

# Research on Wushu Culture in Shanxi Area -- Taking Xingyiquan as an Example

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**Abstract:** Shanxi has a tradition of martial arts since ancient times, and Shanxi martial arts occupies an important position in China and the world. Xingyiquan is an important part of Shanxi martial arts. It is popular in Pingyao, Taigu, Qixian, Yuci and other places. It not only protects the lives and property of the local people, but also sets off a martial arts atmosphere in the local area and promotes the prosperity of martial arts culture in Shanxi.

**Keywords:** Shanxi; Wushu; Culture; Xingyiquan

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## 1. The cause of the rise of

### 1.1 Internal conditions

The perfection of boxing. The boxing principle of Xingyi Boxing is “to take the meaning from the form, to take the image form, to turn the form at will, and to take the meaning from the form.” At the beginning of the creation of Xingyi Quan, shape and meaning can not be well combined, the name is not true. Cheshimen artificially changed this situation and named many movements in order to make Xingyi Boxing worthy of its name, which fully embodies the essence of Xingyi Boxing. Such as Kuixing style, also known as oolong pour water; Step-by-step horizontal boxing, also known as oolong over the river; Bump boxing cross kick, also known as dragon and tiger intersection. The perfection of boxing theory has laid a theoretical foundation for the development of Xingyiquan.

Improvements in practice. In view of the traditional practice method of “emphasizing the inside but not the outside, emphasizing the spirit but not the shape, and emphasizing the cost but not the end”, Che proposed that Xingyi Boxing should not only have the inside but also the shape, both nourishing and training, both fighting and defending. The so-called inner meaning and shape of equal emphasis means not only to pay attention to the shape and pace of boxing, but more importantly, to take the lead. The equal emphasis on nourishing qi and practicing qi means not only to keep the abdomen and form a true qi in the body, but also to let the mind slowly leave the abdomen and let the heat in the body circulate in the blood so as to achieve the strength of qi. Attaching equal importance to fighting and defense means that we should attach equal importance to attack and defense at the same time. The new practice method not only attaches importance to shape, but also makes Xingyi Boxing attach importance to the cultivation of qi, so that it can be practiced both inside and outside. Xingyi Boxing has become a profound boxing method with equal emphasis on both inside and outside, shape and spirit, attack and defense.

Enrichment in content. The traditional boxing method is twelve shapes, each shape has a set of boxing methods, although it is quite distinctive, but a wide variety, inconvenient to learn, for the spread of Xingyi boxing produced obstacles. For this reason, Che and his fellow goalkeeper took only one of the original twelve-shaped boxing methods and created a new type of Xingyi Boxing, also known as Che’s Xingyi Boxing. The new style Xingyi Quan is not only beautiful in appearance, but also powerful, easy to learn and widely spread. According to records: The Xingyiquan in Taigu area, represented by Che Shui Hong, has continuously innovated and formed a unique car-style Xingyiquan method. Spread more than 40 cities and counties in the province and Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Northeast and Beijing, Tianjin and other places. Overseas spread to Brazil, Japan, Guatemala. It can be seen that the establishment of Che’s Xingyiquan has played a great role in promoting the development of Xingyiquan.

Improvements in boxing. Che’s Xingyi Boxing improves the traditional Wuxing Shengke Boxing. It aims at standing boxing,

uses both fists and palms, and creates simple routines, such as “advance and retreat serial style” and “miscellaneous hammer style. During the period from Tongzhi to Guangxu in the Qing Dynasty, he also created “yin and yang handle”, “circuitous step” and “walking instead of walking” and other techniques and footwork. In the early years of Guangxu, Che Yizhai and his disciple Li Fuzhen successively created 10 combat routines including five fireworks, which not only strengthened the attack power of Xingyi Boxing, but also strengthened the defense capability of Xingyi Boxing. Twenty years after Guangxu, Che Yizhai created the “six-gun idea” and “split knife” and other fighting routines, and the Xingyi boxing system is becoming more and more perfect. According to records, Xingyi Boxing takes five elements of boxing and twelve-shaped boxing as the basic boxing methods. The boxing routines include five elements of serial boxing, miscellaneous hammers, eight-character skills, etc., and the training routines include five elements of raw grams, five fireworks, nine rings, etc. The content is basically the same as the skills created by the car style. It can be seen that the improvement of the car style to the Xingyi boxing method has promoted the formation of the basic system of Xingyi boxing.

Improvements in skills. With the increasingly complete theory and boxing methods, Xingyi Boxing can not be understood by people if it only stays in theory and self-training. Only through practice can it be accepted by people. According to records, Che Yizhai had profound martial arts and defeated the Japanese in Tianjin with the skill of throughput and avoidance. Later, the Japanese wanted to worship him as a teacher and were rejected by Che Yizhai. In recognition of the achievements of Che Yizhai, the Qing government awarded him the position of five rank. After Che’s death, the villagers erected a monument to Che Yizhai in his hometown. The story of Che Yizhai has been widely circulated and talked about. Because of his success, Xingyiquan has also been widely circulated, attracting more people to learn.

## 1.2 External conditions

Superior natural geographical environment. Jinzhong area is located in the central zone of Shanxi Province, connected to the Taihang Mountains to the east, adjacent to the Fenhe River to the west, the provincial capital Taiyuan to the north, and the Linfen Basin to the south. It is very rich. The climate is temperate continental monsoon climate, dry and windy in spring, hot and rainy in summer, cool in autumn, cold in winter but less snowfall. The fertile soil and suitable climate make the local agriculture and commerce flourish rapidly, meet people’s material needs, and lay the foundation for the formation and development of Xingyiquan.

Love the tradition of martial arts. Shanxi people have been very fond of martial arts since ancient times. Gai Nie, a native of Nie Village in Yuci, Shanxi, was a famous assassin during the Warring States Period. He was famous for his swordsmanship among the princes. At that time, Jing Ke had discussed swords with him. Lian Po in the Warring States period, Huo Qubing in the Western Han Dynasty, Guan Yunchang in the Three Kingdoms period, and Yang Ye in the Song Dynasty were all famous generals in Shanxi, and their martial arts were handed down from generation to generation. After the Song Dynasty, martial arts gradually popularized. In the Yuan Dynasty, the combination of martial arts and Yuan Zaju had a good effect. In the tombs of the Yuan Dynasty found in Wuling Village, Xinjiang County, Shanxi Province, the door of the tombs is engraved with martial arts wearing short fights, indicating that martial arts had entered the lives of the people during the Yuan Dynasty and became more and more common. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Shanxi’s martial arts were more prosperous, and the government and the private went hand in hand. According to records, in the 17th year of Jiajing in the Ming Dynasty, Zhongkui, the magistrate of Lingshi County, built a martial arts exercise field (covering an area of more than three mu and five tiled houses) at the foot of Qingliang Temple Mountain in the northeast of the county. It can be seen that the official attached great importance to the development of martial arts at that time. The same is true of civil society. At that time, Shanxi’s private martial arts were divided into seven types. One was the traditional teacher-apprentice professor, the other was the escort agency practicing martial arts and darts, the third was the school practicing martial arts to obtain fame, the fourth was the rich guard training, the fifth was the government service learning martial arts to arrest prisoners, the sixth was the Jianghu performing martial arts to make money, and the seventh was the temple practicing martial arts to keep fit. It can be seen that the folk martial arts at that time were of various types and wide range.

The rise of Jin merchants and the escort agency. Before the emergence of Shanxi ticket number, most of the transactions were carried out in metal currency, metal currency is very heavy, inconvenient to carry, short-distance transactions are still possible, but if you encounter long-distance transactions, extremely inconvenient. After the rise of Shanxi merchants, their business areas not only involve domestic and foreign places, but also as far as Europe. For long-distance transactions, it is difficult to guarantee the safety of goods and the safety of merchants’ lives and property. For this reason, many businessmen employ martial arts masters as their bodyguards to protect their personal safety. Many martial arts practitioners have employment opportunities, and the escort agency industry was born, and gradually formed a business model of “raising darts with business and protecting business with darts. Since

then, escort agencies have been set up everywhere. Heart boxing master Dai Longbang has set up Guangsheng Escort Agency in Hebei, Henan, Inner Mongolia and other places. Gong Liquan master An Jinyuan set up Sanhe Escort Agency in Zhangjiakou, Hebei. Zuo Changde, famous for his Mianzhang and Tan Leg, set up Changlong Escort Agency in Suzhou. The Escort Agency industry is unprecedentedly prosperous. With the rise of the escort agency, many people who study martial arts have joined the escort agency. Those who have not learned martial arts have also learned martial arts.

In addition, due to social unrest, bandits are rampant, and many Shanxi merchants are often faced with the situation of being robbed. In order to avoid property losses, but also to ensure the safety of life, Shanxi merchants often hire famous local martial arts masters to look after the home and guard the home, and treat them with courtesy. The martial arts masters also take the opportunity to promote martial arts, Guangdamei. At that time, the Taigu Cao family hired many martial arts masters to specialize in guarding the home. In 1900, the Cao family had 500 soldiers, divided into southeast two games. The East Bureau was located in Miaoju An in Beiguang Village, Taigu County, headed by a local Xingyi Quan master; the South Bureau was located in the Cao Family Courtyard, headed by Yuan Zhitian.

## **2. Development process**

### **2.1 Embryonic stage**

Xingyi Quan was not called Xingyi Quan at first, but “Liuhe Quan”, “Xinyi Quan” and “Liuhe Xinyi Quan”. It was created by Ji Longfeng, a martial arts master in the late Ming Dynasty, about 300 years ago. Since Xinyiquan was founded by Ji Longfeng in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, it has spread to Henan, Hebei and other places, and gradually formed three major schools, namely: Henan Luoyang Ma Pai Xinyiquan, Shanxi Qixian Xinyiquan, Sichuan Jinjia Xinyiquan. In addition to the three major schools, Dai Longbang, on the basis of the original Xinyiquan, created the “Dai-style Xinyiquan” that “only passes on the Dai family, not outsiders”. It was not until the 16th year of Daoguang in the Qing Dynasty that the Dai family was allowed to pass the Xinyiquan to outsiders. At this time, the Xinyiquan is still immature and in its infancy, focusing on the inner and not on the outer shape. This stage of the heart boxing method is mainly divided into five parts, the first part is pile work; the second part is the main boxing; the third part is the Italian boxing; the fourth part is the pictographic boxing; the fifth part is the single practice routine.

### **2.2 Founding Period**

In the 16th year of Daoguang, Li Luo came to Xiaohan Village in Qixian County, Shanxi Province to learn “Dai’s Heart Boxing” and sell his property. He wanted to worship Dai Erlu, the descendant of Dai’s Heart Boxing, as his teacher. Dai Erlu rejected Li Luoneng’s request for apprenticing under the pretext that “Dai’s heart fist” was only passed on to his own people and not to foreigners. Li Luoneng did not give up the idea of learning boxing. Instead, he planted land in the vegetable garden near Dai’s house and delivered free vegetables to Dai’s house every day for three years. Finally, Dai Erlu’s mother was moved. Dai Erlu’s mother asked Dai Erlu to teach Li Luo to be able to boxing. Limited to the consideration of family rules, Dai Erlu only taught Liluo to pile and collapse boxing. After Dai Erlu’s mother passed her life, Dai’s mother ordered her son to accept Liluo as an apprentice. Since then, Dai Jiaquan’s rule of “only passing on inside, not outside” has been broken.

In the twenty-ninth year of Daoguang, Taigu Confucian merchants hired Li Luo to guard their homes. Meng Ruo is a businessman with culture. He thinks that “heart” and “meaning” should be integrated. They both refer to people’s inner thoughts, while “shape” refers to the external image of the body. Only by combining “shape” and “meaning” can we reach the highest level of martial arts. Li Luoneng thought that Li Luoneng’s explanation was very reasonable, so he changed Xinyiquan to Xingyi Quan, and Xingyi Quan was formally established.

By chance, Li Luo was able to see the action of the workers in Huayinpu to cut the silver ingot, and was inspired, so he changed the lunge of Xinyiquan to the “half horse step” of Xingyi Quan, and integrated the original body method into it. Finally, the three-body style of Xingyi Quan was formed, that is, the current three-body pile. Later, Li Luoneng and his disciples founded the “Five Elements Chain” and “Five Elements Cannon”, and the martial arts system of Xingyi Quan was basically formed.

### **2.3 Development and prosperity period**

After Li Luo was able to return to Hebei, he taught Xingyi Quan in Hebei Province. Under the guidance of Meng, his disciple Che Yi Zhai not only perfected the theory of Xingyi Boxing, but also perfected the practice and boxing methods. Xingyi Boxing is becoming more and more prosperous, mainly as follows:

(1) The door is broken. Xingyi Boxing used to be handed down from father to son, with men not women, and was relatively closed. During the period of the Republic of China, the traditional door-to-door view was gradually broken, and the way of inheritance

was transformed from closed to open. As long as the conduct was correct, no matter whether it was male or female, no matter what school, no matter what race, you can learn.

(2) The mode of communication is becoming more and more extensive. In 1918, Taigu County set up a sports association, with Fu Xuekuan, a master of Xingyi Boxing, teaching martial arts and boxing to the local people. In 1934, Taigu Mingxian Middle School set up a martial arts class, with Bu Xuekuan as the teacher, teaching students Xingyi boxing, and training a number of Xingyi boxing masters such as Brazilian master Wu Chaoxiang and Guatemalan master Li Yingang. In 1937, in order to better promote boxing and improve the self-defense ability of the masses, Taigu County established 75 martial arts promotion stations with a total of 1500 people.

(3) Frequent non-governmental competitive exchanges. Xingyiquan is called “tearing” and “naughty boxing” in the folk of Taigu County, that is, communication is not only not afraid of being seen, but likes to be seen. The exchange of boxing skills between the same door and foreign land is very frequent. Every year on the fifteenth day of the first month, there are Xingyi Boxing in Taigu County’s performances, which have lasted for decades. Many learners and masters of Xingyiquan have signed up to show their skills and increase their popularity, which has become a local event in Taigu.

(4) The content and theory are gradually enriched. Content: On the basis of the original Xingyi Boxing, Li Sanyuan added the contents of medullary meridian washing, leg work exercises, long and short instruments, etc., and created the “Comprehensive Xingyi Boxing”. As the name implies, comprehensive Xingyi Boxing not only has boxing methods, but also contains the strengths of each family. It integrates the essence of several martial arts. It is what we usually call “superior martial arts”. Theory: The increasing development of martial arts skills has put forward new requirements for theoretical research. For this reason, many literati have made in-depth research on Xingyiquan and compiled many works, such as “Transcript of Li Guangheng” and “Transcript of Bu Xuekuan”. The enrichment and perfection of the content and discussion is not only an important reason for the prosperity of Xingyiquan, but also an important manifestation of its prosperity.

### **3. Cultural value**

#### **3.1 Etiquette**

In the teaching of Xingyi Boxing, there are strict regulations, that is, three religions, three non-teaching, three passing on three righteous services, six non-teaching, and three religions, which refer to filial piety, loyalty and faith that can be taught. Those who are just and soft can teach. Those who are well-advised can teach. Three don’t teach, means thieves can’t teach; Stupid people can’t teach; People who are heartless and unjust can’t teach. Three biography means that people who are dedicated to the country and the people can pass it on. People who respect teachers and respect Taoism can pass it on. People with benevolence and righteousness can pass it on. The three righteousness means that those who learn Xingyi Boxing should safeguard justice, help the weak and unite with the same family. Six not to pass on means that those who do not respect their masters and ancestors should not be taught; those who do wrong should not be taught; those who are ungrateful should not be taught; those who mutilate and deceive their friends should not be taught; those who are lazy and cowardly should not be taught; and those who are stupid and cunning should not be taught. The inheritance regulations of Xingyiquan are the concentrated expression of Chinese culture’s benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, trust, loyalty, filial piety and righteousness. It has profound cultural connotations and is of great benefit to the current life and work.

#### **3.2 Martial arts culture**

In Xingyiquan culture, martial arts culture is an indispensable part. Few of those who learn Xingyi boxing do evil, and most of them are chivalrous and do harm to the people. During the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China, a gangster in Taigu, Pingyao and Yuci did all kinds of evil, and the government ordered him to be arrested without any result. By chance, this gangster took advantage of the Jiajiapu temple fair to come out again to do evil, break into the house and rape women. Xingyiquan master Li Fuzhen arrived in time, captured him and sent him to the government for criminal treatment. The local people praised him one after another.

#### **3.3 The philosophy of “harmony between man and nature”**

The ancient Chinese thinkers Laozi and Confucius once put forward the idea of “the unity of man and nature”. Chinese martial arts and traditional Chinese medicine also strive to pursue the highest state of “the unity of man and nature. The same is true of Xingyi Boxing. From the perspective of health preservation, Xingyiquan believes that the human body is a small world, and the universe is naturally a big world. Only by combining the small world with the big world, and achieving “the unity of man and nature”, can we achieve the effect of strengthening the body. From the perspective of fighting, the style of Xingyi Boxing is to combine the upper,

middle and lower parts of the body, that is, the combination of heaven, earth and man, in order to achieve “the unity of man and nature” and exert its maximum attack power. Learning Xingyi Boxing can unify one’s mind outside, so as to achieve the effect of “harmony between man and nature.”

### **3.4 Home country feelings**

Learners of Xingyi Quan usually combine practicing boxing with defending their country. In the 26th year of Guangxu’s reign, the Eight-Power Allied Forces fought in Tianjin. Li Cunyi, the master of Xingyiquan, led his disciples to attack Laolongtou Railway Station in Tianjin and killed the Russian soldiers on guard. In the 7th year of the Republic of China, Li Cunyi assisted Han Mu chivalrous in Beijing Six Nations Hotel to defeat Russian Lux, and Xingyi Quan became famous all over the world. In 1938, the Japanese army occupied Taigu. In order to strengthen the management of the county, they formed a security regiment and lobbied Song Tielin, the master of Xingyi Boxing, to ask him to take an important position. Song Tielin sternly refused. The disciple of Liu Jian, the master of Xingyi Quan, once set up a monument for Che Yonghong to defeat the Japanese samurai. The monument contains the words “Japanese pirates are defeated and their colors are depressed. After the Japanese occupation of Taigu, they learned of the incident and were ready to smash the monument. The Japanese army arrested Liu Jian and forced him to hand over the monument. Liu Jian vowed to protect it to the death. After the bail of a friend, was released. After his release from prison, Liu Jian continued to teach his skills.

### **Conclusion**

Xingyiquan is the treasure of Chinese martial arts culture and the crystallization of the excellent culture of the Chinese nation. Although science and technology are now so advanced, more and more advanced weapons, but more important in modern warfare is not weapons, but people. Learning Xingyiquan can appreciate the ancient philosophy, Shanxi merchant culture, martial arts culture and patriotism, strengthen the body, establish the feelings of family and country, enhance national cohesion and improve the sense of national identity. We should further carry forward Xingyiquan, constantly innovate, make it keep pace with the times, and make it play its unique light in the new era.

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