

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF BOOKS AND VIDEOS ON TAI CHI, MARTIAL ARTS, AND QIGONG

DR. YANG, JWING-MING

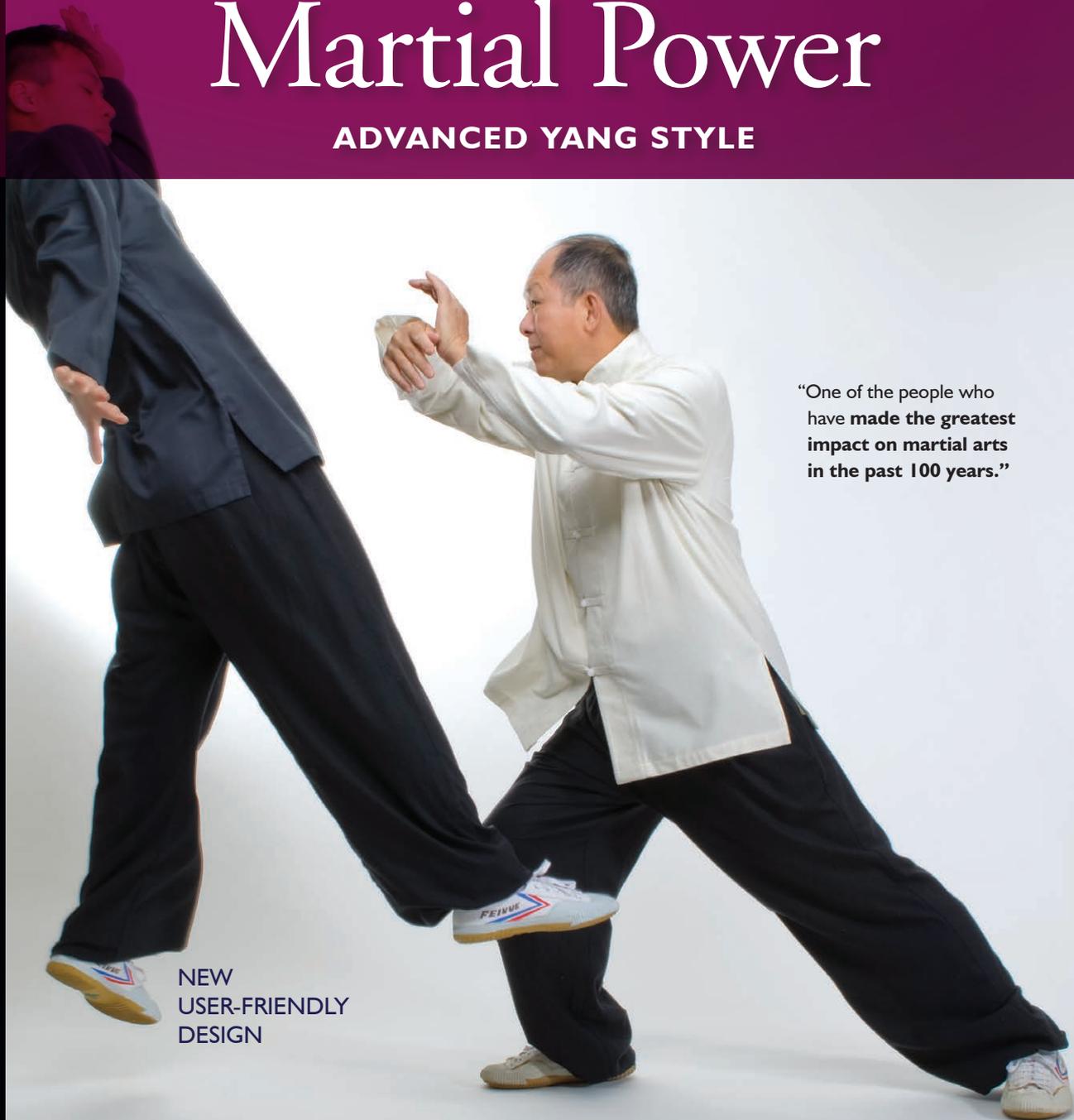
Tai Chi Chuan Martial Power

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The study of tai chi power is a direct link to tai chi as a martial art. When you finish learning the tai chi form and begin the second level of your practice, it's time to focus your efforts on theory and principles of tai chi's amazing power (jing). This will lead you to deeper martial skills, proper body alignment, rooting, and energy (qi) manifestation.

An effective way to enhance health, strength, and balance

Tai chi's natural power contributes to your overall health and well-being by training your body to be stronger. You will explore many tai chi postures, revealing the essence of stability, motion, and power. With these skills you can remain confident that the *natural strength* of your tai chi movements will support your everyday activities.

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- 12 coiling qi exercises
- 3 types of sensing jing
- 16 types of offensive jing
- 19 types of defensive jing
- 4 types of neutral jing
- 11 types of kicking jing
- 14 hand forms for accumulating jing
- 8 postures for accumulating jing
- 15 tai chi classics with translations and commentaries

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“One of the people who have made the greatest impact on martial arts in the past 100 years.”

—Inside Kung-Fu Magazine



Yang, Jwing-Ming, PhD is a world-renowned author, scholar, and teacher of tai chi chuan. He has been involved in Chinese martial arts since 1961 and maintains over 55 schools in 18 countries. Dr. Yang's writing and teaching include the subjects of kung fu, tai chi chuan, massage, meditation, and chin na, and he is a leading authority on qigong. Dr. Yang is the author of over 35 books and 80 videos.

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Chapter 2: Qi and Taijiquan

2-1. Introduction

Once you have learned the postures of the sequence and the basic principles of taiji movement, the next step is to start working on qi, mind (yi), and power (jing). This chapter discusses qi, its relationship to health and the martial arts, and how it is controlled by the mind. The role of qi in taijiquan is discussed, as is its relationship with breathing, spirit, and the mind. The chapter concludes with general rules of posture, and recommendations for practicing the sequence.

2-2. Qi

General Concepts

Qi in Chinese has two different meanings. The first refers to kong qi (空氣), literally, “the qi of space”, meaning air. The second meaning is energy. Many Chinese believe that everything in the universe has its own energy field—every animal and plant, and even inanimate objects like rocks. Living things have a particularly strong energy field circulating through them. When this circulation is disturbed, illness results, and when it stops, there is death. Qi can be transferred from one object to another. In animals this qi, which is often translated “intrinsic energy,” circulates throughout the body to keep every part vital and alive. Qi can be affected by the weather, the season, the food you eat, your mood, and thoughts.

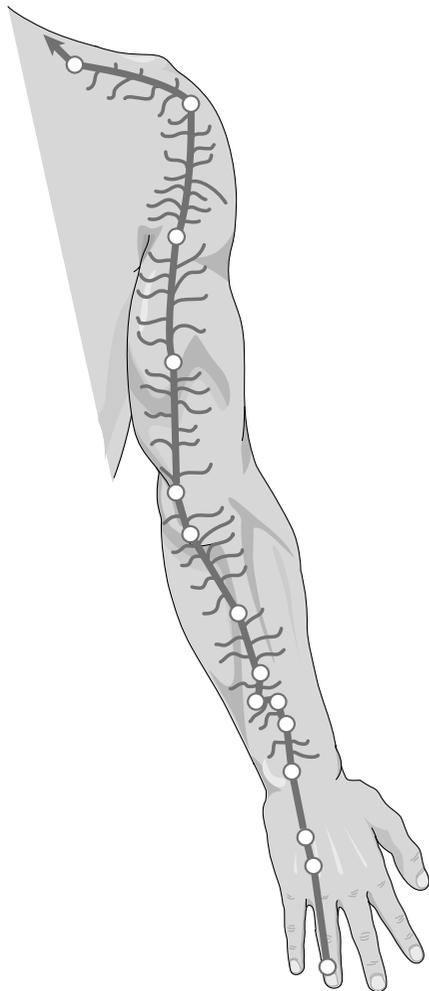
Qi is often associated with a feeling of warmth or tingling that many people experience. Some qigong practitioners misunderstand this and believe that qi is heat, and that this is why they feel warm during meditation or qigong practice. Actually, warmth is an indication of the existence of qi, but it is not qi itself. This is just like electricity in a wire. Without a meter, you cannot tell if there is an electric current in a wire unless you sense some phenomenon such as heat or magnetic force. Neither heat nor magnetic force is electric current; rather, they are indications of the existence of this current. In the same way, you cannot feel qi directly, but you can sense the presence of qi from the symptoms of your body’s reaction to it, such as warmth or tingling.

The Chinese have researched human qi and its relationship with nature for more than four thousand years. This has resulted in acupuncture and in the many exercises and

practices that can be used to strengthen the body and improve health and life. Taijiquan is only one of the many available systems.

Qi and Health

If you understand the relationship of qi to health, you will then realize why taijiquan is so beneficial. In human or animal bodies, there are two major types of circulation. One is the blood circulation, commonly known in the Western world. Blood vessels and capillaries carry the blood to every part of the body in order to supply oxygen and nutrients,



An example of a qi channel (jing, 經) and its branches (luo, 絡) through which the qi can flow laterally to the surface of the skin and deep into the marrow.

and to carry away waste. The other major circulatory system is that of internal energy (qi). This qi circulation supplies energy to the organs and to every cell of the body. There are twelve major pairs of qi channels (jing, 經) and eight qi vessels (mai, 脈). The twelve channels are related to the internal organs, which will function normally when qi is circulating smoothly, but will degenerate or malfunction when the circulation is disturbed. Of the eight vessels, two are particularly important. These are the governing vessel (du mai, 督脈), which goes up the spine and over the head, and the conception vessel (ren mai, 任脈), which runs down the center of the front of the body. In addition to the twelve channels and eight vessels, there are numerous small channels called luo (絡), which are similar to capillaries. These carry qi from the major channels to the skin and to every cell of the body. Some of these small channels bring qi from the main channels to the marrow of the bones, which are also alive and need qi and blood for growth and repair.

In order to maintain and enhance health, the qi must circulate smoothly and strongly, and it must be balanced. When the qi circulation loses its balance through stagnation or accumulation in one area, you may become ill. There are many “knots” along the paths of the qi channels, both the jing and the luo, where the flow is constricted. These knots can slow down the qi circulation and cause serious problems. In addition, stress or injury will cause an accumulation

of qi in the affected area. To heal this, the channels must be opened up and the stagnation removed. The training and practices used to open these knots and strengthen qi circulation are called qigong. Taijiquan is a form of qigong, and has been proven to be a safe and effective way to maintain and improve health.

Often imbalances will clear up by themselves, because qi always seeks to balance itself. However, it is wise to pay attention to your training and to any activity in your life that influences your qi circulation. Be careful of anything that may disturb the body's natural circulation pattern, and avoid anything that causes imbalance. For example, if you build up the qi in your right arm, you should also build up the qi in your left arm.

Qi Generation

Generally speaking, there are two ways to generate qi: externally (called wai dan, 外丹) and internally (nei dan, 內丹). External qi generation comes from stimulating a part of the body, such as the arms, in order to build up qi in that area, and then circulating it throughout the body. This circulation is done either through conscious control, or by letting it happen spontaneously.

External Qi Generation

Methods of external qi generation include muscular tension, massage or acupressure, and acupuncture:

1. Muscular Tension

The most famous way of generating qi by muscular tension is Da Mo's system, explained in his book, *Muscle/Tendon Changing Classic* (*Yi Jin Jing*, 易筋經). In these exercises, the practitioner will repeatedly tense and relax some part of the body, such as the forearms or wrists. When the muscles of a part of the body are tensed, qi is built up in that area. This accumulation is most commonly felt as warmth. When the muscles are then completely relaxed, the qi will naturally start to flow to other parts of the body.

2. Massage, Rubbing, and Acupressure

This approach uses external force to stimulate the muscles, skin, or points on the qi channels in order to normalize or balance the qi circulation.

3. Acupuncture

This is one of the most common methods in China for adjusting qi circulation. Needling and other methods are used to balance the system, increasing or decreasing the flow of qi.

Internal Qi Generation

Internal qi generation comes from exercising the dan tian, and uses the mind to guide the qi:

1. Dan Tian Exercises

The generation of qi from the dan tian has been used by qigong practitioners both for maintaining health and for increasing martial ability. In these exercises, qi is generated in the dan tian by the continual in and out motion of the abdomen. When the qi has accumulated there to a certain level, the concentrated mind circulates it up the back and down the front of the body, which is called “small circulation” (xiao zhou tian, 小周天). In the next step, called “grand circulation” (da zhou tian, 大周天), the qi is circulated throughout the whole body.

2. The Mind

The concentrated mind is crucial for generating qi, and the will and intention lead the qi throughout the body. A person with extensive qigong experience can concentrate his mind at some area of the body and generate qi there purely by thinking. The qi can be affected or disturbed when a person gets nervous, worried, uptight, or in shock. However, this kind of qi generation is not caused by conscious control and cannot be called qigong.

Qi and the Mind

Yi has been popularly translated “mind.” However, another Chinese word, xin (心), is also translated “mind.” You must understand and distinguish between them in order to grasp the meaning of the ancient poems and songs translated in appendix A.

In China, the heart is considered the most vital organ. The direct translation of xin is “heart.” When Chinese say zhuan xin (專心), literally “single heart,” they mean “single minded, with one mind.” It is often translated as “concentrated mind.” Xin commonly means “intention, idea, or thought,” referring to an idea that is not yet expressed, that lacks the full intention necessary to express it. When this idea is shown or expressed in some way, it is called yi (意), and has the meaning of “purpose, intention, or desire.” The reader should understand that a person must have xin first and then yi, because xin is the source of yi. If you want to do something, that is called xin. When you want it and fully intend to do it, or actually do it, this is called yi. Sometimes the words are put together: xin yi (心意). This can be translated “mind” or “intention,” and also refers to the intention to do something specific.

The taiji master Chen, Yan-lin (陳炎林) wrote: “Somebody said that yi is xin, and xin is yi. As matter of fact, there is some difference between them. Xin is the master of yi. Yi is the chancellor of xin. When xin generates an idea, the yi is then raised. When yi is generated, the qi then follows. In other words, there is linkage and a mutual relationship

between xin, yi, and qi. When xin is scattered, the yi is then dispersed. When yi is dispersed, then the qi will float. Conversely, when the qi is sunken, then yi is strong; when yi is strong, then xin is steady. Therefore, all three are interrelated and inseparable.”

As mentioned, qi can be affected by your thinking. Consequently, all qigong styles emphasize calming down the mind and using it to guide the qi circulation. Therefore, it is said: “Use your mind to lead your qi” (yi yi yin qi, 以意引氣). Sometimes when you concentrate your mind on the qi, you will find that your body tenses up and adversely affects the qi circulation. This is because your mind is not calm and relaxed. Remember that your body can be relaxed only if your mind is.

In qigong and taijiquan, yi is probably the most important key to success. If you cannot concentrate your yi and use it to lead the qi, all your practice will be in vain.

Qi and the Martial Arts

According to Chinese history, qi was first noticed four thousand years ago. Later, when its importance to health was realized, methods were researched to enhance its circulation. The Chinese people have used these methods for more than two thousand years to improve their health. Eventually it was realized that this enhanced qi circulation could be used in the martial arts to support the muscles and strengthen offensive and defensive techniques.

Almost every Chinese martial style trains qi through wai dan, nei dan, or both. When qi is used to support either the muscles (in external styles) or the sinews (in internal styles), the power generated will be greater than if you used only unaided muscular strength. Taijiquan is an internal martial style and specializes in using qi to support the jing that is emitted from the joints, tendons, and sinews, and that is controlled by the waist. The next chapter will focus on the principles of jing and various training methods.

Qi is also used in golden bell cover (jin zhong zhao, 金鐘罩) and iron shirt (tie bu shan, 鐵布衫) to train the body to resist strikes without injury. Methods such as one finger contemplation (yi zhi chan, 一指禪) and gold-steel finger (jin gang zhi, 金剛指) have been developed to build up high levels of qi in the fingers. This was used for cavity press (dian xue, 點穴), whereby a touch to the appropriate cavity could kill or injure an opponent.

Qi and Hand Forms

Hand forms play a very important role in qigong and the martial arts. Different hand forms are used for different purposes, and various styles emphasize different forms. It is through your hands that you express your will, for martial arts, for health, or for healing. Your hands are the furthest point to which your qi moves inside your body, and how they are held, and whether any muscles are tensed, influences the flow of energy.

There are six main energy channels that end in the fingers. The thumb and middle fingers each carry a yin channel (hand taiyin lung and hand jueyin pericardium channels,

respectively, 手太陰肺: 手厥陰包絡) and the index and ring fingers each carry a yang channel (hand yangming large intestine and hand shaoyang triple burner channels, respectively, (手陽明大腸: 手少陽三焦). The little finger has both yin and yang channels (hand shaoyin heart xin and hand taiyang small intestine channels, respectively, 手少陰心: 手太陽小腸). Normally, when your yi leads qi to your hands, the qi will be distributed to all the fingers. However, often you would like to concentrate your qi in specific fingers for some special purpose. For example, you might wish to concentrate the qi in the index finger for cavity press. In order to do this, a special hand form is used to narrow the other channels while leaving the channel in the index finger open.

Generally speaking, when a finger is extended, the qi will circulate easily to the fingertip and out. This emission of qi is useful for attacking an enemy's vulnerable points, as well as for healing. An extended finger is usually offensive and is classified as a yang finger. When the finger is bent and touching the palm, the qi is less active and will flow back to the palm. This is usually classified as a yin finger. Sometimes the bent fingers are stiffened to slow down their qi circulation and make the extended finger(s) stronger. The extended fingers may also be stiffened. This is often seen in external styles where a muscular type of jing predominates. Conversely, when the extended fingers are relaxed, the qi can move strongly. This is commonly seen in the internal styles where qi plays a more important role in emitting jing.

In qi-transportation training, both hands are usually held in the same form in order to keep the yi and qi balanced and symmetrical. The exception to this is when one hand is holding a weapon.

We will now discuss the more common hand forms. Most of their names contain the word jing because they use qi, in coordination with breathing, to generate a flow of energy for either healing or martial purposes. These forms range from ones that only direct qi to those that use qi to support the muscles, and to those in which muscular strength predominates. This will be discussed further in chapter 3.



One finger contemplation hand form.

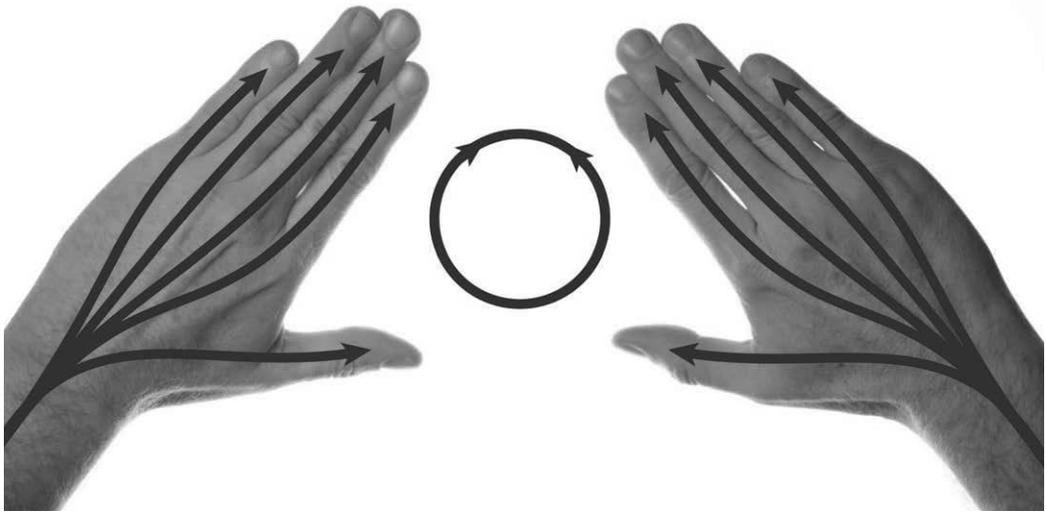
A. One Finger Contemplation (Yi Zhi Chan, 一指禪)

The yi zhi chan hand form is used in both internal and external styles. In this hand form the index finger is straight to allow the free passage of qi, while the other fingers are bent to slightly restrict the flow. The thumb touching the bent fingers enables the qi to circle through them, and also helps the qi to flow strongly to the straight finger. This form is commonly used in cavity press. External styles use special training

to stiffen the finger without losing qi concentration, while internal styles emphasize qi circulation and minimize the use of the muscles. This form is sometimes also used in healing.

B. Rushing Panther Jing (Bao Pu Jing, 豹扑勁)

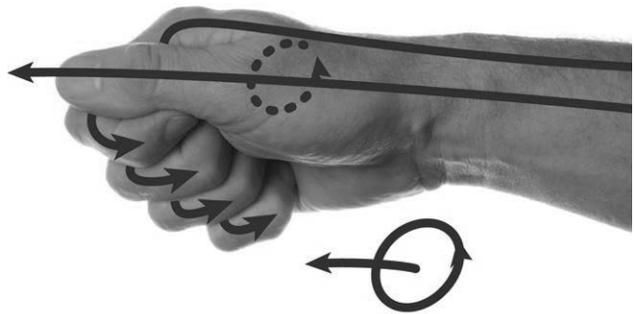
The bao pu jing hand form is said to resemble a panther rushing at something. The thumb is separated from the other four extended fingers, dividing the qi into two major flows—one to the thumb, and the other to the rest of the fingers. This form is commonly used for massage



Rushing panther jing.

C. Duck's Beak Jing (Ya Zui Jing, 鴨嘴勁)

In the ya zui jing hand form, all the fingers except the thumb are held tightly closed. The channel to the thumb is kept wide open, while the flow to the other fingers is restricted. The thumb in this form is commonly used for cavity press, although it is also often used in massage and qigong healing.



Duck's beak jing.

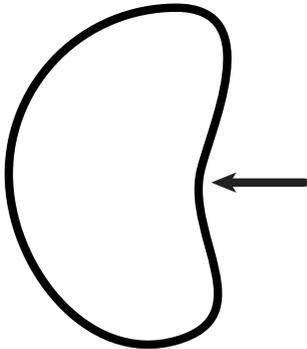
II. Manifested Jing (Xian Jing, 顯勁)

A. Offensive (Yang) Jing (Gong Jing, Yang Jing, 攻勁、陽勁)

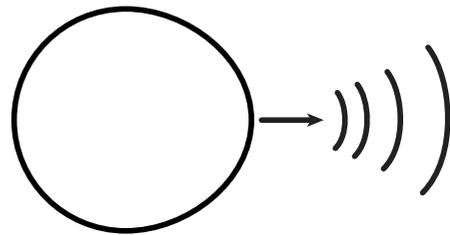
a. Purely Offensive (Yang) Jing (Chun Gong, ChunYang Jing, 純攻、純陽勁)

1. Wardoff Jing (Peng Jing, 棚勁)

Wardoff jing is a strong yang jing that is used offensively even in defense. In principle, it behaves like a large rubber ball—when pressure is applied, it compresses, and when a certain point is reached, it bounces the outside force away. The opponent's force is often directed upward, as you lift his attack the way water lifts a boat. This jing is often emitted at maximum strength in coordination with the sound ha. It may be done at all ranges, and is often used to bounce the opponent away. This application is forceful, but not directly destructive.



Wardoff jing compress.

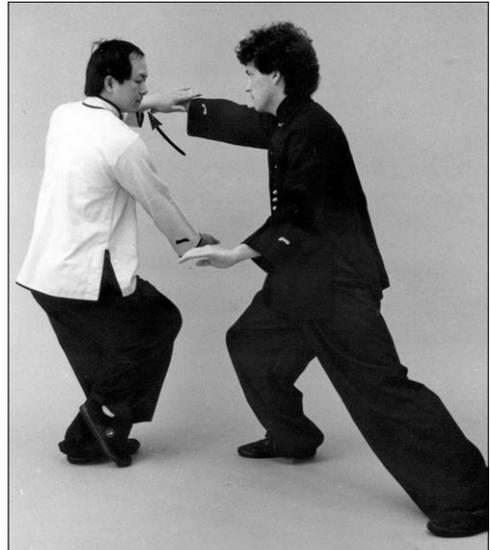


Wardoff jing bounce.

Defensively, this jing absorbs the opponent's attack and then bounces him away. In this application, your forearm does not generally come into contact with the opponent's body, but instead functions through his attacking arm. Specifically, you absorb some of the opponent's force either at the very beginning or at the end of his attack, and give the force back to him through his stiff arms (also read borrowing jing). Wardoff is commonly used against a punch, in which case it directs the attack upward and seals the arm.



Wardoff jing used against a punch.



If the opponent attacks with a right punch, you may deflect with your left hand.

Offensively, wardoff is used as a strike, most often to the opponent's chest or arm. When this jing is used to attack the chest, some other neutralization is usually used first in order to set up the attack.



Then strike his chest with your right forearm.



When the opponent attacks with a right punch, deflect his attack to the right and down with your right arm.



Then step behind his right leg with your left while your left arm covers his right arm and then attacks forward.



Using wardoff slightly upward to bounce an opponent.



Using wardoff sideward to bounce away an opponent.

When this jing is used to attack the opponent's arm, his attack must be neutralized downward and sealed first.

In order to bounce the opponent away, you must first destroy his root to upset his stability and balance. This is done by directing the force of your wardoff slightly upward or sideward.

Your body must be sunken in order to build up your own root, stability, and upward power. Wardoff is sometimes done as a sort of double technique. First, apply a small push to the opponent or deflect his attack and lead him to an unbalanced position. If he rises a little and his root becomes unstable, you should immediately apply a second, stronger push to knock him away. If, on the other hand, he resists and pushes forward, withdraw slightly and lead his momentum upward. As soon as you succeed in leading him, immediately emit your force to knock him away.

As with most of these techniques, muscular force will predominate in the beginning, but as you gain skill, the reliance on muscles will lessen and you will do these techniques with arms that are more and more relaxed. Indeed, you will find that you cannot really do these techniques well with tensed muscles because this interferes with accurate sensing and precise control.

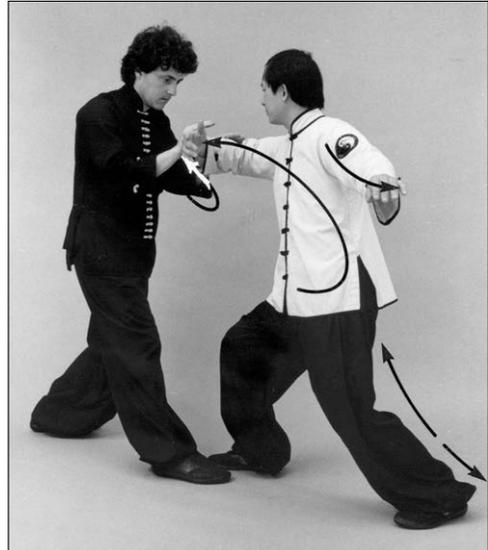
There are several ways to train wardoff jing. A good way is to use a bag, first a light one and later, heavier ones. You can practice striking with wardoff, and you can practice pushing. To do the latter, you can place your forearm against the bag and push it slightly to get it moving. "Catch" the bag on your forearm as soon as it starts to move toward you, and immediately bounce it away. You

can swing the bag and “catch” it near the end of its swing and bounce it, or move the bag around in circles and use wardoff to redirect it sharply away from you.

You can also practice wardoff on a partner. When you do this, it is best for the person being pushed to protect his chest with his forearms to prevent injury. Another exercise is for one person to stand in the wardoff position, and the other to push the extended forearm with both hands in a somewhat stiff-armed fashion. The first person either absorbs some of the force, directs it into his root, and then bounces it back, or else emits force just as the other person is about to push.



Practicing with a partner who is protecting his chest with his arms.



Practicing with a partner who is protecting himself by maintaining a stiff arm.

When doing wardoff, the body must be centered and stable, and your yi of attacking must be farther than the target. Yi, qi, and jing must be balanced among the attacking arm, the other arm, and the rear foot.

2. Drilling Jing (Zuan Jing, 鑽勁)

Drilling jing is an offensive jing that twists as it penetrates. When your hand touches the opponent's body, your arm and hand rotate clockwise or counterclockwise in a screwing motion, which makes the power penetrate more deeply than with a regular attack.



Rotating arm and hand clockwise.



Rotating arm and hand counterclockwise.

The power, which is generated by turning the waist and shoulder, is usually directed forward, although it can also be used sideward. The fist, finger, or knuckle is usually used for attack, frequently against vital cavities. The muscles must be tensed somewhat to direct the jing and to ensure that it penetrates, and also to protect the hand against injury. Also, your yi must be concentrated inside his body in the organ or cavity being attacked. Drilling jing is also occasionally used to pull your arm out of the opponent's grasp. Here too the shoulder and waist are the sources of the jing.

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