Yezi's sword ?

Ou Yezi agreed to make swords for King Goujian and set out to find the best place to make them. Ou Yezi and his students reached a region known as Long Yuen, where the mountains had dense forests, the water from the rivers was pure and crystalline, and the sand was very rich in iron. Ou Yezi found it to be the most auspicious place for a forge and made three bronze swords there.

Longyuan (龙渊)  
Tai'e (泰阿)  
Gongbu (工布).

Long Yuen possessed seven wells, or springs, laid out like the seven stars of The Big Dipper constellation, and also a large lake in the shape of a dragon. The Seven Stars became the symbol of Longquan swords.

Still today there is a temple dedicated to O Yezi in Longquan. To some scholars the interpretation is that O Yezi never existed, and it is the mythical denomination for all smiths of Longquan. The reason for this is that O (欧), the name of a river at Longquan, and Ye (冶), meaning steel, do not make sense as a person's name. However, truth and legend merge, since the written history is accurate enough to name swords that were created by this smith.

The name Longyuan was changed when a Tang Dynasty emperor, also named Yuan and decided that the name Yuan could not exist so as not to compete with that of the Emperor's. Needless to say the name was swiftly changed to Longquan and it has remained as such to this day.

Here at **WUSHU DIRECT** we favour and stock the Shen Guang Long manufacturer of Longquan swords

## Shen Guang Long 沈廣隆



1882 "Shen Guang Long", the brand and the manufacture were established in Long Quan  
 1914 Won the title of "King Sword" at the local competition  
 1915 Attended Panama Exposition in San Francisco and won gold medal. "Shen Guang Long" became famous after that

The second generation inherited in the sword manufacture

1956 Partnered with Long Quan Imperial Sword manufacture to improve sword making skill and to learn corporation management

1930 Attended Nan Jing national sword competition and won the title of "best of the best sword"

1935 Long Quan governor gave Chiang Kai-shek a sword as his fifty-first birthday; which was forged by Shen Guang Long

The third generation inherited the manufacture

1972 Three generations worked together and forged a sword as a national gift to President Nixon



1974 Attended national art fair, and it was introduced to and filmed with Chairman Deng

1985 Successfully forged Chinese style Damascus blade, which considered to be the lost art of 1000 years

In the same year, won the title of "Number One Sword of Nation"

1991 Received the title of "Master for Swords and Arts"

1992 "Shen Guang Long" has been collected into Chinese Characters Year book

1996 National Wu Shu Association appointed Shen Guang Long's swords to be national standard competition weapon.



KFS005 Longquan Single Straight Sword



KFS007 Longquan Double Straight Sword



KFS073 Longquan Seven Star Bat Sword Detail



KFS073 Longquan Seven Star Bat Sword



WDB031 Longquan Bagua Jian (1.0 Metre Blade)

## Broadsword

The broadsword is often seen as the poor relation to the straight sword. It is however a devastating weapon in its own right. It was first used by Cavalry where the slashing and chopping actions really came into their own on horseback with devastating effect. The broadsword then started being issued to infantry as it was easy to learn and use and also they were quicker to make.

Although there are many varieties of broadsword they usually fall into one of two main types, straight blade or curved blade.

The most common straight bladed types are Liuye Dao, (Willow Leaf Broadsword) and Yanmao Dao, (Goose Quill Broadsword). They are both very similar, difficult to differentiate and therefore often mixed up. The Liuye Dao has an elegant slight sweeping curve the length of the blade. The

Yanmao Dao is straight for most of its length and has a curve at the tip. The last quarter of back side of the blade were often sharpened which is sometimes the only clue you are looking at a Yanmao Dao.



KFS037b Longquan Yang Tai Chi Broadsword

The advantage of the straight design broadswords is that they can be used for thrusting as well as slashing. The straight blade designs were used until relatively recently with the curved blade designs starting to be used from the Ming Dynasty(1368CE-1644CE) and then became more common in the Qing Dynasty(1644CE-1911CE).

The most popular broadsword among martial artists is the curved blade Niuwei Dao, (The Oxtail Broadsword). This the broadsword that is most often seen at competitions where exponents are performing or practicing their forms. The other popular curved broadsword was the Da Dao.



KFS006 Longquan Single Broadsword



KFS008 Longquan Double Broadsword



Da Dao

The curved broadsword has largely replaced the straight broadswords now and it is unusual to find anything other than curved broadswords being used as the 'standard' broadsword. The exception to this is Tai Chi where straight broadswords are often used and the Miao Dao two handed straight broadsword is also seen regularly.



Miao Dao Techniques



KFS085 Miao Dao

The Miao Dao and Da Dao were being used by the Chinese in the Second Sino-Japanese war in 1933. There are photos of the Battle of The Great

Wall at Rehe clearly showing these strapped to the Chinese troops' backs. The Miao Dao is noted as being a recent weapon becoming popular in the Republican era (1911CE) although there are unsubstantiated reports of Miao Dao being the sword that was taken back to Japan, copied and improved upon. This may be because Miao Dao has become something of a generic term for any long, two handed straight bladed broadsword. The Zhan Ma Dao is the original 'Horse Chopping Broadsword' which dates back to the Song Dynasty(960CE- 1279CE) followed by the Chang Dao (Long Broadsword) made famous by General Qi Jiguang around 1560CE in the Ming Dynasty(1368CE- 1644CE).

Vince Hinde is an ITSWA instructor and teaches Foshan Wing Chun

## WHAT'S ON

27th May '09	<a href="#">Lee Kam Wing 'Hammers' Seminar</a>	Leicester
20th September '09	<a href="#">National Sparring Championships</a>	Derby