

# YAO CHENGGUANG

## PRINCIPLES OF YIQUAN TUI SHOU TRAINING



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**Yao Chengguang**

**Principles of yiquan tui shou training**

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## INTRODUCTION

How to defend yourself and attack in situation of contact of arms is very important. In yiquan the idea of tui shou is that when in combat such situation happens, you should be aware of opponent's "solid" and "empty", "strong" and "weak", so in various situations you can control opponent and attack him efficiently. Tui shou is a form of fighting used in short distance. In yiquan the content of tui shou study is wider than content of san shou. The level of difficulty is higher too. But from the other side it can be said that tui shou is supplementing san shou, it is used as a form of training supplemental to san shou. Although tui shou cannot replace san shou, it can be used as a form of exchanging of experience and comparing skill.

Yiquan pushing hands is a kind of testing effects of zhan zhuang, shi li, steps and fa li training. In situation when there is contact of hands, you continue studying and developing hunyuan li and learn to use this "unified force".

Some people think that yiquan tui shou means, that touching opponent's hands is enough to make him fly several meters away. Some think that is about attacking opponent with qi, but because it was secret transmission, many "ultimate techniques" were lost. This kind of talk is result of lack or knowledge about yiquan pushing hands and about yiquan as a system. To help people better understand yiquan pushing hands I will explaining the concepts and principles of this training method.

## SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE

Yao Zongxun said: "there is a big potential in scientific attitude. Yiquan is rejecting superstitions, outdated concepts and anything not important, it is showing the path of development guided by science". Yiquan is based on dialectical concepts. "Unity of relax and tension", "movement and non movement are rooted in each other", "using pushing and pulling together", "unity of absorbing and projecting", "force in direction opposite to movement", "linking together straight and diagonal", "soft and hard are helping each other", "in and out, swallowing and spitting out", "single and double, light and heavy", this is all related to the theory of unity of contradictions.

Results of yiquan training are coming fast. This is because it is based on science and because the training methods make a consistent system. It is scientific, which means that the principles make sense. This is not something just given. It is something which is verified in practice. In this process what is useless and false is rejected, and what is useful and true is absorbed, It is a complete system of training methods and their order. From learning basics to the highest level of acting freely you should walk step by step. In the theory of systems the relation of parts of the system is most important. Yiquan is not zhan zhuang, it is not shi li, not fa li, it is the complex system of training methods. If you concentrate on one of the training methods only, there will be no chance for learning yiquan. The only way is seeing yiquan as a system.

Summarizing, basis of yiquan is science and seeing it as a system. Without those principles, even if you are able and training a long time, you will be like a blind man riding on a blind horse.

So if you want to learn yiquan you must learn the principles. Don't believe absurd stories about "ultimate techniques" or "hitting with qi".

## **UNDERSTANDING AND USING THE PRINCIPLE "PROTECT CENTER, USE CENTER" IS THE CORE OF YIQUAN TUI SHOU**

The goal in tui shou is keeping balance in each moment of competitive situation and using various technical means to disturb opponent's balance. But in tui shou, unlike in zhan zhuang or shi li, absolute balance is not possible. In tui shou, in situation of constant changes, we are working with relative, not with absolute balance. So in tui shou you need to constantly adjust position of all parts of body according to changes in opponent's actions, so you can control balance in changing situation, this is the balance we are talking about in relation to tui shou. How to adjust and control balance then? Your both arms must keep proper range of position and movement, and when you go beyond this range, you need to think how to go back to proper situation. As for advanced practitioners, no matter what position of body, they should be able to coordinate body in such a way as to keep balance all the time, and constantly being ready to issue force.

When we talk about balance, it means proper use of center. Center is the line, where center of weight is placed. Nose is center of head and indicator of the central line of body. Lower on this line you will find center of weight. Center of weight is the support for balance of whole body. When opponent controls and disturbs your balance, you become like a car with a flat tire - it is easy to defeat you, because you lost the main basis for defense: balance.

What to do to keep balance? Just a few words: "protect center, use center". Protecting center means that you don't allow opponent affect your center. No matter what action of opponent, you should try to redirect his force several inches to both sides of your central line. Many of those who practice tui shou are blindly doing the circles or blindly seeking for changes. This way they open the center and can be easily defeated. So in tui shou you should work on developing this reaction of protecting center, and to make it automatic. Then, when opponents is doing any action, you are aware of this, without thinking about it.

Using center means that while you protect your center, at the same time you try to control and use opponent's center, using all kinds of technical means, "playing" with opponent. At each moment at least one hand should point to opponent's center, you should be ready to attack at any moment. Masters of old times used to say: "it doesn't matter if it looks good from distance, what matters are fast changes just in front of you". You should think about controlling opponent's center and unbalancing him, not thinking blindly about superficial techniques".

When you use principle of "protect center, use center" in relation to arms, you should also put attention to using it in relation to legs. Classical theories say: "When foot is entering the central gate, taking the position, even for a supernatural being it will be difficult to protect". But you must also take care that opponent doesn't use your central gate, using swift steps you should move your crotch to the sides from the line of attack.

Summarizing, the principle of "protecting center, using center" is the core of yiquan tui shou. If you will be able to use it freely in tui shou, you will be able to control your opponent as easily, as if controlling an ox, using a rope tied to the ring in its nose.

## **HOLISTIC METHOD AS A CRUCIAL ELEMENT IN YIQUAN PUSHING HANDS**

There is a traditional formula: "When you attack with head or hands, you must attack with body. When hands and feet arrive together, it is the true method". It explains, that in a fight you shouldn't just use head, hand or foot, but all parts of body must co-operate. So when we are talking about so called pushing hands, it is not just pushing hands, but pushing opponent's body. Tui shou is not just circular movements of arms, but it is using whole body, it is practical use of the unified force developed through training of zhan zhuang and other basic methods. You should use the principle "when something moves, there is nothing which doesn't move, when something moves, it is whole body movement". In traditional xingyiquan there are 3 internal harmonies: harmony between heart and intention, harmony between intention and qi, harmony between qi and force, and 3 external harmonies: harmony between palms and feet, harmony between elbows and knees, harmony between shoulders and hips. It is called six harmonies. Six harmonies are stressed, because the goal is unifying all internal aspects (described as heart, intention, qi and force) and external aspects (palms, feet, elbows, knees, shoulders, hips), achieving the perception of being unified as a sphere.

Wang Xiangzhai, while creating yiquan, surpassed the concept of six harmonies of traditional xingyiquan. In his opinion the actual idea behind this concept was harmony of unified use of body, not just relation of position of various parts of body. So when you practice zhan zhuang in yiquan, for example using the posture of embracing a tree, it is not only embracing a tree, but it as if at the same time you were inside the tree, being embraced by it. You can also imagine "swimming in air", no matter how you move, you keep this feeling. This is not just 6 harmonies. In whole body there is no place where there is no harmony with other parts.

When you experience harmony of whole body, in pushing hands you should put stress on using whole body method. In pushing hands you not only push with hands, but each part of body, e.g. arms, elbows, shoulders etc. can be used as efficient weapon. But you shouldn't think about using some part of body and wait for opportunity of using it. You should be like a ball, no matter from which side it is hit, there is spring-like reaction just there. You should not think only about one part.

Also when we are talking about technical means, you should use holistic, unified method. You should be able to react according to opponent's reaction. You shouldn't only wait for opportunity, you should actively create opportunity. If there is chance to turn opponent using xuanfa, you do it, when there is chance to pull him diagonally, you do it. You shouldn't limit

yourself to a few learned methods, but you should actively, through practice, develop new technical means. The more well rounded the technical means, the bigger chance for winning.

We should point out to the importance of unity of training system. Many practitioners, when they start learning pushing hands, tend to neglect basic training. You should know that tui shou is concretization of all basic methods and at the same time it is a method of testing effects of basic training. Focusing on tui shou only and neglecting basic training means focusing on results and neglecting their source, it is like trying to breed fish in a pond without water. Finally there will be no other way out as moving back to basics.

Summarizing - holistic method is a method of whole coordinated body. It is coordination of force, coordination of all parts of body, coordination of technical means. Also coordination of the system of training methods is very important - this is basis for everything. Lack of coordination of the training system negatively affects possibility of developing coordinated force. If force will not be coordinated, body will not be in harmony, possibility of using technical means will be limited.

Yiquan training must be coordinated, any part of the system is closely related to other parts. If you put too much stress on something or you neglect something, the balance of the whole will be lost. Imagine a bucket made of vertical wooden boards. How much water you will be able to pour into the bucket depends on the lowest board. So you must make all the boards evenly high.



## **PRACTICAL USE OF CONCEPTS OF 'SECTION', 'POINT', 'SURFACE', 'LINE'**

Using the concepts of 'section', 'point', 'surface', 'line' in tui shou is very important. If you understand those concepts properly, you can practice tui shou in accordance with natural mechanics of human body. Without it tui shou would change into forceful pushing and pulling, the essence of tui shou would be lost.

Section. As example let's take an arm. Upper part of arm is a root section, forearm is middle section, wrist and palm are end section. End section is the weakest one. In tui shou body power is transmitted from root section through middle section to end section. Contact of arms of both opponents is usually made at middle section - forearm. But if end section is loose and weak, it is as if there was lack of one section of arm, it negatively affects the possibility of effective use of force through middle section. So during the training process enhancing the force in end section is crucial. Only if you enhance the feeling of force in end section, and transfer force through root section in proper way, you will be able to express it in middle section properly. This training of perception of force in end section is embodied in basic training. For example in zhan zhuang fingers are separated and intention is reaching there. Also in shi li intention and feeling in palms and fingers is stressed. This is training of end section. In practice force is often transmitted from root section through middle section and used in end section.

Summarizing, tui shou is interaction of forces of both opponents, and sections create path for transmitting force. If you understand how to use sections, you can efficiently use your force, affecting opponent's body and efficiently neutralize his force. So while learning tui shou you must understand not only relation between sections of your own body, but also between sections of opponent's body, so you can use it in order to win.

When both opponents connect their arms, there is situation of some relation of their forces in a 'point'. 'Point' is a concept originally meaning point of contact of weapons. In tui shou it means point of contact on opponent's forearms. Forces of both opponent's are expressed in point - size of forces, directions, the state of relax-tension, subtle and solid aspects and all changes in use of technical means. While doing rotations of arms in tui shou, those changes are uncountable and unpredicted.

Stiffness or excessive looseness of the "force" of whole body is expressed in changes of the quality of relax and tension in 'point'. During the changes in tui shou none of the opponents yields completely. It means that in the point of contact there should be some elastic tension,

arms should not slip loosely or loose contact. At the same time there must be agility and sensitivity of reaction in the point. At each moment you should realize the changes in opponent's action and his intention. You should observe the sensations in 'point' to estimate opponent's stiffens or looseness, his empty and full aspects, size and direction of force, whether it is unified force or not. In "The art of war" it is said: "When you know yourself and you know your opponent, in hundreds of battles you will not be defeated". In tui shou, at each moment you must realize uncountable, irregular and unpredictable changes in 'point'. This is where victory or defeat are decided. So changes in the 'point' and using 'point' are crucial issues.

How to use 'point'? You should develop ability of 'listening' what's happening in the 'point' and using 'pointing force'. To be able to use opponent's weak points, to react appropriately in order to control him, you need specific perception, it could be said that it is sensitivity of touch. This is related to sensitivity of nervous system. The more sensitivity in this perception, the easier is observing and realizing opponent's changes, it means enhancing the ability of 'listening'. This is not about hearing with ear but the level of sensitivity of mind, nervous system, body.

Some practitioners have good basis, putting a lot of time to basic exercises, but they are still not efficient in tui shou. Although basic training is necessary to create ground for combat practice, it is not possible to replace combat training with basic training only. The way of reacting developed through basic training is still not the same thing as the way of reacting in a fight. No matter how good basics, the reaction of nervous system must be further developed according to the needs of fighting.

So, in order to develop the ability of 'listening' you need to spend a lot of time on tui shou practice. By a lot of repetitions of situation of "intimate contact" of forearms, you develop "feeling" or "affection" between them. When this "feeling" becomes deep, it means automation of reaction - possibility of spontaneous adjusting your action according to situation. This is enhancing the ability of 'listening'.

So called 'pointing force' doesn't mean force of fingers (from translator: word 'zhi' can mean both 'finger' or 'to point'), but pointing the direction of force in 'point'. In tui shou, no matter what situation, there should be force in 'point', pointing toward opponent's central line.

In single pushing hands we have one 'point', and in double pushing hands four arms create two 'points'. In double pushing hands, at any moment, at least in one of the 'points' there

should 'pointing force' - it can change from one of the 'points' to the other. In pushing hands, when you do rotations, you do not take your hand away to hit somewhere - this would be 'escape of point'. Because opponent's springy force is directed from the 'point' to your center, when your point escapes, it means being defeated immediately, opponent's hand will hit you like an arrow from a bow. Escape of point means releasing the arrow which is pointing toward you.

The issues related to the concept of 'point' should not be neglected. Efficiency of tui shou is based on sensitivity in point of contact. When opponent is attacking your center, you only need to redirect his force with slight movement of the 'point' to neutralize the threat of his force. When you attack, you should make swift changes in 'point', enhancing frequency of changes between relax and tension, so opponent will not be able to protect himself. So while studying tui shou, you must put a lot of time and attention to the issue of 'point'.

No matter if it is zhan zhuang or tui shou, positions of arms should be diagonal (diagonal surface). This is the concept of 'surface'. Thanks to diagonal position opponent's force will not affect you directly. How to achieve 'diagonal surface'? This is related to 'bending'. This means bending joints (some angle between parts of body connected by some joint), like bending wrist joint (between palm and forearm), bending elbow joint (between forearm and upper arm). Those angles should be bigger than 90 degrees, so the structure can create force. If the angle is less than 90 degrees, posture is weak and opponent can easily use this weakness. No matter if we are talking about tui shou or san shou, you should remember about principle "slightly bent, not straight", "form bent, force straight". You should not straighten your arm completely. When arm is straight, it is so called 'even surface', you will lose the elastic "arguing" forces between parts of arm. You would use obvious, one-dimensional force, which can easily be used against you. The difference is as if between a spring, and if you completely straighten the spirals of this spring - it will lose the quality of a spring. And if form is not bent, force is not round, you will not be able to adjust yourself to changing situations swiftly. When arm is too straight there is a big danger of injury. This is reason why straight punch practice in boxing or sanda often leads to elbow injury. So while practicing tui shou you should keep obtuse angles at your joints. This will help you to use force in various directions and change those directions freely.

The concept of 'line' means the path of 'force'/'energy'. In yiquan pushing hands the principle "form bent, force straight" is stressed. "Form bent" means that joints are bent during all changes, so there is no 'even surface' or 'one-directional force'. 'Straight force' doesn't mean

straight path of movement, but actually the meaning is the same as when we say 'round force' - everywhere, in all directions there is intention of force. It is expressed by spiral movement around some pivot. Spiral and straight line are contradictions which are unified. In other words, no matter how complicated paths and changes of joints bending during movement, it is all transferred to the 'pointing force' - from point of contact to opponent's center. In pushing hands, when hands make circles, there should be spiral force all the time. This twisting should be there, no matter if you do offensive or defensive action. "When hands attack, they are like a steel file, when they come back, they are like a grapnel". There must be rolling and twisting in it. This kind of force is result of spiral movements of body. Yao Zongxun used to say: "When you are learning martial art, you must master the pushing hands circles. You should know that small circles are better than big circles, subtle circles which don't reveal form are better than small circles, unifying whole body is still better than subtle circles. This kind of intention and force is the way of protecting center and using center".

This is why in pushing hands we very seldom use straight line movements. Even if we use such movement, it is short and abrupt and immediately changing again into spiral movement, into all kinds of circles, those circles about which Yao Zongxun was talking in above quotation. This is not just circles of arms, but also head, shoulders, elbows, hips, knees etc. The path of circles is changing, direction of circles can change, the circle can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal. Summarizing, there shouldn't be straight line movement. "No matter if you attack or defend yourself, there should be a spiral", "waist as a wheel, legs as a drill" - there is the same meaning in those quotations. It must be stressed that basic demand is: "seeking fullness of spirit and intention, not mimicking form". You should understand the essence of this, so in your mind there will be readiness and ability of reacting according to countless and unpredictable situations. It doesn't need to be expressed in obvious external form. And if you only express those circles in external form, this is a big mistake, extremely big mistake.

Summarizing, if we are talking about 'section', 'point', 'surface' and 'line', we shouldn't think about one of those concepts without relation to other. This is all one thing. All principles are linked together, creating each other and supporting each other. Together they form actual tui shou and the ability of subtle, swift changes in tui shou. Practicing tui shou without understanding what is behind those concepts is like trying to chop wood with a handle of an axe - it will take a lot of effort and will bring no results.

## **SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PRINCIPLES OF MECHANICS USED IN TUI SHOU**

The whole training system of yiquan is based on developing and using hunyuan li - unified force. Zhan zhuang, shi li, moca bu, fa li, they all serve developing it, while tui shou and san shou are focused on using it. At the first stage of study to use hunyuan li there is need to express it through some form. Although changes in the form of movement of human body are unlimited, all must be based on principles of physics.

### **Principle of leverage**

No matter if we are talking about single or double pushing hands, when there is contact between opponent's arms, the placement of point of contact decides if you are in a position favorable from point of view of efficient and economic use of power or not. In case of double pushing hands usually there are such situations:

(1) 'A' is using middle part of his forearm to press the part of 'B's' forearm close to his wrist. A is obviously in favorable situation, if we are talking about efficient use of power which would need less effort. This very simple issue is often neglected. In tui shou we should avoid using palm to push opponent's arm. Instead we are trying to use part of forearm closer to elbow to press opponent's part of forearm close to wrist, whenever this is possible..

(2) 'A' is keeping point of contact relatively close to his own body (but not too close). 'B's' arms are relatively straight, point of contact is far from his body - the lever is long, so it's hard for him to oppose transversal force. 'A' is in better position.

(3) In tui shou, no matter if arms are above or below opponent's arms, you should not push, press or lift using straight movement. Force in straight movement is not the balanced unified hunyuan li. The right way is using a system of levers made by bending joints. Forearm should be treated as something like a connecting rod. You should use weight of body or force of pressing ground with feet, transferring it through system of levers to opponent's body.

These are 3 typical situations in which leverage is used.

### **Principle of diagonal surface**

In tui shou practice, no matter what changes, you should always try to keep diagonal position of your arms in relation to opponents force. Elbows are pointing horizontally outside and "wrapping" vertically inside all the time. Position of arms should not create horizontal surface, because this would mean lack of proper force. If keeping elbows lower than wrist is

impossible and horizontal surface appears, it is better to move wrists lower than elbows, so again diagonal surface is created, according to this principle. When opponent is attacking and you are accepting his force with level surface, there will be lack of supporting force.

Opponent will be able to use this opportunity and you will have to accept all his force. But thanks to diagonal surface, efficiency of opponent's force is decreased, you divide opponent's force into smaller component forces. You don't need to use so much effort while opposing opponent's force, so it can be said that your force is increased in a way. Summarizing, no matter attacking or defending, using the principle of diagonal surface is very important.

### **Principle of a screw**

The so called principle of a screw, or of a spiral, relates to a system of levers which can do continuous rotations. This kind of force is commonly used in martial art. The classical theories say: "when you attack, it is like drilling, when you move back, it turns opposite way" or "when you attack, your hands are like an iron file, when you move back, they are like a grapnel", "waist like a wheel, leg like a borer". All those sayings are related to spiral force, force of a screw. Wang Xiangzhai said: "As for spiral force, the pivots of spirals should be on many surfaces, wherever there happens even a slight movement, spiral force appears". During any movement there is so called supporting force in all joints, everywhere there is form of obtuse angles. This is accompanied by a feeling that force is accumulated, body as if wanted to shrink and to expand simultaneously. In whole body, including legs, there is spiral force. If talking about using it, at some moment direction of force changes abruptly. The force is issued in such a way as if it was explosion.

In yiquan pushing hands we don't use straight forward, straight backward force. You should develop ability of transmitting spiral force through arms and through whole body. By using a spiral you can link various forces together. Using a spiral, a screw, will help you to decrease effort and increase efficient force.

Summarizing, tui shou is a form and a method of researching the issue of using force. This cannot be separated from the principles of mechanics. If you master proper use of force, you will be able to achieve better results with less effort. Without it, using of body force will not be efficient and will help opponent to defeat you. Appropriate use of principles of mechanics is crucial point of tui shou, and mythical "ultimate techniques" actually don't exist. Yao Zongxun said: "...on one side of a mountain there are deserts without water, and on the other you can find woods and meadows full of flowers. There is similarity between using structure of human body and monetary system - there are one cent, two cent, five cent coins, there is no

need of four cent or eight cent coins. Martial art training is based on using functions of body. You should not create fantasies about supernatural forces, but standing solidly on ground practicing and researching, summarizing the experience, using principles of science. This is the scientific principle of yiquan". Yao Zongxun strongly opposed absurd views propagated by some yiquan people (like "hitting without touching" or teaching "18 methods", "36 methods"), which are just contrary to the actual principles of yiquan

So, when you are learning a martial art, what is valuable is mastering the principles. You will learn one, and you will be able to relate it to more issues. It is enough to learn one example, to be able to use the same principle in many other similar situations, putting together basic training, combat training and theoretical studies, this way making real progress.

I explained a few basic principles which are used in yiquan pushing hands. This should help you in tui shou practice.

## **SINGLE AND DOUBLE PUSHING HANDS**

In single pushing hands both partners are standing obliquely side to side, linking their left forearm with partner's left forearm, or in opposite position it would be right forearm with partner's right forearm. Although contact is on one side of body, you should use one side to control opponent's whole body. In single pushing hands there is a big stress on the basic training, the effects of basic training are expressed in it. Single pushing hands is also a basis for double pushing hands practice. Doing something in right or wrong way in single pushing hands will be reflected in the possibility of making progress in double pushing hands and in san shou (free fighting practice). While practicing single pushing hands you should not stick to practice with fixed position of feet. You should also put attention to footwork, which will help you to maintain and adjust body balance. In single pushing hands you should not forget, that the hand which is not in contact with opponent, is also working in harmony with the other hand.

In double pushing hands both arms are with contact with partner's arms. Double pushing hands is much more complex than single pushing hands, both in use of technical means and working of whole body. Although it is kind of supplementary training method for san shou, but actually the changes contained within tui shou are much richer and refined.

There are two stages during the process of tui shou training: circles and changes. So called circles mean cycles of circles of connected arms of partners. Circles have important place in tui shou practice, they are basis of tui shou. Their main goals are:

- developing feeling, sensitivity in situation of contact of arms,
- learning to find good opportunity to attack.

Circles practice can be divided into: fixed position circles and circles with steps

Fixed position circles means that partners do the circles exercises without changing position of feet. These are the most basic tui shou exercises in yiquan. But many people don't put enough attention to them. When there comes contact and circles, they immediately move to so called changes. Because they don't possess solid basis, result is just forceful, stiff pushing and pulling. Finally they will find out that they must move back to basic stuff anyway and work with circles to find their real meaning. In yiquan tui shou a lot of stress is put on basic training. It is easy to see through tui shou whether someone has solid basis or not. We can say



that tui shou is not only expression, summing up of all methods of basic training, but it is also and efficient method of testing if basic training is practiced in right way.

Circles with steps mean that circles exercises are linked together with mocabu steps. It needs working on coordination between arms, body and legs (steps).

As for demands of circles exercises, you should put attention to following issues:

- while practicing circles, you should remember about basic demands regarding body, which you learned with basic training - head is "leading" upward, a bit as if a thread was pulling it upward, chin is slightly withdrawn, as if you kept a small ball under it, shoulders and elbows are slightly expanding outward, chest is slightly concave and felt as "empty", and back is slightly rounded etc.
- during circles exercises not only your arms are moving, but you should remember, that back foot is pressing ground, leg is supporting whole body movement. Many people while practicing circles starts feeling shoulders pain very soon. The main reason is that they don't use power of whole body, engaging arms only. This is common situation.
- in circles the force should be homogenous and coordinated, there should be proper balance between tension and relax, you shouldn't wildly oppose force with force, but you shouldn't be too slack, all the time you must adjust to the amount of force of your opponent and changes of his force.

Circles don't mean only doing circles. Although at this stage you don't use so called changes, but you mind should be engaged in similar way as in real fight. Imagine that your partner is as a mighty tiger, if you will not be careful, he will kill you and eat you. So you must keep high level of concentration all the time, putting attention even to the most subtle elements of movement. Imagine that opponent's arms are like pythons coiling in spirals, circling as tooth wheels, and as if the circling forearms were tied by some ropes, and you are twisting and breaking them. It shouldn't be circles for sake of circles. Your mind should be focused, so you will be able to develop solid basis for the practice of changes in tui shou.

While practicing circles you should pay attention to all the minute changes and subtle elements of each stage of movement. For example when your forearm is above opponent's forearm and you do the movement of redirecting his force, you should take care how to protect your center and control opponent's center. The more subtle aspects of this you are able to realize, the more sharp will be you ability of observing and reacting in situation of changes.

No matter how is the path of the circle, the main goal is keeping the force pointing toward opponent's center. While practicing the circles you should try all the time to develop the consciousness of opponent's center. This is like archery. To be able to hit the center of the target, you must realize where it is and then you need to aim at it. If you have not the ability of aiming, how could you hit the center of the target?

While practicing changes you should be ready all the time to use situation and use various technical means, maintaining combat awareness and brave attitude in order to win. This method of training can be divided into two parts.

### **Training of changes in fixed position.**

You start from circles in fixed position, seeking opponent's weak points and using in proper way various technical means, like piangua, xuanfa, gouga, to attack and control opponent. The basic goal is seeking proper movement, using in tui shou what you already achieved through basic training, continuing seeking the full, balanced force in situation of changes of movement.

### **Training of changes with steps.**

While practicing circles with steps you learn to use various methods freely, continuing the study of "seeking force".

In this kind of training you should put attention to following issues:

- you should actively seek possibility of using technical means and not complain all the time that you are not able to do it. Main reason that you are not able to do it is that you don't really try, that you are not resolute enough, you hesitate too much. So in result is difficult to use opportunities when they appear. So you should attack without being "too polite". Imagine that opponent is a big magnet, and you are a piece of steel. When there is a mistake in opponents defense, you should attack him like a piece of steel attracted by a magnet.
- movements during practice of changes are much more complex than during practice of circles. There is much bigger variety, the level of difficulty of observing situation is higher. On a higher level you are using the combat awareness which you developed through circles practice. You need high level of concentration, you cannot afford being careless. Think that your opponent is like a hungry tiger. Would you be careless if a hungry tiger was in front of you, ready to attack you?

- in practice of changes you should "seek force" without too much effort. You should not attack with wild, not coordinated force, and you should not oppose opponent with effort. On this stage you are "seeking force", studying changes. If now you start fighting with your whole power, it will be too early. It is as if you try to get the steel from iron works furnace before it is fully melted. You will not be able to use it for your needs, you will only waste the material. So at this stage you should focus on observing carefully the most subtle changes of force. As in a very subtle style of painting, you should be aware of movement of each hair of the brush. Only in this way you will be able to develop proper technique and achieve high skill, not attacking blindly, which would lead to too much stiffness and wrong form of movement.

From practice of circles you move to practice of changes, and after getting some basis through this practice, you can gradually move to real full contact tui shou.

Full contact tui shou means, that in tui shou you should use all your skill and power. This is directly related to abilities and skills developed through basic training, practice of circles and practice of changes. In this kind of tui shou there should be kind of abruptness like explosion of a bomb. It is said: "only if you brave enough to risk, you can win". You should not only use all technical means fully, but you should perfectly unify technique and power of body. This is much more demanding, comparing to practice of circles and practice of changes. In this kind of tui shou you can express the complex of your abilities and skills more completely.

### **Proper understanding of the circles**

From the practical point of view, wouldn't it be better to attack directly, when there appears contact between arms, instead of doing "circles", wouldn't that save time and effort?

Unfortunately not always everything goes the way you wish. When you are doing some action, opponent is reacting and doing some corresponding action. If there is contact between arms, there appears a situation somewhat similar to the circles exercises. So we say that circles are beginning form of tui shou. The paths of movements are not strictly determined. Some parts of movement can go clockwise, and some counter-clockwise. The surface of circle can be oblique or vertical. Main goals are: firstly training the sensitivity of arms, of touch, secondly, when opponent is attacking your center with big power, you need to use the methods of circles to neutralize his force and to control him, protect yourself and seek for the opportunity to attack. It can be said that tui shou is only some stage, the real goal is hitting, knocking down the opponent. In yiquan pushing hands the stress is put on attacking directly,

circles are only serving the actual goal of attacking. So in pushing hand, if opponent doesn't have proper control, you don't need to stick to just doing circles, you can attack him. In tui shou you need to work on developing awareness of possibility of attacking. It doesn't mean attacking blindly all the time, but it means using opponent's weak points. When there appears opportunity, you should attack boldly. It shouldn't be like just thunders and no rain. You should not limit your practice to doing empty circles.

**Principles of "force is not overreaching the tips", "form is not breaking body", "intention is not visible"**

The principle of "force is not overreaching the tips" can be explained in two ways. Narrow meaning is that force should not be directed somewhere for longer time, because when force have clear direction, opponent can easily use it against you. So you should be ready to change direction of force at any moment, any situation. Broad meaning is that movements of body and limbs should not go beyond the range where you can easily control your body in some situation. For example if front hand (point of contact) is passing too far beyond the central line, you will loose the feeling of body being balanced, you will not feel stable, it will be difficult to generate and issue efficient power, opponent will be able to use it against you.

"Form is not breaking body" means that while executing offensive and defensive actions, together with moving in all directions, you should keep the proper balanced structure of body, the state of being ready to make changes in movement. When there appears opportunity, immediately issue force.

"Intention is not visible" means, that opponent should not be able to read your intention. It is said: "If there is intention, it should not be revealed in form, when it is revealed in form, you can be sure, that you will not be able to win". You are doing moving away and coming back maneuvers, once hard once soft, subtle and solid interchanging, as if floating in unpredictable way in the middle of contradictions, so opponent cannot see your intention and cannot take initiative.

"Force is not overreaching the tips, form is not breaking body, intention is not visible" is an important principle in both tui shou and san shou. This is embodiment of the "principle of middle" of traditional Chinese philosophy. The main idea is that whatever you do, you should leave some spare opportunity. You should not do something in too exaggerated way. To exaggerate is to overreach, to reveal. "Bird which is flying before rest of the flock, will be shot first", "A wooden board in a construction, which is longer then the rest, will be broken

first" - these sayings show the results of exaggerating, overreaching, revealing. So in tui shou you should keep some balance all the time, use your own balance to break opponent's balance.

### **The question of action appropriate in given situation**

When talking about pairs of opposites, like "relax and tension are mutually changing", "straight and diagonal have their share", "movement and non-movement have root in each other", "pulling and pushing are based on each other", "in and out, swallowing and spitting out", "single and double, light and heavy", it is not possible to tell which aspect of opposites is more important. We can tell this only when talking about specific situation.

For example, if talking about relax and tension, which is better in yiquan tui shou, relax or tension? What level of relax? Tension to what degree? It is not possible to tell this clearly. It can be decided only in relation to specific situation. If opponent is doing attacking action toward you, and you just keep relax, he will break your line of defense, so this kind of relax will be a mistake. But in other situation, when opponent tries to rotate your body, using whirling method (xuanfa), and you suddenly relax, his action will "fall into emptiness". He will not be able to rotate you, and he may lose balance. This kind of relax will be proper.

The same with tension. When you are issuing force, you must use all possibilities of generating power, for a moment there is a sudden contraction. You should not be afraid of this kind of tension in this moment. You should be afraid of not enough tension. So you should use mind activity to stimulate nervous system in order to be able to generate more power. In such situation lack of tension will be a mistake. But when opponent is doing xiaya fa li on your arm, and you tense at this moment, you will create better opportunity for him. This tension will be a mistake.

Generally, some relax is a constant element of tui shou, and big tension appears only for moments. Relax and tension are relative, not absolute. Wang Xiangzhai said: "relax and tension, tension and relax are not going beyond proper range, empty and full, full and empty have root in each other".

## **ABOUT LOSING POINT OF CONTACT**

When in tui shou opponent will suddenly interrupt contact of arms which are doing circles, taking his hand away, with intention of hitting, this is called losing the point of contact.

Although this is not allowed in tui shou, you need to know how to protect yourself in such situation. When opponents moves his hand away, in order to hit, actually the length of his movement is bigger then of your movement straight from point of contact to opponent's body. In such case we are using so called "pointing force". This is the force from point of contact to opponent's center, which you should keep all the time. If in some situation you will not be able to keep convenient control through point of contact, you can use other parts of body to attack. If you cannot use palm, use wrist, elbow or shoulder. Next weapon, which is close to the target. If you keep the pointing force, you don't need to be afraid that opponent will interrupt contact, because his hand will need to go through longer path, while you will be able to hit immediately on straight line. Taking hand away and losing point of contact will work against your opponent.

## **ABOUT USING FORCE IN TUI SHOU**

### **Sudden changes of force**

The force in tui shou should be moderate all the time. There shouldn't be too much tension or slackness. Opponent should not be able to read your intention. This is the meaning of expression "intention should not be revealed through form". Only this way you will be able to make appropriate changes of your force, according to changes of opponent's force - its amount, solidity or subtlety. It should be stressed, that the idea of "according to opponent's force" is relative too. If you cannot find opponent's weakness, you should "follow". Following serves finding opportunity to attack. It is not following for sake of following. If there is opportunity, you should attack directly. Because water has no determined form, it can adapt any form.

In yiquan tui shou the changes are sudden. It is like guerilla, not like regular battle. It needs sudden changes of force - which means changes between tension and relax. The faster you can do these changes, the more "agile" is your force, the easier making a series of sudden bursts of power. When opponent is resisting in hard way, you should just make a change. Don't stick rigidly to continuing the started action. You should develop the ability of "abandoning". Abandoning allows finding better opportunity for attack.

In tui shou you should be able to change the amount of force, its direction and angle suddenly. You should be able to use the principle of "the use of pushing and pulling are mutually related". When there is only pushing, without pulling, it will be difficult to achieve good results in real combat. In tui shou practice this is always a situation when there is pulling after pushing, and pushing after pulling. When you are about to push, you are instead pulling suddenly. It will be difficult for your opponent to realize whether you will do something or not. Subtle changes into solid and solid changes into subtle. You want to push, but first you pull. You want to pull, but first you push. Whole body is like a spring (it is expression of summing up of "contradiction forces"). If you want to push opponent, start from opposite action - pulling.

If opponent reacts then, opposing by using force, pulling and stiffening, you can do forward fa li with forward step, pushing him away. But if opponent will react fast, your action will not unbalance him, because he may move back very fast. But again, at that time you may do next actions, e.g. using the xuanfa (whirling) method to turn his body and push him from his side.

Summarizing, you need to develop ability of fast changes of force. It is based on solid basic training and rich sparring experience.

### **Unified force and balance**

In tui shou you need to put attention to unified, coordinated use of force. It means that force which source is in legs, coming from pressing ground with feet and rotating is transferred through body, and it is not just using force of arms. Many practitioners are able to unify the force while doing basic exercises, but when it comes to tui shou, this unity disperses. Certain balance developed through basic training is destroyed in a new situation of using force in tui shou. So you must seek it again, to establish a new balance. So unity and coordination are not absolute concepts, they are related to a certain situation. This is also some process of gradual development. And final goal of tui shou is to be able to destroy opponent's balance and to build your own balance while issuing force from various angles.

### **Explosive issuing of power and continuous repetition**

Fali in tui shou should be like explosion of a bomb, it should be a shock for your opponent. Power must be abrupt, explosive, extremely fast, like an exploding missile. Only when you can use this kind of power, your opponent will perceive your attack as menacing and destroying. Also, when there is opportunity, you should repeat attacks, one after another, like a machine gun, like a battery of cannons, so opponent has no chance to defend himself. Source of this is in the frequency of muscles relaxing and tensing, directed by nervous system.



## **ABOUT TECHNIQUE IN TUI SHOU**

### **Technical versatility**

In free tui shou there are no paths of movement which could be determined in advance. There can appear various complex forms: both hands can start simultaneously, but only one will complete the action, or one of hands will do forward movement, but then both will move back, or left side can be solid and right side empty, or top can be heavy and bottom light. While seeking opportunity for attacking, both opponents are continuously making changes in their offensive and defensive actions, so it is not possible to use prearranged forms of movement. You can use opportunity, but you cannot force it. You shouldn't lose opportunity. When you lose it, the same kind of opportunity will not appear soon. Hence the form of movements in tui shou becomes quite complex.

So you should not limit your technical means to simple, often used methods like e.g. xuanfa, piangua or gougua, but you should develop proficiency in adapting to various situations and ways in which your opponent is using force. As for means of attacking, you should not limit them to using palm or fist, but your whole body should serve as a weapon. When opponent is grabbing your hand, your force can be issued there, when he is grabbing your forearm, you can use your forearm to issue force. Generally there are no fixed rules. Your body is as an inflated balloon. You are issuing force anywhere, where contact happens. But you should not forget about using spiral movements: the principle of a screw. No matter if it is clockwise or counter-clockwise, there should be twisting all the time, it should not be just a straight movement.

There is a popular saying: "when your foot is entering middle gate, to take position, even a spiritual being will hardly be able to defend himself". Using this saying in yiquan means that footwork in tui shou is very important. You can attack while doing forward step or backward step, or some shorter steps, being ready to change direction. Victory or defeat is usually related to whether you will do the right, crucial step.

Moreover you should remember about attacking not only frontally, but also sideways. When opponents will suddenly move to your side and you will not manage to make change and

attack frontally, you should be able to direct force to the side. You need to use your arms in right way to close opponent's line of attack and find situation favorable for your own attack.

Of course if you really want to master the technical aspects of tui shou, you will not be able to do it by reading text and watching pictures. You must boldly engage in intensive practice. Only this way you will be able to gradually improve your skill. You can try out various forms of movement, provided that what you do will not be contradictory with the basic yiquan principles. During training you should not fear losing. You should only fear that you will not be able to try out some possibilities. Wang Xiangzhai said : "there is no correct or not correct, there is only right or not right". If there is no correct or not correct, the crucial thing is whether something is right or not in some situation. Yao Zongxun used to say: "understanding principles is crucial in martial art, if there is only explaining some fixed situations one after another, student's creative thinking will be limited, it will be difficult to reveal the potential of intuitive understanding of principles and spontaneous using them in various situations."

### **Technique and strength**

In tui shou practice you can understand how important is basic training. If you neglect the hard basic training and instead concentrate only on using technical tricks, you will discover that this will not be efficient. Creative developing of technique is possible only if you have solid basic training. If difference in technical skill is big, the one how presents higher technical level will win. But if level of skill is similar, the stronger will win. When wild buffalo is big and strong, even a few tigers together will have a difficult time fighting him.

In tui shou so called skill strength is a basis, and technique is only an external form of using this strength. Technique and strength are closely related and mutually supplement each other. They are a unity, which cannot be divided into parts. Technique without strength is like an fancy ornament without practical value. Strength without technique are like dumplings in a tea pot.

But now there are some people with very extreme views about the relation between strength and technique. Some of them think that zhan zhuang is a method, which enables developing all possible skills in some mysterious way. They say that just practicing zhan zhuang is enough. That this way you will develop right strength, and when it comes to contact with opponent's arms, he will be thrown far away. But when it comes to confrontation, it turns out, that they are not able to do anything. Some other don't put much attention to zhan zhuang, concentrating on studying technical tricks. They dream about being able to demonstrate in

how beautiful, effortless way they defend their opponent. But in reality, they only give their opponent an opportunity to achieve victory without much effort and in very beautiful, convincing way.

In yiquan tui shou stress is put on mind, feeling, training the natural strength. You need to train sensitivity, fast reaction, agility of limbs, feeling through contact. You should not concentrate on technique too much. Without basic training, technique and technical tricks are like a tree without its root, like a river without the spring.

Yiquan is unity, which should not be divided into parts. We can talk about two aspects: developing skill strength and using it. Using is done by employing some technical form. It's like a car. It can have a good, powerful engine, but the car will not drive without wheels. In other words, technique without proper strength is like a beautiful soap bubble - you only touch it, and it breaks. And technique based on proper strength is like a big tire filled with air - the stronger you hit it, the stronger its elastic reaction.

So there must be a balance between strength and technique. Otherwise you will not be able to understand how to become successful in combat.

## **ABOUT RULES IN TUI SHOU**

Yiquan tui shou is based on unifying mind and body, coordinating internal and external. We could say that there are rules in tui shou. But we could also say that there are no rules in tui shou.

No rules means that when there is contact, the possibility of changes is unlimited. There may be attack or counter-attack, forwarding or retreating, moving to the left or to the right, raising or sinking, straight attack or attack from the side. It is difficult to know in advance if opponent will attack with fist or palm, elbow or maybe knee. Whether it will be straight punch or hook. You don't know this in advance, moreover you will not be able to analyze it, when it happens. This must be based on spontaneous reaction: "You don't expect, and it just happens, your attack reaches opponent before he realizes this".

Wang Xiangzhai said: "The basis of martial art is no method. Method is empty". It means, that martial arts should help to develop natural human potential, and not be based on fixed technical sequences. It's like when you are walking and stumbling against something, and without thinking you make some movements which help you to avoid falling over. Or when you touch something hot, and you immediately move your hand back. These are reactions of this kind. And so called methods are something partial, superficial. If you stumble against something, and then you start thinking how to avoid falling over, or after touching red hot iron you start thinking how to avoid burning, this will only create disaster.

When we say that there are rules in tui shou, it means, that although the changes are uncountable, some basic forms can still be noticed. It is all related to three dimensional space. For example, if talking about contact of arms in double pushing hands, there may be such basic situations: your both arms above opponents arms, you both arms below his arms or right hand is in above position and left in below position or opposite. One hand can be higher, and the other lower, one can be more extended forward, and the other closer to body, one can be in inside position and the other in outside position. Movement can be straight or circular, upward or downward, leftward or rightward, forward or backward. In practical using it can be hooking, pulling, whirling, pressing, lifting, tilting, or other methods being modifications of those basic methods. This is: "One strength changes into thousands strengths, thousands of strengths are going back to one basic strength".

Methods about which we are talking in yiquan are mainly principles and rules and methods of developing natural human potential. These are not methods which mean just external form of techniques. Because a sheet of paper is blank, you can draw something on it. Because water has no form, it can take form of any container. "The basis of martial art is no method". Just because there is no strictly fixed method, the changes which allow adapting to objective situation, efficient using opportunity and creating all needed methods, are possible. Wang Xiangzhai said: "There is no one fixed method, at the same time there is no method which is not included in it".

## **ABOUT ATTACK AND DEFENSE IN TUI SHOU**

In tui shou you should not only think about tight defense. Sometimes you should even reveal your "weak points" to provoke opponent. When opponent's hands come in contact with your body, don't oppose using force, but still let him feel some resisting force. In such situation, he will exert his force in some determined direction, and you will be able to use this against him. Slightly sit down on back leg and issue force forward immediately after this. Your force can be transferred through opponents arms. And he will have feeling as if "falling into emptiness", lacking strength and feeling uncomfortable. Then it will be easy for you to use his action against him.

From practice we know, that only by brave attacking and using opportunity for counterattacking you can win. When opponent is attacking, you should not think only about defense. Sometimes the more you concentrate on defense, the easier it becomes for opponent to use your mistakes against you. You should attack bravely. At the same time you should be able to "sit down". The one who is able to use this "sitting down" usually wins.

What is the meaning of "sitting down"? Your hips area is moving back slightly and you sit down on back leg. This sitting down doesn't mean scattering your strength, but you use sitting down to scatter opponent's strength. At this moment opponent is at loss. His form is "breaking body", "strength reaches over tips", his intention is clear and easy to read, and thanks to this the efficiency of your actions is higher.

Combat training is about joint use of attack and defense. In tui shou there should be defense in attack and attack in defense. This unifying of attack and defense is important characteristic of yiquan tui shou.

## **MISTAKES IN TUI SHOU**

### **"Blind" circling, without being aware of central line.**

Central line is where center of weight is placed - this is very important in tui shou. The one who is able to manage the center of weight will have advantage. But presently there are many yiquan practitioners who are not aware of central line. In result they just make "blind" circles. When they attack, they don't attack center, when defend themselves, they are not defending their center. There is no real meaning in such tui shou practice. As the goal of tui shou is breaking opponent's balance and building your own balance, if you are not aware of center line, you will not be able to seize opponent's center of weight, so how could you be able to efficiently destroy his balance?

So even when you just start learning the most basic circling exercises, you should work on developing awareness of central line. This awareness should be present all the time during pushing hands training. Let opponent's center be like a magnetic pole of earth, and your awareness like a magnetic needle, all the time pointing to the pole. No matter what movements your opponent is making, "the needle should all the time point to the pole".

### **Twisting waist in order to neutralize opponent's force**

You can often see such situation in tui shou, that someone is controlling partner's arms and is pushing toward his chest, and the partner instead of using steps - retreating, moving out from the line of force, and moving around opponent, is trying to neutralize force by twisting waist and turning hips, keeping feet in fixed position. It is possible to neutralize force this way and continue pushing hands. You usually see this kind of tui shou in taijiquan.

But from yiquan's point of view, if someone is really proficient in explosive issuing force and is able to react fast, before opponent's hands can press his chest, he will already make a forward step, issuing force and projecting opponent. If opponent will try to neutralize force by twisting waist and turning hips, in such situation this will not work. When you feel that opponent's force already arrived and affects your body, trying to turn hips will oppose the basic demands - whole body structure will be broken, you will lose the basic premises needed to use supporting force of whole body and to issue force properly.

If we talk about tui shou which is only practiced slowly, for leisure, then twisting waist and turning hips will not matter much. But in the kind of pushing hands which should serve developing fighting skill this will be a big mistake, which will put you in dangerous position.

### **Mistakes related to position of elbow**

Because elbow is in the middle of arm, all changes of angles and surfaces of arm are made with elbow. So whether position of elbow is right or wrong, directly affects result of tui shou contest.

Some practitioners straighten or bend elbow too much. Too much bending is when the angle is less than 90 degrees. Too much straightening is when the shape of triangle is lost and arm becomes straight. Wang Xiangzhai said: "there should be shape of triangle created at all joints". The goal is increasing "supporting force" of body structure, to keep conditions for issuing whole body force. When the angle is less than 90 degrees, the "supporting force" decreases a lot, using whole body force become much more difficult. Straightening elbows results in tensing shoulders. Tiredness and shoulder pain during tui shou will appear very soon in such situation.



## **ABOUT IDEAL AND REAL TUI SHOU**

Ideal tui shou is what some people imagine: that in tui shou there should be no using force to oppose opponent's force, that when there appears contact of arms, you will project opponent without any effort, as if casually. When such people watch real tui shou training and competition, when situations of opposing and tension appear frequently, they come to conclusion, that this is not proper yiquan pushing hands.

Their understanding of tui shou is based only on the impression received from listening to the stories about how Wang Xiangzhai was able to throw opponents effortlessly, with slight movement. But they don't understand that achieving such amazing level of skill was result of long and hard process of training.

In tui shou, when you do something, opponent reacts. You use some strength, and opponent too, and sometimes his strength is bigger. When your opponents possess similar strength and skill, winning is not so simple matter. But when there is big difference between strength and skill of both opponents, what meaning has comparing them? Actual possibility of making progress of many practitioners was hindered by listening to wrong opinions of people who think only about astounding effects, but don't want to see the hard process of achieving high level.

Actually in tui shou training you need to go through stages of skill: from opposing, through no opposing, to rapid changes. In this process solid basic practice is necessary. You will not be able to omit hard training. Thinking that getting great results without hard training is possible is dreaming and deceiving yourself. Finally people will laugh at you, if you keep such attitude.

When Yao Zongxun was explaining the relation between basic training and tui shou, he talked about when he just started learning from Wang Xiangzhai, he practiced tui shou with Yang Demao. Young and strong Yao Zongxun was not able to do much against Yang Demao, who used proper yiquan methods. Then Yao Zongxun started practicing basic methods very hard, training many hours a day. After just some half a year he was able to make a tremendous progress in tui shou.

Realistic attitude wins over beautiful stories. Those who talk only about not opposing force with force in tui shou, are dreaming, not understanding the training process and the process of developing skill in tui shou. Such "experts" simply have not went through proper training process, were not able to master right use of strength, of rapid changes in tui shou, changes between relax and tension and ability of issuing force at any moment. They have not practiced the violent. combat-like tui shou and san shou. They can only talk useless, empty theories.

## **FIVE STAGES OF TUI SHOU SKILL**

### **Stage of circles with intention of attacking**

At the first stage, although practitioners just start this kind of training, the intention of attacking must be included in exercise. You do fixed forms of circles, but all the time you must keep force pointing toward opponent's center. At the same time you develop sensitivity of reaction.

### **Stage of "bulls pushing"**

After some time of circles practice, when you have some experience and understanding of strength, you should move to learning how to use basic methods: pulling, tilting, turning, pushing etc. You should observe opponents strength, and attack immediately when opportunity arises. But because at this stage practitioners' skill is not ripe yet, they have not enough experience, there appears stiffness, they tense a lot and oppose with force, this is known as "bulls pushing". You will need to pass through such stage. This is stage of skill "sprouting", from where you will advance.

### **Stage of attacking with proficient use of various means**

After the stage of "bulls pushing", when technical strength and skill gradually increase, experience enriches, there will be less of "dirty force", you will be able to freely use various methods, you will develop the ability of observing opponent's strength and fast reacting to changes. At this stage there is a lot of attacking.

### **Stage of proficient controlling**

After some time of practice, you will see that event without attacking, you will be able to control opponent. Controlling is advanced stage of tui shou. At this stage footwork is swift, changes of hands movements uncountable, body work free and natural, issuing of force is clear, movements compact. In the point of contact there is controlling opponent or affecting his balance. Both controlling and attacking are as if casual, as if Buddha was playing with Monkey King on his palm.

### **Putting pushing and hitting together.**

Putting pushing and hitting together is an intermediate form of practice between tui shou and san shou. In yiquan we issue force with any part of body: palms (fists), arms, shoulders, head, elbows, knees, hips. There is no part of body which is not like a spring. Attacks often come when there is contact with opponent - this is typical for yiquan. Tui shou training should serve to help in developing free fighting skills. When in a fight there appears contact with opponent's arms, you use the skill developed through tui shou training, in order to immediately gain control over him, destroy his balance, hitting him and projecting, using all parts of body to attack him.

It can be said that tui shou is a jewel of yiquan, the key to winning. When Wang Xiangzhai compared skill with boxing world champion - Yingge (it might be Hungarian Imre Harangi, Olympic champion in 1936), he used tui shou skill - when there came contact of forearms, he used ability of controlling and issuing force, projecting opponent. Yao Zongxun defeated some Chinese master the same way in 1940s. The skills developed through tui shou training are very important in free fighting. Of course you need solid basic and technical training to be able to use them. Those who would like to achieve skills like those presented by Wang Xiangzhai or Yao Zongxun, without hard training are like idiots daydreaming.

Yiquan tui shou is very specific, because it is directly related to violent fighting. The highest stage of tui shou is actually san shou. High stage of san shou is putting san shou and tui shou together.

Just think, is there any point discussing with those who talk only about ideal tui shou, and don't understand that it is not possible to achieve high level of skill, not going through lower stages first?

## **COMPETITIVE TUI SHOU AS A WAY OF IMPROVING LEVEL OF SKILL**

Presently some people say that there should not be competing in tui shou, because in such competition the "bulls pushing" happens frequently, so the tui shou where everything should happen naturally, as if without effort is losing its original character. But this is very superficial view. Process of development and improving must go from imperfect toward perfect. At the imperfect stage of course there must be some insufficiencies. But you should not deny value of whole piece of jade, only because some part of this is not perfect. When you notice some problem, it means that you notice your insufficiencies, you see what you need to change and improve. The more you change, the faster you can develop.

As for competing in tui shou, we can talk about two variants:

- in one protective equipment is not used, only pushing (unbalancing, projecting) is allowed), hitting is not allowed,
- in second protective equipment can be used, both pushing and hitting can be applied, this way the possibilities of tui shou can be fully explored.

In this way it is possible to exchange experiences and improve skills.

Thanks to competing you can better know your insufficiencies, this is the progressing force. If in tui shou there will not be competing, and it will be limited only to light training of "feeling", it will be difficult to develop level of skill.

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