
Central Academy of National Martial Arts

CHUAN NA QUAN
Style of Piercing Blows and Holds

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FREE TRIAL VERSION

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Preface of Yi Jin

Six years has already passed since the Central Academy of National Martial Arts\(^1\) under the guidance of the respected Zhang Zhi Jiang undertook to propagate and develop national martial arts. During that time a lot of books on martial arts appeared like “spring flowers that bloom after a heavy rain”. However, in the process of detailed familiarization with a great deal of those works a whole number of shortcomings inherent in most of them is found. For instance, some hieroglyphs that did not reveal proper sense of some movements were used, clear differentiation of single positions and methods was not always done, instructions on methods of execution – fast or slow, with force or without force were not available. Furthermore, fuzzy photographs, wrong directions (of movements), description of movements proper and their combat use with lack of sufficient details were often provided. So doubts and questions often arose; the readers felt as if something was withheld from them, superficial understanding of the subject occurred. All this created insuperable difficulties on the way to fine acquisition of presented methods and techniques and made a profound unassisted study of them impossible.

In compiling this book the author succeeded in avoiding the above-mentioned shortcomings; he wrote it so that it could be possible to train oneself with the same success as if you were guided by a flesh-and-blood tutor. The respected

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**Editor’s notes:**

\(^1\) The Central Academy of National Martial Arts was founded in Nanking (the capital of China at that time) in 1928. The Academy was set up with governmental support and with the aim “to consolidate martial arts of China by gathering all great masters.” General Zhang Zhi Jiang, known for his devotion to WU SHU (martial arts), was appointed as the chancellor of the Academy. Before that appointment General Zhang Zhi Jiang was the commander of the North-Western Army and strictly demanded that all soldiers and officers under his command should improve their WU SHU.
Xu Ji Liu\textsuperscript{2} and I work together at the Central Academy of National Martial Arts. He showed me photos and the text of the book CHUAN NA QUAN and asked to write a preface. Having read the contents, I can say that it is the case when “it is possible to pull out the whole chain by holding the main link”. Text spacing is clear\textsuperscript{3}, explanations of movements are very detailed and at the same time understandable and intelligible to the highest degree, as the saying goes, “to reveal the heart of a problem with one stroke\textsuperscript{4}”. Furthermore, combat use of movements is explained.

The first state examinations for national martial arts which took place at the Central Academy in Nanking in 1928.

The opening ceremony of the state examinations.

Let’s consider, as an example, basic movements of the style CHUAN NA QUAN. They are LAN (to bar), TIAO (a blow or a block from below upward), TUI (a push forward), SHEN (a blow or a block from above downward), GOU (to hook), CHA (to drive into) and others. All of them are described in detail and systematized, therefore, when methods are explained, it is clear what the matter is about. As the saying goes, “if you drew a dragon, draw his pupils”. Otherwise, you will distort the essence of the object by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Editor’s notes:}
\item \textsuperscript{2} Xu Ji Liu, another name of the author of the book is Xu Yi Qian.
\item \textsuperscript{3} It means spacing between sentences and indentations, that was an innovation in the traditional Chinese writing at the beginning of the XX century.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Figure of speech; it means a brush for writing hieroglyphs.
\end{itemize}
omitting one small detail. A name is none other than the mental image of the object and the image must reflect its essence. There is no object which essence could not be expressed through mental images. You pass from one position to another, from one method to another as if you are wandering at mountain peaks, going high up and down. One movement follows another to form a continuous chain. The pictures of black-and-white photographs are very clear, all methods and positions are shown in detail, therefore it is easy to see what is what. It is necessary to stick to the photos in order not to deviate from the original and preserve the traditional manner of execution and the spirit of the art proper. Besides, the smallest details of all movements and methods are explained in the text, which gives a chance to unite single steps (positions) and blows into “paths”5. Following images, you must move as gracefully as “a wild goose sitting down at the sand bank”; raise up as rapidly as “a swallow which shoots straight up”; descend like “a bird of prey swooping down on its prey with the folded wings”; you must be in readiness as “a bow string of the arbalest and a naked sword” are and move as quickly as “an arrow shot from a bow”. If you exercise pell-mell and do not follow instructions, it will be a hindrance on the

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**Editor’s notes:**

5 “Path”, a sequence of movements presupposing notional completeness; it can be a single method or several methods following each other.
way to profound comprehension; in such a way you can not reach genuine mastership.

Certainly, even if you reached the highest mastership, you can not do much alone in the battlefield with a sword against the whole hostile army. One man can do nothing in a modern war. But if hundreds of thousands of such masters are in the battlefield, one should not tell fortunes by a tortoise shell to guess the winner. The present aspirations must be aimed at waking up “China’s Lions”; that’s why we undertook the edition of this book with ardor. The author set himself the task to disclose all niceties of the style and described movements with so many details that it is possible to exercise independently of a master. This problem was successfully solved by him. Now those who have no tutor can train themselves with the aid of the book as if a flesh-and-blood tutor is beside them. I share and hail such an approach of the honorable Xu, therefore I was happy to write the preface.

Written at the Academy of National Martial Arts, the second decade of September, the 23-d year of People’s Republic (1934).

Jin Yi Ming from Hanjiang.
Author’s Preface

CHUAN NA QUAN, a kind of the pugilistic art, was developed by master Sha Da Chuan from the town of Nantong. All movements of this kind of the pugilistic art were taken from the style TAI JI YUAN GONG; the oldest and respected specialist in it was master Wang Yue Qun, a fellow-townsman of Sha Da Chuan. During several decades this style was formed through reflection, training and practical experience. It is complicated enough, sometimes sequences of movements are unpredictable, therefore, it is difficult to understand the essence without a prior grounding.

In my childhood I exercised with a sword under the guidance of Li Xue Qun. He and my father are schoolmates, Wang Yue Qun’s skill is a legacy to both of them. They acquired forty-three methods from the style TAI JI YUAN GONG and twenty methods from the Master Sha’s style CHUAN NA during six years they lived together with him. After thirty years their hair became grey and noticeably thin. As this kind of QUAN SHU (“pugilistic art”) is passed down to outsiders very seldom, there are only few people who know it. Being anxious that with time this style can be entirely lost, I recorded everything I knew from my tutors, wrote on paper my opinions based on personal experience and compiled this book for future generations.

The book contains thirty of the most effective methods from CHUAN NA and few techniques from the section SHAN DIAN SHOW (“Arms like lightning”) of the style TAI JI YUAN GONG. We tried to shift the grain from chaff and show all that is the most valuable. All in all, fifty-five position are available, each of them is shown on a photo and supplied with detailed explanations on the execution of movements, movement directions, etc. I think writing books on martial arts requires the utmost exactness, briefness and clarity, so the
reader could catch all nuances of movements and their combat employment at once. I always tried to proceed from actual situation, take into account practical training experience and compile a book on that base. Quintessence and innermost gist of this martial art are given in the book. The book includes actual movements, methods and techniques and does not contain idle talk and methods unfit for practical use.

Practice and theory must not be separated form each other. Now it often occurs that those who practice martial arts do not write books and writers do not practice them. Such editions are mere profanation. Their contents seem to be convincing only at first sight. Those editions do not represent true spirit of the national martial art; on the contrary, they distort its contents, widely disseminate incorrect views and opinions. It is very harmful. If it goes on in future, the idea of popularization of the national martial arts itself will be distorted beyond recognition.

The manuscript copy of this book was re-written four times. However, it is difficult to avoid shortcomings. We pray specialists make their corrections.

The central authorities set up the Academy of National Martial Arts to promote and disseminate them. The Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Education issued directives which instructed all military units and educational institutions to conduct regular lessons of WU SHU and include them into syllabuses. Mutual hopes for the central authorities have been justified. At last, the matter was shifted from mere propaganda to the practical plane. In such a situation the publication of educational manuals becomes an important and urgent task. The Director of the Academy of National Martial Arts treats me with benevolence. He entrusted me with compiling this book to replenish collection of educational manuals. At the present time, full of troubles and deprivations, each man is responsible for the destiny of motherland. We must
direct our mutual efforts to the revival of our nation and strengthening its Spirit. That’s why I alone may not keep secrets passed down on me by my tutors, although I realize that my description has a lot of shortcomings due to my limited knowledge\(^6\). I hope that connoisseurs will give their advice.

Xu Yi Qian

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**Editor’s notes:**

\(^6\) A standard pejorative phrase said by all Chinese masters who follow the tradition. The Code of Martial Virtue WU DE specifies to a speaker to belittle his merits and praise merits of a tutor.
On sources and main content of the art of TAI JI YUAN GONG

>> see full version >>

Explanations

>> see full version >>

Biography of Sha Da Chuan

>> see full version >>
Position 1. The beginning of the execution (of the exercise complex) CHAN NA. Initial position.

*Photo 1 shows the first position of a “path” made up of five movements. We have retained traditional names, as they have a figurative sense. This “path” must be executed continuously, but not in a hurry: all movements must smoothly pass from one to another.*

Take the initial position: stand upright, facing the south, arms down along the body, legs joined (*Photo 1*).

**Practical use:** This action is called “QING SHOU” and means “To cross

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**Editor’s notes:**

7 Here and further the term “path” means a sequence of movements with common sense done continuously.
arms” as an invitation for a bout. You must imagine that you stand on a ground in front of the enemy and show respect to him.

Comments: The sense of the style name, [CHUAN NA], is revealed in each of its hieroglyph: CHUAN means “to pierce”, “to transfix”, “to break through” by a blow, and holding the enemy with the aid of grips is expressed by hieroglyph NA – “to squeeze”, “to hold”, “to control”. Earlier the style had a name of CHA⁸ NA. The present name is CHUAN NA. Besides, the way of writing of hieroglyph NA was replaced with a modern one⁹.

Position 2. ZHI NIAO LIAN YI: “Bird of prey folds its wings”

The second movement of the path.

*Photo 2 shows the second movement. Positions, from the second to the fifth one inclusively, must be done within one breath, as a single action. Actions in the book are divided into single (intermediate) positions for the sake of a more detailed description.*

The movement starts from the previous position: tuck the body to become like a compressed spring, slightly bend knees and elbows, bend the wrists too and raise your hands a little, turn the head to the right by 45 degrees (to the south-west), stare to the right and forward (*Photo 2*).

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**Editor’s notes:**

⁸ CHA is translated as “to stick into”, “to thrust into”, “to pierce through”.

⁹ There was another way of writing hieroglyph NA in ancient time; however, the meaning of the old and new hieroglyphs is the same.
**Practical use:** This is the position of readiness, taking measures to ward off the enemy who approaches you from the front and from the right, that’s why you must look forward and to the right.

**Method of training:** Movements of arms, eyes, body, and knees are done simultaneously.

**Comments:** [ZHI NIAO LIAN YI] “Bird of prey folds its wings” is the figurative name of one of the principles of the martial art described in the ancient canon “Thirty-six stratagems”. A bird of prey in flight folds the wings and swoops down to its pray. In respect to the martial art it means to take an advantageous position relative to the enemy and rapidly attack at the weakest point in his formation with overwhelming force. That is, so to say, to suppress “weakness” with “strength”.

![Photo 2.](image)
Position 3. YI BU YOU LAN: “Making a step and barring on the right flank”
The third movement of the path.

Move the right leg to the right and forward by a half step, the knee remains to be bent. Then move the left leg and take the stance XU BU. Simultaneously the right arm stretches to the right and forward (in the south-western direction), doing a “barring” (blocking) movement from the left to the right in front of the breast. ZHANG KOU\(^{10}\) (of the right palm) points to the left, the wrist is bent, finger tips point up\(^{11}\) at the level of eyes. The left arm is slightly bent, its palm adjoins the stomach and covers side ribs, the center of the left palm points forward. You stare at the right palm (Photo 3).

**Practical use:** The enemy attacks me at the right part of the breast with his left arm, I parry his arm with a “barring” movement of the right arm and protect myself against a possible attack of his right arm or leg with my left

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**Editor’s notes:**

\(^{10}\) ZHANG KOU, lit. “mouth of a palm”, the space between the thumb and the forefinger which are moved aside.  
\(^{11}\) Please note that the fingers of the right palm are slightly bent and strained, the palm itself looks as if it is concave (photo 3). It is one of those small differences which distinguish the traditional (applied) WU SHU from the sports WU SHU. In such a position of the hand the risk of damaging fingers during a collision with an enemy's extremity substantially decreases.
arm that is near my stomach. Alternatively, the left arm may be raised to “support” my right arm.

**Method of training:** At the initial learning stage first the right leg moves concurrently with the right arm, then the left leg is drawn to the right one, at the same time the left arm moves. Later on, the movements must be united into a whole one.

**Comments:** [XU BU] One foot completely (with the whole of its sole) stands on the ground surface\(^1\), the other (foot) only slightly rests on the ground with the front part of the foot, the heel is slightly raised. It is an “empty” leg, hence the name of the stance\(^2\).

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**Position 4. KUA BU JUO TIAO: “Jumping and warding off on the left flank”**

**The fourth movement of the path.**

Continuing the previous movement, make a step with the left leg forward and to the left (to the south) and immediately push off from the ground with the right leg. At the moment when the left foot touches the ground the right leg leaves the left leg behind and is half a step ahead (of the left foot), touching the ground only with the toe. That position is called DIAN BU – “jumping step”. During the movement the left arm raises up, the left palm is at the level which is a little above the forehead. The right arm is brought to the torso, its

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**Editor’s notes:**

\(^1\) The right foot in this case.

\(^2\) XU BU, literal translation means “an empty position” or “empty step”.
palm adjoins ribs, the center of the palm points upward. Stare forward (Photo 4).

**Practical use:** The enemy attacked me with his left arm, I ward off his blow with my right arm (the previous position). The enemy immediately continues his attack with a blow of his right arm aimed at my left ear or temple. I block his blow with my left arm, at the same time I move the right leg forward and take the position DIAN BU. It is convenient to strike with the (front) leg from that position.

**Method of training:** The movement of left arm is done concurrently with a step of the left leg, the movement of the right arm and taking the position DIAN BU are done simultaneously.

**Comments:** [DIAN BU] One foot completely rests on the ground, the other foot slightly touches the surface only with the toe. [KUA BU] is a movement with a jump when one leg makes a step and the other leg pushes off from the ground.

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**Editor’s notes:**

14 Body weight in the stance DIAN BU is supported by one leg, the second leg is completely relieved as if it is suspended in the air.
Position 5. TAN NANG QU WU: “Fumbling in a bag to take the right thing”¹⁵
The fifth movement of the path.

Continuing the previous movement, bend the left knee a little more and slightly crouch, stretch the right arm forward (to the south) and downward, and raise a little up at the end of the movement. The center of the (right) palm points forward, stare at the right palm (Photo 5).

Practical use: The enemy attacks me at the head with his right arm, I ward off his blow with my left arm (the previous position) and immediately attack the enemy at the groin with my right arm.

Method of training: This position with the palm blow LIAO ZHANG and the previous position DIAN BU is executed concurrently, in one breath.

Comments: [CHENG SHANG SHI] “To continue the previous position” – three of these hieroglyphs draw your attention to the fact that this and previous positions are carried out as one movement, in one breath. [LIAO] The term LIAO ZHANG, “Raking palm”, describes the nature of an arm

Editor’s notes:
¹⁵ A figure of speech, meaning “easy job” (proverb).
movement (blow) in its second phase when the arm comes back: you as if “rake” (LIAO) something and pull toward you. The first phase of the movement is a downward and forward palm blow; palm fingers point down, the palm center points forward. [TAN NANG QU WU] Li Hu, master of the fifth generation, says: “A technique, resembling our one, is employed all over China, for instance, in Jiangnan it is called just TAN NANG”.

The previous five movements are united into a “path” and done as a single whole. They have the common name YUAN HOU CHU DONG – “Monkey leaves the cave”. Those movements are rather simple to comprehend even for beginners, especially if positions and movements are distinctly divided at the initial stage of acquisition. After taking the initial position (Position 1) one must concentrate, quietly breathe out and execute four successive movements as one action, in one breath.

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Full Version
book
by
Xu Yi Qian.

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/Shaanlin Tutor Chun Jin/

For the first time in English! Jin Jing Zhong "Training Methods of 72 Arts of Shaolin" (Tanjin, 1934).

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/Shaolin Tutor Ru Jing/
Lam Sai Wing was one of the best fighters of his time, an outstanding master of Southern Shaolin Hung Gar Kung Fu and a disciple of the legendary Wong Fei Hung. At the beginning of twentieth century, supposedly in 1917-1923, when Lam Sai Wing was the Chief Instructor in hand-to-hand fight in the armed forces of Fujian province, he wrote three books on traditional Shaolin methods of the achievement of the highest mastership. In those books he scrutinized COMBAT TECHNIQUES of TIGER and CRANE styles, as well as the OLD SHAOLIN METHOD of developing the "INTERNAL" and "EXTERNAL" force. The books are illustrated with a great number of fine drawings showing the author demonstrate his wonderful techniques. Until now the books of Master Lam Sai Wing serve as a basic textbook for those who seriously practices Hung Gar in China.

Now this book has been translated into English and published in electronic format on our site. You can order this e-books here:


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