

REVISED AND EXPANDED EDITION

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THE XINGYI
BOXING
MANUAL



EDITED BY **Jin Yunting**

COMPILED BY **Ling Guiqing**

TRANSLATED BY **John Groschwitz**

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BOXING
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BLUE SNAKE BOOKS
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

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Published by Blue Snake Books, an imprint of North Atlantic Books
P.O. Box 12327
Berkeley, California 94712

Cover and book design by Susan Quasha

The Xingyi Boxing Manual: Revised and Expanded Edition is sponsored and published by the Society for the Study of Native Arts and Sciences (dba North Atlantic Books), an educational nonprofit based in Berkeley, California, that collaborates with partners to develop cross-cultural perspectives, nurture holistic views of art, science, the humanities, and healing, and seed personal and global transformation by publishing work on the relationship of body, spirit, and nature.

North Atlantic Books' publications are available through most bookstores. For further information, call 800-733-3000 or visit our website at www.northatlanticbooks.com and www.bluesnakebooks.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

[Xing yi quan pu wu gang qi yan lun. English.]

The Xingyi boxing manual / edited by Jin Yunting, compiled by Ling Guiqing, translated by John Groschwitz.—Revised and Expanded Edition.

pages cm

Complete title of previous edition: The Xingyi boxing manual : Hebei style's five principles and seven words.

Includes bibliographical references.

eBook ISBN: 978-1-58394-854-5

Trade Paperback ISBN: 978-1-58394-853-8

1. Hand-to-hand fighting, Oriental. 2. Martial arts—China. I. Jin, Yunting. II. Ling, Guiqing. III. Groschwitz, John.

GV1112.X5613 2015

796.815'5—dc23

2014030038

v3.1

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About the Translator

癸亥中秋

技進乎道

武進成且頤



Calligraphy from the 1931 edition. It reads (R to L):

Mid-autumn, guihai year [1923],

“Skill approaching the Dao”

Sheng Siyi of Wujin

雲亭體育大家

衛生之徑

盛昇頤



Calligraphy from the 1931 edition. It reads (R to L):

[To] the great athlete Yunting

“The path to health”

Sheng Shengyi



*Photo of compiler Ling Guiqing
From the 1930 edition*

雲亭先生四十三
肖象



癸亥仲夏嘉定金砭史頤



Photo of Jin Yunting at age forty-three

Calligraphy by Jin Bianshi of Jiading

The fifth month, guihai year [1923]



Calligraphy from the 1931 edition. It reads:

*The person without troubles does not recognize their prosperity;
When troubles arrive, then one begins to know the prosperity of being worry-free.
The body without sickness does not recognize its happiness;
When sickness arises, then one begins to know the happiness of being healthy.*

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

IT HAS BEEN ROUGHLY a decade since publication of *The Xingyi Boxing Manual: Hebei Style's Five Principles and Seven Words*. At the time, the simple and elegant format of that slim volume—containing the basic “songs” of Xingyi’s postures, the images and concepts associated with each element, and the guidelines for practice contained in the “seven words”—seemed like an obvious and essential choice for translation into English. Only several years later did I discover that this short book, published in 1931, was itself an excerpted version of *A Pictorial Explanation of Xingyi Five Element Boxing*, published one year earlier in 1930. This earlier, longer version contained almost all of the material in the 1931 edition, but also offered more detailed discussions of theory, and step-by-step instructions for performing the five elements, accompanied by numerous photos and line drawings. Despite having received widespread attention in Asia—it has been reprinted at least nine times by various presses in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China—the 1930 edition had yet to be rendered into English, and seemed even more deserving of widespread dissemination. Now, after a long interval, the English-speaking audience finally has the chance to enjoy this unique work.

The *Pictorial Explanation of Xingyi Five Element Boxing* is unique in several ways. First, it comes from a student of both Shang Yunxiang and Sun Lutang, themselves students of Li Cunyi and Guo Yunshen, respectively. This work then is certainly a distillation of the knowledge and experience of several of the major figures in the history of Xingyi boxing and, as such, deserves further study and contemplation. Second, it was born during the Qing/Republican Era transition when martial arts writings were undergoing a renaissance. From the theory section we learn that Jin Yunting and Li Jianqiu both moved south in the first year of the republic (1911–12), and from Wu Shulan’s foreword we see that Jin came to Shanghai in 1919. Ling Guiqing, who was in Shanghai, claims to have compiled the text for Jin, and many of the forewords and calligraphy are dated 1923, implying that the text was compiled sometime during a roughly twelve-year period, and probably in the latter five years, a few years after Sun Lutang’s own *Study of Xingyiquan* was published, and contemporaneous with Li Jianqiu’s *The Art of Xingyiquan* published in 1920. Thus, from a comparative standpoint it offers much to broaden our understanding of the art of Xingyiquan at that time. Third, despite the notable martial arts lineage and Jin’s obvious social and political connections (he lived at the residence of Sheng Xuanhuai, Minister of Transportation under the Qing and head of the Imperial Bank of China), we can determine little information about him, aside from what is in his biography herein. This translation helps to record the efforts of an obviously active and skilled practitioner, and may perhaps spur others to uncover more about Jin’s own subsequent lineage.

This revised and expanded edition of *The Xingyi Boxing Manual* contains all of the material from both the 1930 and 1931 editions, along with the biographies of masters added to the first English edition. Mistakes from the first English edition have been corrected—as have a few mistakes in the original Chinese—and the two editions have been combined with an eye to readability. Where necessary, minor edits of the source text have been made to enhance clarity of explanation. Notes are provided as needed to clarify a specific point, though I have sought to keep these to a minimum. All terms in the book are romanized according to the Pinyin system, and all Chinese names are written according to the Chinese system, i.e., last name first, with characters for the names of Xingyi practitioners following their first occurrence in the text. Certain terms, mostly related to Chinese medicine, have been left in Chinese for clarity’s sake, with accompanying references.

The material in this book represents the essential aspects of Xingyi practice as developed and refined over generations and, while not a substitute for a good teacher, it is an essential adjunct to any serious study of this art. As Cui Heqing states in his foreword: “When drinking water, one should ponder its source.” We should consider what is contained in these few pages and attempt to understand and analyze its meaning. The more clearly we can understand the classic texts, comparing their alternate versions and styles, the more easily we will be able to seek the subtleties of this profound art. It is my hope that this translation allows the true intent of *The Xingyi Boxing Manual* to be readily understood by the general Xingyi practitioner, and that it furthers the understanding of this art’s martial and healing aspects. I have done my utmost to translate these passages faithfully, clearly, and according to their original meaning. Any mistakes contained herein are entirely my own, and I welcome any comments or corrections.

John Groschwitz
Menlo Park, California
New Year’s Day 2013

FOREWORD BY VINCENT BLACK

I HAD BEEN LAID up for eight weeks with an internal bleeding injury acquired in training with an effective but inappropriate training partner. I spent those eight weeks recuperating and researching everything I could find an art that offered effective self-defense capabilities but structured so that I could benefit from the training without the need for a reliable training partner most of the time. When I was on my feet again, I went in search of a Xingyi instructor. Five years later I was teaching Xingyi and have continued for the last thirty-seven years. It is with this hindsight perspective that I can speak with some anecdotal authority and wholeheartedly endorse and affirm the veracity of those earlier testimonies of Master Jin's direct students regarding the profound and distinctive benefits from embracing this art to pursue physical cultivation. Aside from my own recoveries through training, I have witnessed similar occurrences many times with students over the past thirty-seven years.

My professional career as a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, a direct influence of my first Xingyi master Hsu Hong-Chi, over the years afforded me countless opportunities on a daily basis to observe the "method" at work and to come to more deeply appreciate the excellence of its "science." I can say that the common acknowledgment of Xingyi's ability to produce profound constitutional benefits that in the end "exceed expectations" is in the long view empirically validated and its promised benefits can be relied upon by the enthusiast.

One cannot help but notice the thread of decency that runs common through all the writings of the practitioners, which is an expression of the esteem they hold for each other. This is also associated with our practice. The necessity of martial ethics being considered an essential aspect in any interaction between practitioners is a matter of legend as well as historical fact: from the legendary founder Yue Fei to the historical hero Ji Jike and on through the next few centuries, Xingyi boxers arose in their times to set the moral post upright. The standard for moral ethics and martial virtue is expressed in the phrase "gentleman of heavenly calm and composure," which connotes a cultivated human being. It was considered equally important that one not only did well in achievement, but also equally as well in self-restraint and aversion to temptation of virtues. This has been one of the most attractive and gratifying aspects of my work over the last four decades.

The very nature of Xingyi training is more inwardly oriented than most other martial methods employing emphatic focus on breathing, prolonged static postures, and quick, adroit movements while in balance to produce smooth, effortless power. The mystery of this "balance" is explained in minute detail in several sections of the book, including the Essential Teachings on Yue Wumu's Xingyiquan. These discussions necessarily interweave the principles of classical Chinese cosmology and Chinese medicine theory and simultaneously infuse them into the boxing methodology itself. This speaks strongly to the holistic nature of the art that sets it apart from the plethora of the other available martial arts.

Master Jin was a master teacher, long in experience and understanding, as evinced in his tendency at the end of a long, detailed discussion to close with some wise caveat that addresses typical pitfalls in training that are common to all acolytes due to basic human nature. In his explanation of the nine essential teachings he provides an overall construct of the method itself, which serves to "decode" abstruse or sublime concepts and subsequently sheds new light on and further clarifies images and meanings of other Xingyi sayings or mottoes. Mr. Groschwitz has produced a wonderful contribution for those of us who passionately pursue the art but cannot speak Chinese. Master Jin has afforded us all a opportunity to peer more deeply into the internal experience through his comprehensive detailing of the

process from multiple perspectives. I have been working with Mr. Groschwitz and many senior masters of Xingyi for twenty years and watching this work in progress for the last ten years and I see that through his prodigious efforts this edition of *The Xingyi Boxing Manual* is a milestone contribution that will revive anew the propagation of an ancient art that is not necessarily an easy fit in this fast-paced action-filled world we presently live in. Perhaps Master Jin's profound words will reach out and touch more of the uninitiated public, so that they are then drawn to and subsequently inspired to undertake the pursuit of the internal method in this unique and dynamic art.

In spirit with Sheng Jun and all the devotees of this tradition, I look forward to a wide dissemination of this publication and to the "unexpected results" for all our future practitioners. With sincerity and humility I add these few words.

Written the seventh month of 2010

Vincent Black of Tucson, Arizona

Sixty-three years of age

[Preface to the 1930 edition]

THIS BOOK SPRINGS FROM the observations and guidance of Jin Yunting of Wuqiao. Although the compiler can awkwardly explain to practitioners each action and each movement of Xingyiquan's hand methods and stepping patterns, illustrated explanations of the subtleties can immediately lead to understanding; those without an instructor can become proficient as if following a master, while those who follow a master in practice can gain even more insight when reading it.

When studying boxing arts without a master as a guide, although one can practice following the photos, not all postures and movements can be correct. Therefore "postural corrections" and "rhyme songs" have been added after the illustrated explanations for each sequence in this book, to aid students in reaching some understanding through contemplation and recitation. Furthermore, photographs of Master Jin Yunting himself demonstrating important postures have been inserted among the illustrations to serve as a model.

This book is divided into two parts. The first part contains general theory relating to and recounting the origins of Xingyiquan, its content, and its application. The second part contains the boxing manual and the rhyme songs.

One name for this boxing style is Form Intention Five Element Boxing, and it is the initial level after entering the Wudang school. Its effects are similar to those of Springy Legs of the Shaolin school. Those things that develop from the transformations of the five elements include Five Element Connected Links, Twelve Shapes Two-Person Boxing, Five Element Creative/Destructive Boxing, and many others. These are all called Xingyi. The purpose of this book is to explore the fundamentals and to seek their origin, and so it compiles only the one category of the five elements; additional publications for each of the other categories of boxing also should be undertaken.

In order for this boxing manual to allow the reader to clearly understand without faltering, each action and each movement has been laid out in illustrations but, in actuality, when practicing these must be unceasing and connected, before and after simultaneously, and cannot be ponderous and repeatedly halting as in the pictures. Students must feel this.

Although this book was compiled painstakingly, seeking the essence, and sent to press only after the corrections of several people, it is unavoidable to still have errors and omissions, and I pray that wise people throughout the country will provide comments and corrections for this work.

FOREWORD BY SHENG JUN

ASIDE FROM THE CULTIVATION of virtue and the cultivation of wisdom, I also value the cultivation of the body. There are many paths to cultivation of the body, but if you are seeking one that is simple and suitable for all ages, there is none like Xingyi boxing, because this art specifically takes *qi* cultivation as its foundation. Splitting, Smashing, Drilling, Pounding, and Crossing correspond to metal, wood, water, fire, and earth and divide externally into the five postures. Internally they fill the five organs and are the natural, profound way to health. Now Jin Yunting of Wuqiao is using these illustrations to demonstrate clearly, at great advantage to later generations, how easy it is! I began studying this art with Mr. Jin Yunting during the winter of the *xinyou* year [1921], and in less than twenty months I already feel that my body is strong and healthy through its [Xingyi's] exceptional protective benefits. I greatly look forward to the publishing and wide dissemination of this book, and cannot control my fervent wishes that numerous future students may research this physical cultivation and enter onto this right path.

Written the fifth month, *guihai* year [1921]

Sheng Jun (盛鈞), style name Weichen (蔚岑), of Wu County

Sixty-three years of age

AFTER THE REFORMS OF the *xinhai* year [the 1911 revolution], I moved to Shanghai to teach at the residence of Guardian¹ Sheng. There I met Mr. Jin Yunting of Wuqiao, who told me he had come from the north and was skilled in martial arts. I had no experience with this art, and my nature was not one to be drawn to these things, so I dismissed this and put it behind me. Now Mr. Wu Dicheng, style name Zhiting, and Mr. Lü Zibin both had stiff, weak bodies, but after studying for just more than one year, each felt that his body and qi were both truly changed. Because Dicheng and the others all realized Xingyi's efficacious nature, they recommended it to Mr. Cui Heqing. When his chronic asthma and exhausted body began to heal, he hastened his efforts and, in less than a year, all of his maladies had disappeared.

I found this quite remarkable and said to our teacher that he was not only good at fighting arts, but also skilled in healing arts. In answer, our teacher lectured us, saying:

All of the martial arts in the world originated with Damo. Yue Wumu² of the Song Dynasty looked back to and combined the essence of the two classics written by Damo—the *Muscle-Tendon Changing Classic* and the *Marrow-Washing Classic*—to create Xingyi boxing. No matter whether you look at it straightforward or roundabout, complicated or confused, it all comes down to using the intention to create form, and using form to create qi. This is the essence of what I have learned.

When I was young I engaged in business, and my body became weak and I had many illnesses. I was told that if I could obtain the teachings of Xingyi boxing, I could eradicate this weakness and illness, so I began searching for a teacher. Now, while those who are skilled in Shaolin or Wudang arts are numerous, very few are skilled at Xingyi. Those who do know, if they are not arrogant, are tight-lipped, so I traveled around and around until I finally reached the two masters, Shang Yunxiang of Leling County and Sun Lutang of Wanping County, under whose guidance I traveled for more than ten years. I was able to glimpse their art, and although my own art is still not refined, my body is now without maladies.

I tell people that what I say to them is not deception. In fact, there is nothing outside the cultivation of qi. If you can nurture qi, your mind will be calm, you will be what people call “a gentleman of heavenly calm and composure,” and your body will have no place for sickness. You say that I am skilled in the healing arts, but I dare not claim so.

I say that this is just my teacher's modesty and that, in fact, his words are a true understanding of the *Dao*, for though I have been associated with him for only several months, I feel that I am flourishing in my everyday life. Now our teacher has followed the requests of his compatriots to publish this volume. I present what I have heard and seen, briefly recounting it here as an addendum to the forewords of the other gentlemen. As for the illustrations and discussions, we have our teacher's original text, so I won't reiterate those here.

The eighth month, *guihai* year [192

Zheng Guangzhao (鄭光照), style name Yicang (逸蒼), of Wuji

Penned at the Yuzhai Study, Shanghai

FOREWORD BY SHENG YULIN

XINGYI BOXING IS ALSO called *Wuxing*³ boxing and follows the principles of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth; heart, liver, spleen, lungs, kidneys [*sic*]; *yin* and *yang*; and movement and stillness. Not only is it an exceptional fighting art, but it also strengthens tendons and bones and enlivens the blood and vessels. Formerly I was plump and my movements hindered. Mr. Jin has trained me for two winters and two summers without cease, and I now feel that my spirit is lively and my gait light and easy, proving that this boxing art has endless advantage for people in terms of physical cultivation. It should be regarded by all people as a great treasure. I submit these few words of record as accompaniment to the text.

Sheng Yulin (盛玉馨) of Wujiaochang

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