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Method of hand-to-hand combat training by Chinese general Qi Jiguang (XVI century) / Metoda treningu walki wręcz według chińskiego generała Qi Jiguang (XVI wiek)

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It is a historical fact that since the most ancient times in China there was a method of training to the impellent actions, allowing to prepare armies for operations in 3–10 days. The method allowed to prepare an army for military operations in the shortest possible time. It was used by many but the main military-pedagogical idea which had incorporated all previous experiences and the basic principles characteristic for the East was established by one man. Thus, it is necessary to name the technique after general Qi Jiguang (1528–1587), as he is described in “The new collection of instructive examples” (Ji Xiao Xin Shu). The technique of training consists in consecutive performance of 32 movements of hand-to-hand combat, each of which was supposed to be the perception of a quatrian and visualization of a symbol. The movement and the symbol were described in the quatrian.

The global scientific community was astonished by the fact of the accelerated mass preparation of armies in China a hundred years ago. Russian psychologist Vladimir M. Bekhterev, having been acquainted with the activity of insurgents of “boxing revolt” (Yi-he-tuan) in China, wrote (1903) about mechanisms of their accelerated psychophysical preparation, in particular about “mental infection”, “mental epidemic”, a method of “suggestion”, “to a hysteria and hypnosis”. He specified: “The various groups of allied and Russian armies had not had necessary time to meet separate gangs in which there were a great number of girls and young men, completely unaided, wagging with the multi-coloured banners. The first volleys ordinarily mowed down these numbers, but that from Yi-he-tuan who remained as a whole, came back from battle with the greater belief in the invulnerability and became a subject of worship for others; killed and wounded men were considered insufficiently «educated». Speed with which the Yi-he-tuan doctrine was spreading amongst people, is noteworthy...” [Бехтерев 1903].

The history has informed us that since the most ancient times in China there were techniques of training to the impellent actions, allowing to prepare armies for operations in 3–10 days [Yi-he-tuan 1955; Абаев 1984; Xi Yuntai 1985; Костяева 1995; Воронов 1996–2006 etc.].

According to the description of eyewitnesses, training the soldier with this technique looked as follows: “Shi-fu (instructors-commanders) forced recruits to recite the texts comprising till 8–20 of hieroglyphs, holding eyes closed. Then recruits lay down on the ground beside and after a while jumped, crying out a name and a surname of heroes of ancient dynasties. After that they started to carry out martial movements, coming nearer to each other. Some of them held bamboo sticks, peaks or halberds, or swords and sabres in their hands. Then having dissipated on mountain passes and gorges, they behaved violently, overturning all upside down... For the tenth day of preparation, after the beginning of employment they lay down on the back, then blindly rose and started to jump and gesticulate... When the complex came to an end, they approached to

the commander and addressed: »Lao shi-fu! (General instructors-commanders!) Ask the sanction to come back«. And they got out of the trance (in which they had spent ten days of training, being in a condition of a mental embodiment as one of the heroes of past battles, came back to the normal condition). After that they did not lie down any more on the back and did not close eyes. It was necessary for them to repeat the spell only once, they could perform that hour movements of hand-to-hand fight, the body became flexible, and jumps high, training these movements appeared more effective than in case of teenagers” [Yi-he-tuan 1955].

The techniques allowed to prepare an army for operations in the shortest possible time. The central, military-pedagogical idea which have incorporated all previous experiences and basic principles characteristic for the East comes from one man. Thus, it is necessary to name the technique after general Qi Jiguang (1528–1587), as he is described in the treatise “The new collection of instructive examples” (Zi xiao xin shu) [Xi Yuntai 1985; Си Юньтай 1985; Воронов 1996–2006; Гу Люсинь 1998; Sang H. Kim 2002, etc.]

In China the Manchurian dynasty of Mines started ruling in 1368. After long centuries of infinite changes of dynasties-favourites, a dynasty comes to power which does not attempt to impose any ideology or culture, but tries “to recreate and restore” all Chinese traditions, bearing



Fig. 1. Qi Jiguang (1528–1587) /
Ryc. 1. Qi Jiguang (1528–1587)

in mind that the best of them could strengthen the country with a huge territory – uniform culture, uniform categories of values, uniform education system basing it on traditional pedagogy. But only externally, and primordially Chinese culture has been put outside of the law! Externally everything looked decent, a special authority on a society “employees” (shi) again revived, as during the epoch of Three Empires (220–280), a fashion for “military” (wu) training, but in practice everything was different: all posts of management were held by Manchurians, the Chinese culture gradually fell into decay...

The Manchurian army consisted of three divisions - two Manchurian ones a Chinese one. The Chinese division, number of 32 thousand person, referred to “Wu Zhen Choha Guza” (the Military Chinese Great Division) and completely consisted of Chinese [Леонтиев 1781–1783].

The commander of the Chinese division was appointed general Qi Jiguang (Fig. 1) in second half of 16th century. In the beginning the division under his command became famous in the battle against the Japanese smugglers in the south of Celestial when Qi Jiguang got acquainted with the Japanese fencing and the Japanese sabres (jap. katana). The general Qi Jiguang armed his soldiers with the trophies – Japanese weapon and trained them in fencing (Fig. 2) with the Japanese sabres (chin. miao-dao).

The Chinese division was relocated to the north for fighting against nomads, after the victory over the Japanese smugglers in the south. Qi Jiguang here again fulfilled his duty in such a manner that up to the middle of the 17th century the Celestial border was not at all an object of desires of the adjacent states.

Qi Jiguang wrote a set of treatises, but the best known of them is “The new collection of instructive examples” (Цзи сяо синь шу). Here all experience of military-pedagogical idea of China was collected.

Why the pedagogical technology of general Qi Jiguang accepted the form of 32 quatrians, till now has not found the unequivocal explanation.



Fig. 2. Figure from the Chinese manual on fight with the Japanese sabres of 16th century /
Ryc. 2. Rysunek z chińskiego podręcznika szermierki japońskimi szablami z XVI wieku

Essence and contents of pedagogical technology of general Qi Jiguang

The essence of technology of training of general Qi Jiguang consists in carrying out a monastic system of military-physical and psychological preparation of the armies in China with its rich military-historical past, in conditions of the state army with the purpose of realizing the accelerated mass preparation of soldiers for performance in problematic situations in order to “strengthen the body, suppress treachery and consolidate the state” as they were designated by Qi Jiguang [Xi Yuntai 1985].

In the language of modern military pedagogy and psychology the main tasks of pedagogical technology of general Qi were “physical, moral and psychological preparation and professional training”.

In those days in the army of Median Empire daily studying of military science until soldiers were losing their consciousness was provided unceasing during all day and after sunset. Contrary to expectations, such physically heavy system of trainings inspired the soldier - they studied military science with huge interest, – it is underlined in “The History of the Chinese Fighting Arts” [Xi Yuntai 1985]. The medieval treatise “Training of Army in Real Conditions” confirms it: “Decline, all have gone away in favourite places and habitually study military art (wu-yi), riding (ma), fulfil [specifications on] to clothing of an armour (pi-jia). And so until the loss of consciousness.... [Soldiers] are ready to carry out a principle in every possible way: for one month – the professional, all sort sing you praise. The sort (zhung) to study with the teacher (jiao-shi), being placed [during employment] on the right and on the left, a daily feed at leisure, any entertainments, employment are conducted only by one teacher as a rule, for entertainments they use a special place and it is not superfluous to have one more platform for independent work and polishing of skill in military art (wu-yi)” [Xi Yuntai 1985].

The contents of soldier's training is described in “The History of the Chinese Fighting Arts” by Xi Yuntai (1985): “Education (jiao-yu) the soldier passed in close interrelation with military (lian-wu), physical (fang-shen) and moral (li-gong) preparations”. The last also represented a new type of mutual relations between the commander-trainee and the soldier-trained; the creative opportunity having been given to the commander to suit the teaching and educational process and now the third division of Manchurian army “Wu Zhen Choha Guza”, completely consisting of Chinese that refers to, “intensive made up missed” – recreated the traditional system of the Chinese military training: commander Qi Jiguang offered precise technology of the ancient concept of training in the “The new collection of instructive examples”.



Fig. 3. 32 movements of hand-to-hand fight from “The new collection of instructive examples” (Ji Xiao Xin Shu) by general Qi Jiguang / Ryc. 3. 32 pozycje walki wręcz z “Nowego zbioru pouczających przykładów” (Ji Xiao Xin Shu) według generała Qi Jiguang

General Qi founded the ancient concept of preparation of soldiers on the basis of the **mind-body exercises** technique: a pronunciation of sound-resonant lines, meditation on symbols and, naturally, physical exercises in the form of fighting movements.

The technology of training consists in consecutive performance of 32 movements кулачного fight (fig. 3), each of which was supposed to be the perception of a quatrain and the visualization of a symbol. The movement and the symbol were described in the quatrain.

It is possible to explain psycho-physiological mechanisms of such a technology hypothetically as follows: the quatrain represents a specific sound-resonant line which, while listening to, reaches certain centers of the nervous system of a person. Representation of symbols strengthens excitation. And performance of fighting movements, by a principle segmentary innervation, makes motor nervous cells of a spinal cord active. Being excited, during the performance of one **mind-body exercises**, the nervous centers represent a uniform innervation complex. Consecutive performance of 32 movements in a series raises such 32 innervation complex. This sequence coincides with a sequence of nervous pulses carried vertically on a spinal cord. Thus, during training not only “horizontal” communications of a segment-muscle, but also “vertical” communications were built up, where all segments of a spinal cord and the big group of nucleus in the brain are engaged. Especially those nuclei which make up the most basic nervous formations of the brain: visual, acoustical, speech and impellent [Penfield, Roberts 1959].

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STRESZCZENIE

Jest historycznym faktem, że od najdawniejszych czasów istniała w Chinach technika pozwalająca na przygotowanie armii do działań wojennych w ciągu 3 do 10 dni. Chociaż powszechnie jej używano, człowiekiem, który sformułował główną myśl militarno-pedagogiczną tej techniki, obejmującą wcześniejsze doświadczenia i opartą na zasadach obowiązujących na całym Wschodzie, był generał Qi Jiguang, jak to zostało opisane w „Nowym zbiorze pouczających przykładów” (Ji Xiao Xin Shu). Technika ta polega na kolejnym wykonywaniu sekwencji 32 ruchów, będących wizualizacjami pewnych symboli. Zarówno ruchy, jak i symbole są precyzyjnie opisane.

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