



少林神威 The power of Shaolin



少林袖圈 Shaolin Sleeve Rings



阿手棍 Yinshou (Negative-hand) Cudgel



白衣殿拳谱壁书-徒手对练 Bare-hand exercise, the mural painting of Shaolin Boxing manual in the White Clothes Hall



大刀破枪 Broadsword vs. spear



镇山棍 Zhenshan (Safeguarding the Hill) Cudgel



白衣殿拳谱壁书-器械对练 Duel practice, the mural painting of Shaolin Boxing manual in the White Clothes Hall



枪对拐 Spear vs. stick



双钩进枪 Double hook vs. spear



月牙铲勇战方天戟 Crescent shovel vs. halberd



拨云望月 Dispelling the clouds and viewing the moon



神龙傲空 Like a dragon roaming in the sky



大洪拳 Dahong Boxing



格斗 Fist fighting



鹰落嵩山 Hawk resting on the Songshan Mountain



莲花神掌 Magic palm



悬空卧虎 Tiger crouching in the air



斩魔剑 As sharp as a sword



飞脚开石 Smashing a piece of stone by a flying kick



相持 Confronting each other



铁布衫 The Belly Exercise



少林童子功 The Exercise for Boys



卧虎功 The Crouching Tiger Exercise



布袋功 The Abdomen Exercise



铁指入木 Drilling the trunk with fingers



梅花桩 Plum-blossom Stakes



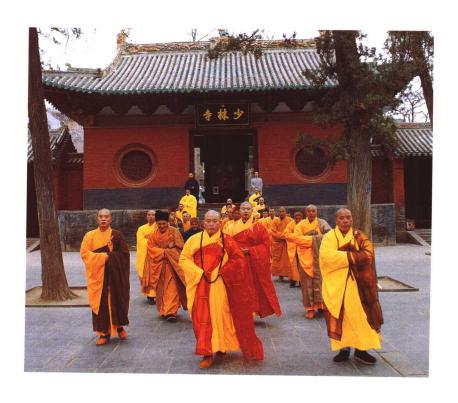
地蹚拳 Ditang (Lying) Boxing



塔上飞腿 Fighting on pagodas

Shaolin Kung-fu





中间流淌出版社 China Travel & Tourism Press

主编:冯永臣释永信Chief Editors: Feng Yongchen and Shi Yongxin副主编:王跃进释延裕Deputy Chief Editors: Wang Yuejin and Shi Yanyu编著:冯永臣王跃进Compiled by: Feng Yongchen and Wang Yuejin

英文翻译: 程春方 冯永臣 任 瑛 Translated by: Cheng Chunfang, Feng Yongchen and Ren Ying

盾 图: 吕大千 Illustrated by: Lv Daqian

装帧设计:王 源 顾泊潮Designed by: Wang Yuan and Gu Bochao责任印制:冯冬青Printing supervised by: Feng Dongqing

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

少林功夫/冯永臣,王跃进编著,一北京:中国旅游出版社,2007.1

ISBN 7-5032-2966-7

I.少... II.①冯...②王... III.武术 - 简介 - 中国 - 汉、英 IV.G852

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2006)第111173号

书 名: 少林功夫

编 著: 冯永臣 王跃进

出版发行:中国旅游出版社

(北京建国门内大街甲9号 邮编:100005)

http://www.cttp.net.cn E-mail:cttp@cnta.gov.cn

电话: 010-85166717 85166504

制 版:北京燕泰美术制版印刷有限责任公司

经 销:全国各地新华书店

印 刷:北京顺诚彩色印刷有限公司

版 次:2007年1月第1版 2007年1月第1次印刷

开 本: 889毫米×1194毫米 1/16

印 张: 10

定 价: 98.00元

书 号: ISBN 7-5032-2966-7/G · 818

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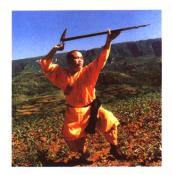




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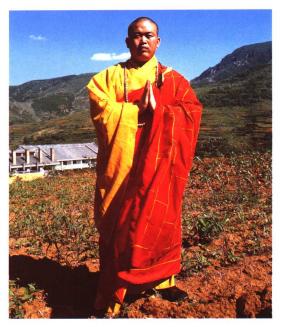








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公元5世纪末,正是我国北魏孝文帝太和年间,西域高僧跋陀来到中国,受到虔信佛学的孝文帝的礼敬。跋陀高僧"学务静摄,博通经文",且又"性爱幽栖,林毅是托"。于是,孝文帝敕令在林木茂盛、景色幽美的少室山阴建造少林寺,请跋陀高僧在此落迹传教。一时间,四面八方虔心向佛的人们闻风而至,纷纷投到少林门下。跋陀不仅注重佛法的传教,还在众弟子中造就了一批聪慧精干、善好武技的弟子。其中慧光和僧稠备受跋陀青睐,前者能在井栏边上反踢毽子连续五百下之多,后者则一身武功超绝于世。可见少林寺建寺之日,亦正是少林寺僧人习武之风开始之时。

后来,另一印度高僧达摩从天竺来到嵩山,在少林寺初传禅宗,并 在寺后五乳峰上面壁九年。由于禅宗注重坐禅壁观,修炼时不免筋骨困顿,于是寺僧们便自创出一些舒络筋骨的武功套路,以便在长时间坐禅 后演练一番,从而消除困顿,强身健体,如易筋经、先天罗汉拳、十八 手等等,可能是少林寺最早的几种功夫了。

隋朝末年,朝廷风雨飘摇,烽烟四起,少林寺亦曾养起护寺僧兵。 此后,以志操、惠瑒、昙宗为首的寺僧们救助秦王李世民,生擒王仁则,

逼降王世充,立下了赫赫战功。李世民做皇帝后,在少林寺封官赐爵,并明令少林寺可以豢养僧兵,至今少林寺内碑勒尚在。唐末五代,少林寺曾一度衰颓,至南宋又复中兴。明代的少林寺僧,普遍习武,"以搏名天下"。当时,少林寺僧也曾参加沿海御倭之战。"骁勇雄杰",数年屡立战功。

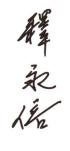
明人王士性在《嵩游记》中说,少林"寺僧四百余,武艺俱绝",演出时,"拳棍搏击如飞"。从中可略见当年少林众僧习武演武之盛况。少林寺后殿专为寺僧练武之用,设有兵器架,架上十八般兵器俱全,供练武僧人随时取用。由于年复一年的练功,后殿砖地表面已磨出脚窝,至今仍清晰可见。白衣殿南北山墙上有清代绘制的各种拳式的壁画,有拳术对练和各种器械对练,生动地描绘了寺僧练武的情景,突出了少林拳手、眼、法、步和攻防要领。

少林寺附近民众练武之风也极盛,并对少林武功的发展起了促进的作用。上千年来,中国各拳术门派的精华融汇于少林寺,少林寺实际成了武术集散地,并在长期发展中形成了少林派。少林寺也因此而名扬天下,所谓"武以寺名,寺以拳显",也不无道理。

少林拳术有套路172种之多(器械除外),并有三十六外功和三十六内功,合称七十二艺。原有木刻版拳谱留存寺内,但在1928年少林寺遭到历史上第三次火焚,武功典籍已烧毁殆尽。由于少林武术确已形成系统,所以大部分仍能留传至今。

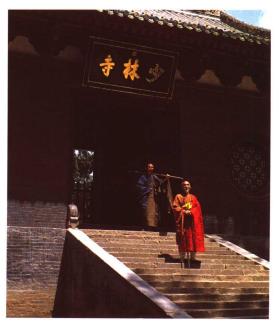
今天,少林武术又为世人所重视,并引起海外大批武术爱好者的瞩目。新一代的少林武僧,正在挖掘失传的绝艺,继承、发扬少林功夫。更有一批有识之士,搜集资料,潜心研究,出版各类有关少林武术的典籍。我等僧众,看到古老的少林武术能重放异彩,是何等的欣慰。

中国嵩山少林寺方丈





Preface



By the end of the 5th century, an Indian monk called Ba Tuo came to China and was highly respected by Emperor Xiao Wen of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), who piously believed in Buddhism. Ba Tuo was conversant with Buddhist classics and fond of living in a peaceful and secluded place with forests around. Hence Emperor Xiao Wen gave an order to build the Shaolin Temple for Monk Ba Tuo to disseminate Buddhism at the foot of the Shaoshi Mountain, where forests were luxuriant and the landscape was fine. From then on, many Buddhists came to the temple one after the other from all over the country. Ba Tuo laid stress not only on imparting and teaching Buddhism, but also on bringing up a large number of disciples who were intelligent, capable, and good at martial arts, among them, Hui Guang and Seng Chou were his favorite, because Hui Guang could kick a shuttlecock over 500 times in a row on the rails around a water well, and Seng Chou was armed with superior Kung-fu. This obviously showed that the days of the founding of the Shaolin Temple was the beginning of monks to practice martial arts.

Later on, another Indian monk called Bodhidharma arrived at the Songshan Mountain and taught the Zen at the Shaolin Temple. Facing the cliff on the peak behind the Temple, he sat in meditation for nine years. Long time sitting in meditation caused the monks very tired, so they created a series of martial arts by themselves to stimulate the circulation of blood and to limber up their muscles and joints, Yijin Jing (The Boxing of Limbering up Muscles and Joints), Arhat Boxing, Shiba Shou (18-Style Hand Exercises) were probably the earliest Shaolin Kung-fu.

By the end of the Sui Dynasty (581-618), the Imperial Court was tottering. In order to safeguard the temple, a guard monk army was organized at the Shaolin Temple. Later on, the Shaolin guard monks headed by Zhi Cao, Hui Xi and Tan Zong rescued Li Shimin (598-649), the Qin Prince, captured Wang Renze, and forced Wang Shichong to surrender. After taking the throne of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), Li Shimin offered official posts upon the Shaolin monks, and issued an order that the Shaolin Temple might have guard monks. This is recorded in an inscription on a stone tablet at the Shaolin Temple. From the end of the Tang Dynasty to the Five Dynasties (618-960), the Shaolin Temple became weak and degenerated, but revived in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), all monks at the Shaolin Temple practiced martial arts, and Shaolin martial arts became well known nationwide. In addition, the Shaolin guard monks also took part in the fight against the Japanese invaders in the coastal areas then, and won several victories.

According to the description of *Songshan Travel Notes* written by Wang Shixing of the Ming Dynasty, "There are over 400 monks in the Shaolin Temple, and all of them are good at martial arts." During demonstration, "the wrestling with fists and cudgels are flying in clouds."

The rear hall of the Shaolin Temple is specially used by the monks to practice martial arts. Inside the hall, there are weapon frames on which 18 types of weapons are available for monks. On the brick floor of the hall, there are many footprints which were shaped by the monks' stamps after years of practicing.

On the north and the south walls of the White Clothes Hall, there are two murals of various Shaolin Boxing postures painted in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The murals vividly depict not only the scenes of the Shaolin monks' practicing martial arts but also the essentials of hands, eyes, bodies, steps, and offensive-defensive of Shaolin Boxing.

The martial arts training of villagers near the Shaolin Temple became very popular then, which on the other hand, promoted the development of Shaolin

Kung-fu. In the past hundreds of years, the essence of various schools of the Chinese martial arts was integrated in the Shaolin Temple, making the temple actually a center of martial arts. The Shaolin School of martial arts came into being after a long time development. The Shaolin Temple became well known far and wide.

Besides the 172 routines of Shaolin Boxing, there are 72 techniques including 36 external and 36 internal exercises. The original woodcut edition of *Shaolin Boxing Manual* was preserved at the Shaolin Temple. But in 1928, the Shaolin Temple was destroyed by the third fire in history, and all of the ancient books and records of Shaolin Martial Arts were burned into ash. However, Shaolin Martial Arts at that time had already formed into a system, so most of the skills of Shaolin Martial Arts have been inherited till the present today.

Today, Shaolin Martial Arts become popular again, attracting many overseas fans. The new generation of the Shaolin guard monks is now excavating the lost martial arts, and inheriting and developing the Shaolin Kung-fu. A large number of people with insight are collecting materials on Shaolin Martial Arts, studying it, and publishing various kinds of books on it.

I'm 85 years old this year and how gratified I am to see that the ancient Shaolin Martial Arts are blossoming again in radiant splendor.

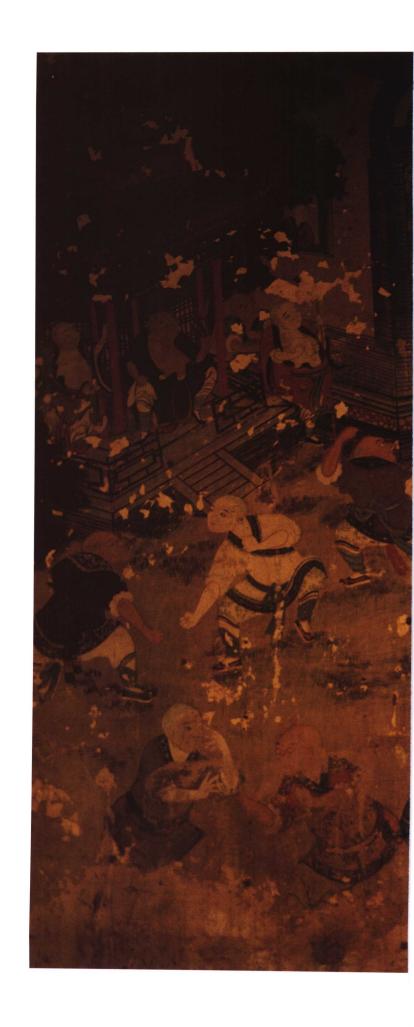


Shi Yongxin
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Songshan Mountain, Henan Province
P.R. China



少林神威 The power of Shaolin





白衣殿拳谱壁画——徒手对练 Bare-hand exercise, the mural painting of Shaolin Boxing manual in the White Clothes Hall



少林功夫