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YIQUAN Kungfu Academy

Not all Chinese Kungfu [quan fa] was designed to be beautiful, some like Yiquan are just, plain, practical.

Yiquan is a Martial Art based on the Chinese 5 element theory and is taught as a powerful, freethinking, free moving self defence style. Yiquan is practical efficiency in motion and is not taught as a 'form' intensive art.

THE MARTIAL STRATEGY OF YIQUAN

With origins around 900 years old, Yiquan is one of the oldest of the 'internal' martial arts, and the only internal art proven effective on the battlefield. Based on the movements of weaponry, the strategies and techniques are designed to subdue an opponent in the shortest possible period of time. The basic fighting strategy or better still intention of Yiquan dictates a highly aggressive 'take no prisoners' attitude, with the goal of incapacitating an opponent as quickly as possible. There are no flashy, overly complicated or unbalanced techniques. Yiquan is practical efficiency in motion.

The simple underlying strategy of Yiquan is based around ending a confrontation in the quickest, most effective manner possible while inflicting the maximum amount of damage to the opponent. It is not so much a system of 'self-defence' as 'aggressive offence'. Even though we are an effective self-defence style we do not use a common 'self-defence strategy' i.e. one of escaping from a violent encounter unharmed. Yiquan is taught with a 'warrior strategy' of taking out the opponent as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Since the principles of Yiquan were honed from the battlefield and primarily developed to be applied against a potentially armed and possibly armoured opponent, Yiquan favours very direct and incapacitating techniques that would quickly end the encounter. Most other styles consider that striking precise vital points, complicated techniques, prolonged grappling encounters and the use of force against force were the answer in battlefield conditions. Yiquan believed that an evasive continuous, vicious attack with shocking percussive strikes and quick debilitating takedowns were much more effective.

The powerful percussive strikes of Yiquan will damage and disorient the opponent no matter where they connect. Strikes are generally not aimed at specific 'vital points,' but rather through the enemy's centre of mass, their earth line or vertical gravity line, insuring maximum shock and transferring energy into not just onto the opponent.

Yiquan has grappling techniques or Chinna built into it's structure, that are essentially rapid, bone jarring takedowns. The lifts, flips and hip techniques of the many wrestling arts are not found in the Yiquan arsenal. From the point of view of the warrior on the battlefield, the longer the grappling encounter, the longer he is vulnerable to attack from a third party.

Yiquan techniques are based on continuous attack, or very tight sequential attack and defence especially if the opponent manages to launch an attack first. Techniques that block first and then counterattack with a 'one-two' timing are taught in the very beginning of the novice's training but are phased out as the student progressively understands the physiology and philosophy of the movements. Because Yiquan has a continuous attack until they are crushed philosophy, we also continue to attack the opponent even as they retreat.

THE BASIS AND INTENTION OF YIQUAN

The direction of movement in Yiquan is predominately linear. The hands, feet and torso all arrive together and the nose, lead hand and lead foot are aligned along the same vertical axis. The arms are

held in front of the body and the practitioner lines up his or her centreline with the opponent's earth line i.e. vertical core axis or gravity line.

The hands focus is around the area of the heart and the elbows almost always go past the rib area to collect the weight and Qi at the Dantien or horizontal centre axis around the navel area. There are fewer kicks in Yiquan compared to other Chinese arts, most are based on the spirit of animals and are used mostly to attack the opponent's structure and balance. All techniques are predominately percussive in nature with great emphasis placed upon the ability to generate power with the body as a whole and to focus all power into one pulse or percussion, which is released in a sudden burst.

The techniques of Yiquan are visually aggressive in nature and the Yiquan prefers to move into an opponent with a decisive strike at the earliest opportunity. The style is economy of motion and uses a close sequential almost simultaneous action of attack and defence. As in life, in Yiquan we believe that the mind controls and leads all the movements of the body.

The 5 Elements of Metal, Water, Wood, Fire and Earth are our base movements and express all the possible combinations of motion of the trunk and upper body which produce martial power including energy directions which can move downward, upward, forward, outward and inward. After a certain level of proficiency is acquired the 11 Animal and 1 Insect influences are progressively introduced. The 5 Elements can then be expressed and delivered using the spirit of those animals in combat, not the mimicry of the animal's mannerisms, as in perhaps Shaolin based Gong Fu. Our Animals allow evasive entry and allow our 5 Elements to flow more freely, greatly enhancing the ability to strike more effectively and powerfully with every part of the body.

At the beginning of a student's training we firstly introduce the general mechanics, then the 5 Elements. Once the 5 Elements are beginning to be understood, we slowly introduce our 11 Animals and 1 Insect. We then begin to slowly combine these basic movements to condition and develop the striking ability of what we call, the Seven Pressings i.e. the transfer of power from feet to knees, knees to hips, hips to shoulders, shoulders to elbows, elbows to hands, done with head erect and tongue to the roof of the mouth. Then the student will progress to integrate the carrier [movement] qualities of the Animals into and with the focused power of the 5 Elements.

To many people Yiquan is an enigma and appears at different times to be soft yet hard, yielding yet non-yielding, light yet heavy, agile yet unmoving. A great and continuing emphasis is placed upon evasive footwork and the continuous delivery of techniques until the opponent is crushed. Even though we are a family member to the 2 other internal or soft styles of Taijiquan [Tai Chi] and Baqua Chang [Pakua], Yiquan has been called the most external of the internal or soft styles. Due in part to the strong emphasis placed upon the conditioning of the mind, body and will to receive strikes in the first place and secondly because Yiquan is very powerful and aggressive in nature with simple and straightforward movements and intent.

All Yiquan techniques are relatively simple and straightforward and rely on the ability to generate force with almost any part of the body. As training progresses our much more advanced levels train in weaponry such as the fengun, spear, staff, throwing stars and short sword.

IN SUMMARY

Yiquan has an aggressive, straightforward nature and has been summed up by many in the key words of the style: Brave, Fierce, Sudden, Quick, Violent, First and Sharp. The study of Yiquan strategies and techniques provides any participant with a fascinating insight into the truly ancient Martial Arts.

As a message from Shifu Chris Futcher-Coles Yiquan is powerful regardless of your gender, age or the position you are forced to fight from e.g., standing, sitting, on the ground or being held down. *True power is the known and effective combination of mass, acceleration and intention not age, sex or build.* So if you have a teachable heart and a strong will to survive you have the requirements we need to begin you on the Yiquan journey.

In the present as in the past Yiquan enforces excellent health benefits with a practical no-nonsense approach to your self-defence, survival and personal growth.

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