

A PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WUSHU ATHLETE
INCLUDING A TECHNICAL MANUAL OF THE NOVICE SKILLS
BY
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1990

This paper was given as a major paper towards the completion of a Master of Physical Education degree. It was done before the development of the new duan ranking program in China, so the routines examined are those from the older system. The basic techniques required for the lower levels have probably not changed that much, but I need to take a look at them to update this paper. Due to the limitations of the old computer, the pdf of this paper does not include the original drawings and tables.

Until I manage to do an update, I hope that this will help wushu coaches analyse what, why, and how they coach.

Andrea Falk, April 15, 2004

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is intended as the preliminary step in the development of a wushu teaching and training program. Currently there are neither established progressions nor objectives in wushu clubs throughout Canada. This paper is an attempt to fill this need, and is in two parts. The first is a plan for a complete teaching program. An outline has been developed for an overall program, with suggested objectives for each level of achievement. The second is an in depth analysis of the wushu skills in the first level of the program. The novice level has been described in more depth, both as a suggested technical manual for the level, and as a blueprint for the development of technical requirements for the higher levels. The contents of the novice level can be made into a technical manual in line with the National Coaching Certification Program by creating a more readable format, such as putting the text and diagrams together.

INTRODUCTION TO WUSHU AND LONG FIST

Wushu is the national sport of China. It is traditionally subdivided into combative and exhibition areas of performance. Over many years a great variety of styles of wushu have developed. Due to the characteristics of each style, everyone may find one suited to their abilities and needs. The style analysed in this program is modern long fist, the most athletically demanding style of wushu, and the style seen as well suited to develop a firm foundation for further involvement in wushu. Long fist is being developed as the major compulsory style for international routines competition, for empty hand, sword, sabre, spear and staff. See figures 1, 2, and 3 for the placement of long fist and the four weapons within the overall picture of wushu.

INSERT FIGURES 1, 2, & 3 ABOUT HERE

Long fist is a dynamic sport, demanding a great deal of the player. The attributes necessary for the performance of long fist include great leg strength, power and endurance for vertical jumping, kicking, holding stances, and moving at top speed throughout an 80 second form; superior passive and dynamic flexibility of the ankles, hips, legs and waist for kicks, stances and balances; absolute motor control for powerful, rapid, full body movement interspersed with motionless stances and balances; upper body speed, power and dexterity for fast accurate techniques and especially for weapons play; fast reaction time for performing two or three man sparring routines; a great deal of coordination and agility for performing a great many complex and accurate moves within 80 seconds; and expressiveness for displaying a martial spirit. A high degree of mental toughness and psychological skills are also required. Intelligence, concentration and artistry are needed to learn and perform, and dedication to master long fist.

EXPLANATION OF THE PROGRAM

The development of a well integrated athlete skilled in wushu requires a carefully designed program which can take the athlete from novice to elite and from childhood to adulthood. To this aim, this program is purpose-process oriented, that is, it attempts to serve the athlete's needs through the medium of wushu. The purpose-process framework examines why people move, how they develop through movement, and how a program can provide the opportunity to fulfill their purposes. Jewett and Mullan (1977) list twenty two purpose elements through which a person may seek meaning in movement, grouped into seven main areas: physiological efficiency, psychic equilibrium, spatial orientation, object manipulation, communication, group interaction, and cultural involvement. These purposes indicate the many reasons and combinations of reasons athletes have for participation in a sport.

The process aspect of the program examined how the athlete would ideally develop within the program. The development of the athlete is accounted for in the physical, motor, psychological or affective, cognitive, and social domains. Taxonomies for both maturation and skill development stages in these domains were used to develop the objectives and progressions of each level of the program. See the references for further information on the purpose and process categorizations. The wushu program has grouped the domains into three areas: attitude, for affective, cognitive and social development; basics, for motor development; and conditioning, for physical development. This is in order to use a simple mnemonic device - learn the ABC's - and to use terminology which is known to coaches and athletes.

The subject content of the program is long fist, and the program allows a progression toward mastery of the skills of wushu. The method of systems analysis has been applied to long fist to determine the skill contents of the program. The skills for the whole program were taken from the Chinese national competition regulations, and the skill progressions for the first two gates were developed from the novice routines developed by a committee of experts in China. See Appendix A for the breakdown of the novice routines. The method of analysis of routines in the appendix was developed expressly for the wushu program. This type of analysis can be applied to any style of wushu, so can be used as a blueprint for other styles as well as long fist.

The development of this program has involved:

Analysis of the attributes required of long fist players

- Analysis of the physical capabilities needed for long fist performance.
- Analysis of the mental requirements needed for long fist performance.

Analysis of the skills of long fist

- A breakdown of all long fist skills to discover the basic movement patterns.
- A breakdown of the skills of the four weapons to determine basic movement patterns of weapons.

Analysis of the learning progression for long fist

- A breakdown of each novice routine to discover a logical learning progression of skills for long fist empty hand and the four weapons.
- Analysis of the development of the athlete from novice to elite, and from child to adult.
- Analysis of the skills, common errors, corrections of each skill.
- Suggested drills and conditioning to improve skills.

The progression of wushu skills for the first two gates was determined by the importance, frequency, and learning difficulty of the novice routines. The following factors were also taken into consideration: the most fundamental techniques are taught first; simple techniques are taught before complex; all techniques which are needed for routines have been taught by the time the routines are taught; tumbling techniques are included early, while the children are still young enough to perform them with no fear or hesitation; kicking and jumping techniques which do not occur in the novice routines are taught to lay a foundation, so that by the time they are needed in future routines they will be relatively skilled. In addition, jumps are the 'fun techniques' so are included early to maintain motivation.

Additional considerations were taken regarding the learning progression of weapons skills. These are: giving fairly equal weighting between long and short weapons, between sword and sabre, and between spear and staff at each introductory level; teaching less techniques in the first path to allow time to become comfortable with the weapons; when one technique is performed with a variety of weapons, teaching it at the same time for all the appropriate weapons; setting a foundation with the four basic weapons before going on to traditional weapons; teaching safer techniques and weapons before the more dangerous. The sabre, having a single edge, is taught before the sword, which has a double edge. The staff, being blunt, is taught before the spear, which has a sharp tip. In general, techniques which move away from the body are taught before those which come in towards the body. The more controlled of the long weapons are taught before those which swing from one end with force.

The program has been specifically designed for the athlete to start at an early age and continue in the program. Developmental aspects are suggested, and suggested age ranges for each level are given. It is expected, however, that many athletes will join the program at older ages than those suggested. The skill progression of wushu within each pathway can be applied to teaching the athlete at any age. Novice adults will not need to go through the developmental motor aspects of the program, but will follow the same skill learning progression. Older beginners will also progress more quickly through the cognitive, psychological and social objectives than younger beginners.

Gates have been used rather than the usual levels or stages, to emphasize the process, or movement, of learning. Instead of looking at each stage as a level which has been arrived at, it is seen as a pathway towards the next gate. Similarly, each set of tests is not a goal in itself, it is a gateway to the new world which opens up to the learner once he or she has passed through. The idea for

the actual term 'gate' comes from the traditional Chinese term for becoming skilled - 'ru men' - to enter the door or gate.

There is a great deal of content in each level, it is not a quick approach with a lot of tests of subskills. All the basic long fist skills will have been learned by the third gate, so further advancement is through refining long fist skills, learning new styles or weapons, and practicing application of the skills. See figures 4 and 5 for the complete list of bare hand and weapons skill groupings and progressions to the third gate.

INSERT FIGURES 4 & 5 ABOUT HERE

One of the great advantages of wushu is the variety of styles which are suitable to a great number of different people with varying abilities and at various stages in their lives. An athlete can continue to grow and improve in skill by changing to less physically demanding styles as he or she grows older. Internal skill and control becomes increasingly important, as it is both more practical and health building than external strength. A traditional style is introduced immediately in the program, and maintained throughout, so that on retirement from competition the athlete is already competent in a style suited to lifetime participation. Sparring is an optional part of the program, and a rough progression has been suggested. If choosing not to spar, the student still must know the application of the techniques in the routines.

The initial stages of the program are to develop the overall skills of the students in an atmosphere of fun so that they want to and are able to continue in wushu. Further training to mastery of wushu will stretch the limits of the participants, challenge them to become the best they can be, and gain self-knowledge from the experience.

BASIS OF THE PROGRAM: LEARN THE A, B, C's

The program emphasizes Attitude, Basics and Conditioning - the A B C's. Attitude, basics, and conditioning are absolutely vital at all levels of ability. Attitude refers to the psychological, affective and social skills and values of the athlete. Basics refers to both general movement skills and wushu skills. Conditioning refers to the development of physical abilities necessary for participation in sport.

ATTITUDE

ATTENTIONAL PROFILE OF A WUSHU PLAYER

A wushu player needs to be able to focus narrowly, to concentrate fully on the performance of a solo routine. The athlete needs to be able to shut out all distractions during practice or performance. A broad focus is rarely needed, as the athlete does not react to external stimuli. Athletes performing two- or three-

man cooperative routines need a broad focus to maintain the cooperation, but the more practiced these routines become, the more the attention narrows. With any routine, an occasional shift to a broad focus is necessary to make adjustments to remain within bounds.

In general, a routine is performed with a narrow external focus. The performer should be attending to what he is doing, not what he is thinking. If the performer becomes too lost within the movement he could lose track of the sequence. Ability to focus internally as well as externally is also needed. The performer must be able to attend to internal feelings and adjust techniques to the moment, especially before movements requiring held balances. See figure 6 for a diagrammatic representation of the attentional focus used prior to and during performance of a wushu routine.

INSERT FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE

STRESS MANAGEMENT SKILLS OF A WUSHU PLAYER

A wushu player needs to be able to monitor himself and adjust his level of excitation both prior to and within performance. The performer must be aware of where he is and what he is doing at all times, remaining totally under control while giving full commitment to each technique. Over-excitation may lead to performing too fast, which results in sloppy movements, errors due to lack of control, and exhaustion towards the end of the routine. Under-excitation may lead to performing too carefully, which results in holding back in amplitude, lack of expression, and a flat performance.

PERSONAL STYLE OF A WUSHU PLAYER

A wushu athlete needs to be highly self-disciplined. Wushu training requires much repetition of basic techniques and the same routines over many years. Perfectionism is important, since many repetitions of the same technique or routine must be towards the aim of perfection at a very subtle level. Someone easily satisfied may settle for a technically correct or showy performance without either the "gongfu" or the "fire" which makes a wushu performer stand out (gongfu means skill, in the sense of a basic technique practiced to the level that it appears both effortlessly perfect and natural).

A strong self-esteem, or confidence in oneself and self-efficacy within wushu, is needed to be able to perform a routine all alone in front of an audience. The athlete should want to show his skill to others, and to feel he has something to show. He must also have the assertiveness to display this skill, to be able to dominate the competition area, not be lost in it.

The wushu player must approach success in his endeavors, because he cannot perform a routine with full amplitude and commitment if he is worrying

about failure. He cannot hold back in performance to avoid making mistakes, because this will lead to a flat performance.

To address these aspects, the 'attitude' portion of the program tries to develop the self confidence, intrinsic motivation, attentional skills, self discipline, and stress management skills of the athlete.

SOCIAL CLIMATE FOR A WUSHU PLAYER

A wushu player in Canada needs to be strongly intrinsically motivated to perform well, since he will receive no public recognition for competition wins. Being externally motivated by competitions in wushu will not work as it may in Olympic sports. There is no national team as recognized by Sport Canada, and no Olympic team. Competition in the world championships pits amateurs against professionals, which makes motivation to win a top three place unrealistic. When the athlete becomes skilled, it is difficult to remain motivated to train if North American competitions are stressed, since winning them does not mean much in the context of the potential level which can be reached.

Wushu is at present a sport unrecognized by Sport Canada and unsponsored by corporations. As such, it does not benefit from funding for travel of the national team, availability of training facilities and equipment, and wages for coaches or administrative staff. Lack of governmental support both helps and hinders wushu in Canada. On the minus side, it remains difficult to develop a comprehensive program to develop elite athletes. The need for personal funding leads to athletes from disadvantaged backgrounds remaining disadvantaged in training, while middle to upper-middle class athletes receive family support. On the plus side, wushu remains independent of government policy. It is free to develop a program of personal development and self-actualization for all who participate. The problem is that both are valid goals. Fortunately, at the popular level, wushu is not an expensive sport. It can be practiced virtually anywhere (weather permitting) and requires no equipment beyond the weapons. But once a certain level is reached, training at an advanced team or in China is necessary, and this is paid for by the athlete himself. In order to allow someone to develop to his or her full potential, the elite level must be available. If not, the more skilled athletes will become discouraged and go to other sports which allow them to reach their full potential.

The vast majority of wushu players in Canada are amateur, and this will remain the case for many years to come. There is one way for a talented wushu player to receive money, which is to compete on the professional karate tournament circuit in the United States. The athlete, once used to receiving money for competing or winning, begins to avoid non-paying competitions, which include all IWF type competitions. The rules and attitudes of the U.S. circuit competition force the player to change the style of wushu considerably, in terms of the time limits, regulations concerning types of jumps, kicks, acrobatics, and size of carpet. This player is at a disadvantage at IWF type competitions due to the changes made in his style, though a few have been successful in both. This

represents a drain on the already small pool of elite level wushu players in Canada.

The social-cultural goal of the wushu program is to provide the opportunity for all to participate to the fullest degree of their ability, challenging the most skilled and satisfying the least skilled. With the coach's help, the participants should learn by experience and example independence, responsibility, equality, cooperation, and respect for others, and come to expect these qualities from society.

BASICS

If the athlete is weak in the basics he will perform poor routines. Neither will he gain full enjoyment from the performance of wushu skills. In higher levels of performance, the perfect body positions, full extension and amplitude, maximum speed and height, precision, flow, and spirit all grow from a firm rooting in the basics. The basic movement patterns of long fist include both static and dynamic skills. Legwork involves stances, footwork, and kicks; handwork involves open hand, fist, and arm; body work involves overall coordination, hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, and use of power flow between segments of the body; tumbling involves falls, rolls and rises; jumps involves upright jumping kicks, distance leaps, turning jumping kicks, and spinning jumping kicks; balances involve raised knee, raised leg, half squat, full squat and body leans. See figure 7 for a diagrammatic representation of the basic movement patterns of long fist. A great variety of skills are within these movement patterns. See figure 8 for a diagrammatic representation of the skills of long fist.

INSERT FIGURES 7 & 8 ABOUT HERE

To address the 'basics', the young athlete will learn basic motor skills, then basic wushu skills, to build a solid foundation for participation in sports. Badminton, volleyball and soccer have been chosen as complementary sports to aid both the development of motor skills helpful to wushu, and improve the all-round ability of the athlete. Badminton will help develop agility, control of an object, snapping power, and hand-instrument coordination. Volleyball will help develop jumping, hitting, falling and hand-eye coordination. Soccer will help develop kicking, foot-eye coordination, and toughness. Volleyball and soccer will also introduce teamwork, and the ability to control a broad attentional focus, which is lacking in much of wushu training. In addition, all can be played in the same area as wushu, so are convenient as warm-up activities.

CONDITIONING

If the athlete is not properly conditioned he will be unable to perform the basic skills correctly. The most important elements of conditioning are the energy systems, flexibility and strength.

Conditioning of the anaerobic and aerobic energy systems is vital to successful completion of a routine. Long fist competition consists of eighty second forms, performed at virtually full speed. It is a largely anaerobic power/endurance event using about 8% anaerobic alactic, 52% anaerobic lactic, and 40% aerobic energy systems. Because of the martial and performance aspects of wushu, the routine must appear effortless, which requires a highly efficient aerobic and anaerobic capacity. Players must also be fit in order to work continuously throughout practice sessions. Flexibility is absolutely mandatory for wushu performance. Stances, kicks, and balances all require a high degree of flexibility, especially in the hips, hamstrings, ankles, shoulders and lower back. Leg strength is necessary to hold the stances and perform kicks, jumps and balances. Upper body strength is necessary to perform punches with power, and control the weapons. Midsection strength is needed for the kicks, and to give impetus to all techniques. Power is the sport specific attribute to be trained for wushu. See figure 9 for a diagrammatic representation of the physical attributes necessary for long fist performance. The training of wushu specific conditioning has been dealt with in 'Coaching Wushu' (1989), so the conditioning aspects of this program can be undergone with reference to that manual.

INSERT FIGURE 9 ABOUT HERE

THE LONG FIST PROGRAM

The A B C's of individual development at gates one and two are not yet sport specific. The novice athlete will gain from the program:

A - A positive ATTITUDE towards him/herself, and confidence that he/she can succeed in any endeavor. A positive ATTITUDE towards physical activity, and especially a love of wushu.

B - The BASICS of movement skills with some emphasis on wushu, to lay a solid foundation for future specialization in wushu or participation in another sport.

C - The necessary physical CONDITIONING to be able to play any sport, but especially wushu. The physical goals of the wushu program at the initial stages is to achieve the conditioning and motor ability necessary to take part in any sport, but especially wushu. The participants will develop strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, cardiovascular endurance, speed, and agility.

PRIOR TO STARTING THE PROGRAM
SUGGESTED AGE: UNDER 5

Under age children will be encouraged to follow along in basics practice, without being expressly taught the skills. They will not be pushed to participate, as long as they do not disrupt the activities of others. They will be encouraged to engage in the following activities:

-Fun activities which develop strength and flexibility.

- Light and fun aerobic activity.
- Fun activities which develop general basic motor skills.
- Playing volleyball, badminton, and soccer at a level appropriate to their age.
- Wushu kicks, punches, and rolling.

To be allowed to move towards the first gate, a child must wish to do wushu, and have some understanding of what what it is not. He will gradually learn what it is as he goes along.

Test: The coach will talk with the child, and establish that he or she understands that wushu is not magic, and is not like the swordsmen or ninja in the movies. It will also be established that the child understands that the main purpose of wushu is not to beat up people. This should be done with all age groups, as even adults have misconceptions about wushu.

A general assessment of basic motor skills will be done with children, looking for development towards mature patterns in walking, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, galloping, throwing, and kicking a ball. Immature movement patterns will not hinder acceptance to the program, but will be noted and addressed during the initial stages of the program.

PATH TO THE FIRST GATE

SUGGESTED MINIMUM AGE: 5 (AVERAGE AGE 6-7)

ATTITUDE

Children of the suggested age range:

General:

- Task completion.
- Positive self-concept.
- Enjoyment of activities.
- Success in all activities.
- Cooperation in practices.
- No competition.

Wushu specific:

- Recognition of the names of the five basic stances, ten kicks, eleven hand skills, four tumbling skills, two jump kicks, and two balances.
- Exploration of the sensation of falling on the ground.
- Experimentation with various activities involving jumping.

Adults:

- Knowledge of the names of all the wushu skills learned.
- Recall of the combinations without aid.

BASICS

The initial skill objectives emphasize perceiving, or becoming aware of and learning body control over the correct patterns of movement. As the athlete develops, objectives will start to encourage patterning of correct movement, and the development of body control.

General:

Children in the suggested age range:

- Body management through use of all body parts.
- Spatial awareness.
- Volleyball, badminton, and soccer basics.

Adult beginners:

- Volleyball, badminton, and soccer basics.

Wushu specific:

- The most basic skills within the dominant movement patterns: handwork, stances, footwork, kicks, body positions, tumbling, jumps, and balances.
- Some of the basics will also be learned in short combinations.
- The most basic traditional combination: tantui.
- The basic weapons skills with the four basic weapons: stabs, chops, hooks, circles, parrys, and blocks.
- When holding a weapon, awareness of the size and peculiar characteristics of the weapon.

SPECIFIC SKILLS

Handwork: three hand positions (palm, fist, hook), eight palm techniques (push, chop, upward strike, flick, thread, press, flash, brush), four fist techniques (punch, chop, upward strike, low punch), and two elbow techniques (hook, high block).

Stances: seven stances (bow and open bow, horse, drop, empty, resting, parallel, open parallel).

Footwork: four stepping patterns (advance, retreat, back step, cross step).

Kicks: three snap kicks (instep, heel, side), six straight kicks (front, oblique, side, inside, outside, back), and one slap kick (front).

Body positions: the basic position for all body segments and eye coordination.

Tumbling: four rolls (forward, shoulder, back, cartwheel).

Jumps: four lead in jumping skills (vertical, spin, run-up vertical, run-up spin), two jump kicks (jump snap, jump heel), and two leaps (turning, reaching).

Balances: two knee balances (front, side).

Simple combinations: various short combinations, 5 step combination (see figure 10),

Traditional style: 10 step Tantui.

Sabre: pierce, chop, hook, slash, wrap, high block, and hide.

Sword: stab, chop, hook, slash, and high block.

Staff: thrust, chop, slash, high block, rest.

Spear: pierce, chop, counterclockwise parry, clockwise parry, high block, and rest.

INSERT FIGURE 10 ABOUT HERE

CONDITIONING

Children in the suggested age range:

- Fun aerobic and anaerobic activities.
- Fun stretching.
- Activities which develop muscular endurance.

Adults:

- Training of strength, especially in stances and balances.
- Emphasis on flexibility, emphasizing lower back, hips, legs and ankles.

Mostly static, extent, flexibility.

- Training of cardio-vascular and muscular endurance.
- 2/3 conditioning, 1/3 wushu techniques.
- For wushu specific conditioning exercises, see 'Coaching Wushu' (1989).

THE FIRST GATE

ATTITUDE

The student will be able to identify and name the four basic weapons, in Chinese and English.

The student will recognize the names and demonstrate recognition by performing the three hand positions, eight palm techniques, four fist techniques, two elbow techniques, seven stances, four stepping patterns, three snap kicks, six straight kicks, one slap kick, four rolls, two jump kicks, and two knee balances, when they are named by the coach in Chinese or English (language chosen by the student).

The student will understand the need to stop before holding a balance.

The student will demonstrate acceptance of the fact that basics and conditioning are vital to learning and performance.

From the beginning, the student will be expected to perform skills with spirit, amplitude to the fullest of his/her ability, clean technique, use of the body, coordination with the eyes, and power and focus to the best of his/her ability.

BASICS

While performing the front straight kick, the student will be aware of the body positions, shoulder set down or up, arms straight or bent, legs straight or bent, back flat or rounded, head erect or tilted, and be able to describe the difference between correct and incorrect.

The student will perform ten continuously walking front snap kicks and punches with alternating limbs, without losing balance.

The student will correctly perform each of the following weapons skills: sabre: pierce, hook, chop, wrap; sword: stab, slash, high block; staff: thrust, chop, high block, rest.

CONDITIONING

The student will perform each of the ten 'tantui' with stances held for five seconds each, with a rest of 30 seconds between each set of tantui.

The student will correctly perform the 'five step routine', holding each stance for 20 seconds, and the empty stance for 10 seconds.

The student will correctly perform the spear combination of 'counter clockwise parry, clockwise parry, pierce' for 30 seconds without pause.

The student will touch the elbow to both the same side and opposite side foot, in the front stretch position.

PATH TO THE SECOND GATE

SUGGESTED MINIMUM AGE 7 (AVERAGE AGE 8-10)

Children of the suggested age range: Emphasis is equally on all-round conditioning, general motor abilities and wushu basics.

ATTITUDE

Children of the suggested age range:

- Task completion
- Problem solving
- Cooperation by practicing combinations and sections with a group of students.
- Fun only, no competition.

All:

- Enjoyment or at least not being bothered by practicing while others watch.
- Enjoyment of weapons play, with no fear of hitting oneself with a weapon.

BASICS

The student will be expected to be developing a pattern of consistent movement. Towards the end of this level the student should be able to adapt basic movements, and to perform movements in combination.

Children of the suggested age range:

General:

- Spatial awareness
- Body management through use of all body parts, hand-eye, foot-eye coordination.

All:

- Volleyball, badminton, indoor soccer, at the level appropriate to the age group and skill in the sports.

Wushu specific:

- More basics.
- More weapons basics.
- Novice routines for the empty hand, sabre, sword, staff, and spear. See Appendix A for the complete routines.

- Two man hand routine.
- First routine of a traditional style (coach's choice).

SPECIFIC SKILLS:

Hand skills: snap punch, palm stab, hack, slap, loop; elbow thrust and block.

Stances: basin, cross, back cross, T, front point, back point, half horse, high T, turned bow.

Footwork: flowing run, leap, kick-hop.

Kicks and leg skills: front sweep, back sweep, oblique slap, outside slap, inside slap, front splits.

Body skills: basic movements, eye coordination in movement.

Tumbling: front fall, side fall.

Jumps: jump front slap kick, jump oblique slap kick.

Balances: forward, swallow, moon.

Sabre: cut, hack, circle, sweep, slice, squash, press, push, point, snap, flick, hold, draw.

Sword: cut, circle, sweep, slice, lift, point, snap, flick, hold, draw.

Staff: strike, smash, slap, circle, swing, flourish, raise, point, snap, flick, whip, hold, pull.

Spear: smash, slap, circle, flourish, raise, point, snap, flick, whip, hold, pull.

CONDITIONING

Children of the suggested age range:

- Fun aerobic and anaerobic activity.
- Fun stretching.

Other:

- Appropriate training for the age group.
- Emphasis on flexibility, combining extent and dynamic stretching.

THE SECOND GATE

ATTITUDE

The student will be able to name all the tested basics, in English or Chinese (language the choice of the student).

The student will be able to describe the principles of the basic body positions.

The student will be able to demonstrate what ten of the techniques in the novice routines are for (the ten techniques will be chosen by the coach prior to the test, but the student will not be informed).

The student will be able to identify and name the parts of the four basic weapons, in English or Chinese.

The student will exhibit no behavior of ducking away from the weapon, closing the eyes, or other avoidance behavior during performance of the four weapons routines.

BASICS

The student will perform a punch with snap from a neutral position into a 1) horse stance, 2) bow stance, 3) resting stance, 4) with a front snap kick.

The student will land from a jump front slap kick into a 1) bow stance, 2) resting stance, 3) knee balance.

The student will perform each of the novice routines without aid in remembering. The techniques should be recognizable. Speed, rhythm and effective breathing are not required, but the requirements specified in gate one still apply.

CONDITIONING

The student will perform five different repetitions of short combinations continuously for one minute, with a one minute pause between repetitions.

The student will perform fifty punches with each hand while sitting in horse stance which is parallel to the ground.

The student will perform the front splits on both sides.

The student will bring the head within a hand's width of the foot in the front, oblique, and side support stretch positions.

PATH TO THE THIRD GATE

SUGGESTED MINIMUM AGE 9 (AVERAGE AGE 11-13)

Children of the suggested age range:

Emphasis is placed equally on all round conditioning and wushu basics and routines, slightly less on other sport activities. There will be more emphasis on wushu training, but no event specialization.

Adults:

Adults reaching this level who, due to age or other circumstances, do not seem to have potential in long fist, may be encouraged to train traditional styles only.

ATTITUDE

Children of suggested age range:

- Problem solving.
- Task completion
- Social interaction.
- Fun, low key, competition.

All:

- Further wushu knowledge and comprehension.
- Relaxation and concentration techniques.
- Enjoyment of performing in front of people.
- Enjoyment of two man forms, no fear of being hit by a weapon played by a partner.
- A healthy respect for weapons (and partner), so two man routines are controlled.

BASICS

The student will be expected to be becoming skilled, and adapting movement more easily. He will be expected to learn to connect correct and consistent movements into a flowing whole, adapting to fit circumstances. Towards the end of this level he should be refining his movements, becoming more economic in movement.

General:

- Volleyball, badminton, and indoor soccer.
- Spatial awareness.
- Ability to change speed and direction.

Wushu specific:

- More basics.
- More weapons basics.
- 'A level' (jia zu) routines for empty hand, sword, sabre, spear, and staff.
- Two man routines (hand and weapon).
- Second traditional hand routine (same style as previous level).
- Basic sparring and wrestling techniques, no free sparring.

SPECIFIC SKILLS:

Hand skills: hook punch, crush, cross punch, rolled punch, palm encircle, flourish.

Footwork: long jump, side jump, stamp.

Kicks and leg skills: toe, coil, hook, back curl, side split, half split.

Body skills: further refinement, use of body to bring power.

Tumbling: fish flop, aerial cartwheel, kipup, spin up.

Jumps: double jump front slap kick, continuous jump front slap kick, jumping outer kick, jump side kick, jump back arch, turning jump front slap kick, turning jump outer kick, jump inside kick, butterfly, butterfly twist.

Balances: back, side, front leg, side leg, face sky, hook, eagle, front full squat, behind full squat.

Sabre: flourish, slide, shove, low block, separate, hit, rest.

Sword: flourish, slide, encircle, thread.

Staff: hook, sweep, coil, medium block, low block, cover, push, thread, trap

Spear: sweep, encircle, coil, medium block, low block, draw, thread.

CONDITIONING

- Continue training in flexibility, emphasizing wushu specific stretching, both extent and dynamic stretching.

- Continue Aerobic and anaerobic activity.

THE THIRD GATE

ATTITUDE

The student will be able to name any ten wushu techniques, chosen at random by the examiner, in English or Chinese (language the choice of the student).

The student will be able to explain principles of gaining height in jumps.
The student will be able to identify major errors as they occur in the performance of a long fist routine.

The student will know the fighting applications of the techniques of the 'A level' routines.

The student will know the different characteristics of the four basic weapons.

The student will exhibit no cringing, excessive ducking (beyond that choreographed), closing eyes, or other avoidance behavior during performance of two man weapons routine.

The student will exhibit controlled technique during performance of the two man weapons routine, and will not exhibit dangerous or uncontrolled technique.

BASICS

Wushu specific:

The student will use legs and arms to increase the height of a jump kick.

Techniques will not be independently tested, they will be seen in performance of routines.

The student will perform each of the 'A level' routines with correct recognizable techniques. The requirements specified in gate one still apply, and speed, rhythm and effective breathing are also required.

CONDITIONING

The student will perform the full side splits.

The student will touch the head to the foot in the front, oblique, and side support stretch positions.

The student will perform five repetitions of combinations lasting two minutes each, with a one minute pause between repetitions. Two of the combinations may be weapons skills.

When performing the 'A level' routines, the student will complete them within the required time.

PATH TO THE FOURTH GATE

SUGGESTED MINIMUM AGE 12 (AVERAGE AGE 14-16)

ATTITUDE

Children of suggested age range:

- More complex problems.
- Mental rehearsal.
- Individual and group goal setting.
- Sportsmanship.
- Competition OK.

All:

- Further wushu knowledge.
- Application of basic concepts.

- Relaxation and concentration techniques.
- Pride in the martial arts tradition.
- A positive self image relative to personal movement characteristics.
- No fear of being hit by a jointed weapon.

BASICS

The student will be expected to further refine his skill. He will be expected to perform exact, sharp and focussed technique.

Children of the suggested age range:

- Ambidexterity.
- More complex movements.

All:

- Increase speed while maintaining accuracy.
- Volleyball, badminton, indoor soccer.

Wushu specific:

- International compulsory routines.
- Third traditional hand routine (same style as previous levels).
- Try out other traditional styles.
- Learn a double weapon and a jointed weapon.
- More two man bare hand and weapons routines.
- Basic wrestling and sparring techniques, more practice with partner, free wrestling.

CONDITIONING

Children of the suggested age range:

- Sub-maximal weight training (strength).
- More rigorous activity.

All:

- Wushu specific flexibility.

FOURTH GATE

ATTITUDE

The student will be able to combine a new combination of techniques together smoothly and without error.

The student will be able to apply knowledge of physiology to the development of an off-season conditioning program.

The student will be able to select a sword, sabre, spear or staff of the proper length and performance characteristics to suit their body height and style of play.

The student will recognize and know the names of at least 10 traditional weapons, in Chinese or English.

The student will know the groupings of the types of weapons, and the major characteristics of the types of weapons.

The student will exhibit no cringing, excessive ducking, closing of eyes, or other avoidance behavior during performance with jointed weapon.

BASICS

The student will satisfactorily perform the international routines, performing the open hand, one short, and one long weapon. The same conditions apply, but the criteria for correctness will be more stringent.

CONDITIONING

The student will touch the chin to toe in the front, oblique, and side support stretch position.

The student will perform the international routines within the time required.

The student will perform one section of each of the international routines (bare-hand, one short and one long) at top speed five times, maintaining the same time for all five. A one minute rest will be given between each repetition, and five minutes between each routine.

PATH TO FIFTH GATE

SUGGESTED MINIMUM AGE 15 (AVERAGE AGE 17-19)

ATTITUDE

- Refine mental rehearsal.
- Further knowledge in wushu.
- Analysis of situations and knowledge.
- Coping strategies.
- Relaxation and concentration techniques.
- Ability to look for and carry out programs to improve specific skills.
- Goal setting.
- Sportsmanship.
- May enter international competition.
- Appreciation that different weapons are suited to different people, and respect of these differences.

BASICS

The student will be expected to be able to vary skills, adjusting to conditions. He or she will be expected to perform with rhythm and full amplitude, and may start being creative.

- Speed.
- Specialization.

Wushu specific:

- Polish international compulsory wushu routines.
- Help coach develop optional routines.
- Develop or create weapons and two man routines.
- Further training in a traditional style or styles of athlete's choice.
- Free sparring and wrestling.

CONDITIONING

Children of suggested age range:

- May begin submaximal weight training.
- All:
- Wushu specific flexibility.
 - Wushu specific aerobic and anaerobic training.

SIXTH GATE

ATTITUDE

The student will be able to analyze performance of a long fist routine to determine possible points of improvement.

The student will demonstrate understanding of how an athlete's characteristics match that of the weapon, and be able to choose which weapons are suitable for his body type, psychology and style of play.

BASICS

The student will perform three different stances with different hand techniques following a back sweep kick.

Improvising with a short weapon, the student will perform three different ways of parrying a straight strike at knee level.

The student will perform a bare hand, a short weapon, and a long weapon routine which he/she has created (may have been created with the help of the coach).

CONDITIONING

The student will perform the bare hand international routine plus another section without pausing.

The student will demonstrate maintenance of flexibility standards.

PATH TO SEVENTH GATE

SUGGESTED MINIMUM AGE: 17 (AVERAGE AGE OVER 19)

ATTITUDE

Suggested age range:

- Peak competitive years.
- Cognitive ability optimal.
- Start self evaluation.

All:

- Synthesis of knowledge, evaluation.
- Relaxation and concentration.
- Acceptance of regular wushu training as a way of life.

BASICS

By the time the athlete reaches the seventh gate, he will be expected to be able to improvise in performing, and be able to adjust to errors. His movement will be more creative, and he will have developed a personal style. Performance should reflect this, such that he moves with spirit, commitment, and expression.

Wushu specific:

- Event specialization.
- Continue to polish international competition routines if continuing in competition. Automatic performance of competition routines.
- Develop maximum speed.
- Further develop optional routines.
- Further training in traditional hand and weapons routines.
- Continue sparring and wrestling.

CONDITIONING

- Wushu and event specific flexibility.
- Maximal strength training.
- Intense anaerobic training.

SEVENTH GATE

The student will be able to utilize appropriate principles of biomechanics, exercise physiology, and choreography to design a long fist routine.

The student will be able to judge a long fist routine or weapons routine and obtain a score close to that of an experienced judge.

PAST THE SEVENTH GATE

NO MINIMUM AGE

ATTITUDE

- Synthesis of knowledge in wushu, and an ability to evaluate.
- May act as judge at competitions.
- May coach.
- Development of a personal philosophical position concerning the martial artist and his attitude toward life.
- Holistic organization of wushu into part of his or her life.
- May retire from competition, go into coaching or other involvement in wushu, while maintaining self training at reduced levels (reduced intensity of training without reducing skill level).
- Ability to make judgements about the appropriateness of the various fist styles and weapons to people of various physical, physiological and psychological characteristics.

BASICS

Past this stage the student will perform with a personal style, and apparent effortlessness. He will be able to compose and choreograph optional long fist routines. If he has reached the same level in sparring, his fighting should be intuitive, not relying on analysis.

- Maintain skill.
- Concentrate on traditional styles.

- May switch to internal styles.

CONDITIONING OBJECTIVES

- Maintain conditioning

SKILLS IN THE FIRST PATH

BASIC SKILLS TO BE ACQUIRED:

HAND POSITIONS: PALM, FIST, HOOK

HAND TECHNIQUES: EIGHT HAND, FOUR FIST, TWO ARM

LEG TECHNIQUES: SEVEN STANCES, FOUR FOOTWORK, TEN KICKS

BODYWORK: BODY ALIGNMENT, EYE COORDINATION

TUMBLING: FOUR ROLLS

JUMPS: FOUR JUMPS, TWO LEAPS, TWO JUMP KICKS

BALANCES: TWO KNEE BALANCES

WEAPONS SKILLS: SEVEN SABRE SKILLS, FIVE SWORD SKILLS,
FIVE STAFF SKILLS, SIX SPEAR SKILLS

BASIC SKILLS

HAND SHAPES (SHOU XING):

1. PALM (ZHANG): The thumb is bent and the fingers are straight and held together. See figure 1 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Opening the fingers; letting the thumb separate from the hand; bending the fingers.

SOLUTIONS: Normally these can be corrected by attention during practice of the palm techniques. In extreme cases, taping of the fingers or thumb can be done.

2. FIST (QUAN): The fingers are tightly curled and the fist surface is flat, the thumb is pressed on the second joint of the middle and index fingers. See figure 2 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Holding the fist loosely; leaving the thumb up or sticking straight forward; leaving the wrist loose or bent.

SOLUTIONS: Have the students hold themselves on their fists in a pushup position and see what happens when they do any of the above errors.

3. HOOK (GOU): The wrist is bent and the fingers are together with the thumb pressing against the index and middle fingers. See figure 3 of Appendix B

COMMON ERRORS: Leaving the hand loose; leaving the wrist partially relaxed so that the hook is open.

SOLUTIONS: Wrist flexibility exercises, pressing the wrist against the floor or wall with the hand turned toward the body.

HAND TECHNIQUES (SHOU FA)

PALM TECHNIQUES (ZHANG FA)

1. PUSH (TUI ZHANG): The palm strikes out from the waist, rotating the forearm so that the palm strikes upright. Force is applied with the outer edge of the palm. See figure 4 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: The hand is not upright. The rest of the common errors are the same as the punch.

SOLUTIONS: Train wrist flexibility by pressing the hand back.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice pushing in an open parallel stance; practice advancing into a bow stance double push or other stances with pushes.

2. PALM CHOP (PI ZHANG): The palm chops down from above with the arm straight and the palm turned sideways. Force is applied at the outer edge of the palm. See figure 5 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Putting too much force at the shoulder joint.

SOLUTIONS: Attention should be paid to relaxing and using the force from the body to cause acceleration of the arm.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice stationary chops; practice moving from a parallel stance forward into a bow stance or open bow stance and chop, coordinating the foot and hand action.

3. UPWARD PALM STRIKE (LIAO ZHANG): The palm swings in a circle forward and up from below, with the arm straight. The action is quick and the force is applied at the palm heart. See figure 6 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Swinging without any snap to the action; hitting too slowly.

SOLUTIONS: Rotate the forearm at the last instant; swing from the shoulder using the waist, accelerating the hand until it is stopped suddenly.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice stationary strikes; practice moving from a parallel stance forward into a bow stance and strike, coordinating the foot and hand action.

4. FLICK (TIAO ZHANG): The arm swings up from below, snapping the wrist to place the palm upright, the force is directed to the fingers. See figure 7 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Not having sufficient snap in the wrist.

SOLUTIONS: Keep the arm fairly extended as it comes up, then snap the wrist at the last instant.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice stationary flicks with one hand; practice moving into a stance, coordinating with the flick; practice walking snap kicks with alternating flicks.

5. THREAD (CHUAN ZHANG) (includes forward, backward, sideward, upward): With the palm facing up, the arm extends while threading through some part of the body (usually over the other forearm), the force is applied to the finger tips. See figure 8 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Having an unclear threading action, such as passing the hand under the forearm or hitting the fingers on the forearm.

SOLUTIONS: Know clearly the technique and watch the threading hand.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice each hand separately in a stationary position; add other hand techniques after the thread; add movement into stances with the hand techniques.

6. PRESS (AN ZHANG): The palm presses down, with the force applied by the palm heart. See figure 9 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Pressing too close or too far from the body; placing the hand in position instead of circling to press down.

SOLUTIONS: The student must understand the application of the press.

PROGRESSIONS: The student can practice the stationary single press as someone punches slowly towards chest height; the press can then be combined with moving into a stance, such as raise knee.

7. FLASH (LIANG ZHANG): With the arm slightly bent, snap the wrist to flip the palm, raising it to the side of the body or above the head. See figure 10 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: The eyes must follow the action, and it must be done with spirit and full amplitude, as it is used as a pose. The snap of the head, wrist, and palm must be simultaneous.

COMMON ERRORS: Tilting the head; placing the palm instead of snapping; snapping the head and hand out of synchronization.

SOLUTIONS: Practice of standing single flash palm paying much attention to the wrist and palm snap and the head and eye action.

PROGRESSIONS: Train wrist flexibility and wrist circles; practice snapping the wrist with the palm flash; practice stationary single flash palm, paying attention to following the movement with the eyes and snapping the head as the wrist snaps; practice step back double flash palm.

8. PARRY (LUO ZHANG): With the palm facing down, circle it obliquely away from or in across the body, with the force applied to the outside of the palm. See figure 11 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: The waist leads the action, drawing the arm across; the eyes watch the hand.

COMMON ERRORS: Lifting the shoulder; raising the arm too high, which makes it a different technique.

SOLUTIONS: Stress keeping the shoulders down and swinging the arm in a horizontal circle.

FIST TECHNIQUES (QUAN FA)

1. PUNCH (CHONG QUAN) (includes punches to the front, to the side, and upwards): The fist starts from the waist and strikes out quickly, with rotation of the arm, the force arrives at the fist surface. Power comes from the snap at the end of the strike. The waist is turned and the shoulder is extended into the

movement. The fist may be either upright or flat. The punch is to shoulder height. See figure 12 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Letting the wrist bend; sequencing the movement other than from the proximal segment to the distal segment; 'placing' the fist rather than snapping with power; allowing the elbow to move out of alignment with the fist; not rotating the body or extending the shoulder; over-rotating the body and shoulder; punching too high or too low; pulling back the fist before punching; swinging the fist up.

SOLUTIONS: To control the placement of the punch, practice in front of a target at shoulder height. To prevent the elbow from turning out, stand beside an object while punching. Pay attention to keeping the elbow behind the fist, and using forearm rotation to snap the punch. To attain power, relax the shoulder, and make sure that the elbow is past the waist before snapping the forearm. To avoid swinging up, pay attention to punching in a straight line.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice punching while standing still, paying attention to proper technique. First practice punching one hand only, then start alternating hands. Slow motion practice can be done at first, paying attention that: the body is straight and rotates with the action, the forearm does not rotate until the elbow has passed the body, the wrist stays straight, and the fist moves in a direct line to the target. Gradually start applying more force, then practice in a variety of stances. To put power in the punch, hold the fist tight, keep the shoulders down, and snap the forearm.

2. FIST CHOP (PI QUAN) (includes to the front, side, and swinging): The fist chops down from above with the arm straight, the force arrives at the heel of the fist. The swinging chop entails a full vertical circle before the chop. See figure 13 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Putting too much force at the shoulder joint.

SOLUTIONS: Attention should be paid to relaxing and using the force from the body to cause acceleration of the arm.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice stationary chops; practice moving from a parallel stance forward into a bow stance or open bow stance and chop, coordinating the foot and hand action.

3. UPWARD FIST STRIKE (LIAO QUAN) (includes normal and reverse): The fist swings in a circle forward and up from below, with the arm straight. In a normal strike, the force is applied at the fist eye or heart. In a reverse strike, arm is medially rotated and the force is applied to the back or heart of the fist. See figure 14 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Putting too much force at the shoulder joint.

SOLUTIONS: Attention should be paid to relaxing and using the force of the swing to cause acceleration.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice stationary strikes; practice moving from a parallel stance forward into a bow stance and strike, coordinating the foot and hand action; practice moving into a stance while performing the reverse strike.

4. LOW PUNCH (ZAI QUAN): Punch down or to the lower front, the force reaching the fist surface. See figure 15 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS AND SOLUTIONS: Same as the punch.

ELBOW TECHNIQUES (ZHOU FA)

1. ELBOW COIL (PAN ZHOU): Raise the arm straight with the palm facing down, then snap the forearm in. See figure 16 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Performing a thrust instead of a coil; placing the arm without snapping.

SOLUTIONS: Practice stationary coils, paying attention to the correct technique.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice alternating elbow coils while sitting in a horse stance; practice the elbow coil in an open bow stance, snapping into the palm of the opposite hand.

2. FOREARM BLOCK (JIA ZHOU): Externally rotate the forearm and raise it, with the heart of the hand facing out. See figure 17 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Raising the arm straight up over the head; not following the circular line of the blocking action.

SOLUTIONS: Emphasize the line of action of the block; understand the application of the technique; have a partner practice chops from above while practicing the forearm block to protect the head.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice the forearm block coordinating with eye movement; practice moving into the horse stance punch with the forearm block, emphasizing moving in under the block; practice shifting from the bow stance punch into the horse stance block and punch.

LEGS

STANCES (BU XING)

1. BOW STANCE (AND OPEN BOW STANCE) (GONG BU, AO BU): The feet are about 4 - 5 footlengths apart. The front foot is turned slightly in, with the whole foot flat on the ground and the knee bent so that the thigh is parallel with the ground, the knee is in line with the toes (or at least the shin forms a vertical line); the back leg is straight with the foot turned slightly to the front and the whole foot flat on the ground. Normally, when a technique is performed to the front with the same hand as the forward leg, the stance is a bow stance; when a technique is done with the opposite hand, the stance is an open bow stance. See figure 18 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: The back leg pushes back straight, the chest is held up, the lower back is flat, the hips are set down, and the feet are in line.

COMMON ERRORS: Not aligning the knee with the front foot, bending the back leg, letting the back foot turn back, rolling the back foot off the outside edge, taking too short or long a stance, leaning back or forward, not sitting low enough.

SOLUTIONS: Train leg strength and ankle flexibility; emphasize the important points when teaching and practicing. Pay attention to pushing the back knee straight and pushing back with the heel, gripping the ground with the toes.

PROGRESSIONS: Gradually increase the time spent sitting in the stance, this will train both the stance and muscular endurance; practice switching back and forth from the left to right stance; practice punching, switching from left to right stance, this will train coordination of the stance with the hands; practice advancing bow stance reverse punches, this trains getting into the stance quickly and coordinating with the hand and body skills.

2. HORSE STANCE (MA BU): The feet are about 3 footlengths apart, with the feet flat and pointing straight forward, the knees bent, and the thigh about parallel to the ground. The knees are aligned with the toes. The weight rests equally between the feet. See figure 19 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: The position taken is chest out, lower back flat, body erect, shoulders settled, hips open and knees in.

COMMON ERRORS: Turning the feet in or out, rolling the pelvis too far in or out, dropping the knees in, rolling out on the feet, not sitting down enough, taking too short or long a stance.

SOLUTIONS: Train leg strength and ankle flexibility; emphasize the important points when teaching and practicing; emphasize pressing the heels out and gripping with the toes; pull in with the thighs to prevent the knees from pointing out and the feet from slipping; stand with the feet 3 -4 footlengths apart then sit into the stance; set the chest and lower back then sit into the stance.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice going from a closed parallel stance into the horse stance, this trains the ability to find the distance of the stance (this can be done with marks on the floor at first); gradually increase the time spent sitting in the stance, this will train both the stance and muscular endurance; practice punching or pushing while sitting in the stance; practice 'advance bow stance reverse punch, turn into horse stance punch', this trains getting into the stance quickly and coordinating with the hand and body skills.

3. DROP STANCE (PU BU): One leg squats completely, with thigh on the calf, and the buttocks close to the lower leg, the whole foot is on the ground, the knee and foot are turned out slightly; the other leg is extended straight along the ground, the foot turned in and flat on the ground; the body may lean forward slightly. See figure 20 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: Keep the chest up, the lower back flat and the hips in, keep the upper body erect, and squat fully.

COMMON ERRORS: Rolling the feet off the ground, not sitting far enough down, turning the extended foot out, leaning forward too much or rounding the back, bending the extended leg, raising the heel of the squatting leg; losing balance.

SOLUTIONS: Grab the feet with the hands and press them down; train ankle flexibility so that the student can perform a full squat comfortably with the feet together; stretch frequently in the drop stance to improve both strength and flexibility; stretch in the drop stance with the front foot pressed against the wall; pay attention to keeping the back flat and the chest up.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice initially holding on to an object; practice drop stance stretching holding onto the feet; gradually increase the time spent sitting in the stance to improve strength and flexibility; practice turning and dropping

from the bow stance into the drop stance; practice waist spin and drop into stance; practice advancing into the stance combined with hand techniques.

4. EMPTY STANCE (XU BU): The back leg is turned out about 45° and the knee is bent so that the thigh is parallel with the ground, the whole foot is on the ground; the front leg is bent with the foot plantar flexed and the toe touching lightly on the ground. All the weight is on the back leg. See figure 21 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: The body remains erect, the chest up, lower back flat and hips set. The weight is clearly on the back leg.

COMMON ERRORS: Not sitting far enough down; sitting too far down; sticking out the buttocks; putting some weight forward; leaning the body forward; rolling off the edge of the supporting foot; rolling the supporting knee in.

SOLUTIONS: Practice sitting in the stance then raising the front foot off the ground; practice ankle flexibility and leg strength; emphasize the important points when practicing; practice single leg squats, emphasizing keeping the knee aligned with the foot.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice the stance a bit high at first, holding the proper body positions (may hold onto an object to get lower); gradually increase the depth of the stance until the thigh is parallel to the ground; practice one-legged squats with the front foot off the ground; practice alternating stances coordinating with hand techniques such as flash palm or block with fist.

5. RESTING STANCE (XIE BU): The legs are crossed and fully bent, the front foot is turned out and flat on the ground; the back heel is raised off the ground and the buttocks sit on the calf near the heel; the back knee is tucked on the outside of the front calf. See figure 22 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: The chest is up, the lower back flat, and the body erect. The legs squat fully, and are tight together.

COMMON ERRORS: Not turning the front foot out, leaving the back knee loose or touching the front of the calf, losing balance, touching the knee on the ground.

SOLUTIONS: Practice ankle, knee, and hip flexibility; practice spinning into alternate side stances; emphasize turning the front foot out and pressing the legs together.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice sitting in the stance; practice cross stepping to the front and back, and the left and right, then practice the same while dropping into the full squat; emphasize the placement of the back knee; practice spinning alternation of the stance; practice cross step alternating stances combined with hand techniques.

6. CLOSED PARALLEL STANCE (BING BU): The legs are straight and the feet are parallel, together, and flat on the ground. See figure 23 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Letting the feet roll out or in, turning the feet, not maintaining the proper body position.

SOLUTIONS: Paying attention to proper position is adequate to perform this stance well.

7. OPEN PARALLEL STANCE (KAI BU): The same as the closed parallel, except that the feet are spread apart, usually to shoulder width. See figure 24 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS AND SOLUTIONS: The same as the closed parallel stance.

FOOTWORK (BU FA)

1. ADVANCE (SHANG BU): The back foot steps forward, or either foot steps forward if the feet are together.

COMMON ERRORS: Unsteadiness; rising and dropping while advancing.

SOLUTIONS: Pay attention to placing the heel first then quickly settling the whole foot; pay attention to placing the foot in line with the line of action; keep the supporting leg bent while advancing.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice advancing bow stances; place markings on the ground and practice advancing with accurate foot placement; practice advancing into stances combined with hand techniques.

2. RETREAT (TUI BU): The front foot steps back, or either foot steps back if the feet are together.

COMMON ERRORS, SOLUTIONS, AND PROGRESSIONS: The same as advance.

3. CROSS STEP (GAI BU): One foot passes in front of the other as it steps to the side, so that the legs are crossed. See figure 25 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: After stepping, the thigh of the leg in front may be parallel to the ground, and the back leg straight with the heel off the ground.

COMMON ERRORS: Stepping too close; turning the hips, thus forming a bow stance after stepping.

SOLUTIONS: Practice the cross stance to become used to the distance; emphasize keeping the back heel off the ground after stepping.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice holding the cross stance; practice the cross step into the cross stance; practice combining the cross step with hand techniques.

4. BACK CROSS STEP (CHA BU): One foot passes behind the other as it steps to the side, so that the legs are crossed. See figure 26 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS, SOLUTIONS, AND PROGRESSIONS: The same as the cross step.

KICKS (TUI FA)

1. SNAP KICK (TAN TUI): The supporting leg is straight or slightly bent. The kicking leg bends then extends out, no higher than the waist, with the knee straight and the foot plantar flexed. The lower leg should snap out quickly and powerfully, with the force applied to the top of the foot. See figure 27 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: Keep the chest up and the back straight, kick with a short snap.

COMMON ERRORS: Kicking with no focus, leaning back, throwing the hip into the kick; swinging the kick up with no apparent flexion and extension.

SOLUTIONS: Pay attention to proper body position at all times; emphasize the flexion and extension, snapping the foot out after the thigh is raised parallel to the ground. To learn focus, kick a light object at waist height (do not kick a heavy bag, as this will cause throwing of the hip).

PROGRESSIONS: Extend the pointed leg and hold; practice walking alternating leg extensions; practice walking alternating kicks, then combine the kicks with hand techniques. Kick low at first and gradually kick higher.

2. FRONT HEEL KICK (DENG TUI): The supporting leg is straight or slightly bent. The kicking leg bends then thrusts out strongly with the heel, no higher than the chest, and no lower than the waist. The body remains straight. See figure 28 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: The heel kick has more of a forward thrust than the instep kick.

COMMON ERRORS AND SOLUTIONS: The same as the snap kick.

3. SIDE KICK (CE CHUAI TUI): The supporting leg is straight or slightly bent. The kicking leg bends then thrusts with the heel, the foot dorsi flexed, kicking with the sole of the foot. The kick is to the knee, waist, or higher. The body may lean with the higher kick. See figure 29 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: Keep the chest up and open the hip; the force is applied by the heel or the outside of the foot; the kick must snap with power.

COMMON ERRORS: Turning the foot up; kicking too low; no focus; leaning forward rather than back.

SOLUTIONS: Emphasize kicking with the heel and outside of the foot; practice the drop stance and flexibility.

PROGRESSIONS: Train flexibility of the hips with the side stretch, the side splits with the feet flat, and swinging to the side; hold on to an object and practice kicking and holding the leg up.

4. FRONT STRAIGHT KICK (ZHENG TI TUI): The supporting leg is straight with the foot flat on the ground. The kicking leg remains straight and swings to the front to the forehead with the foot dorsi flexed. The arms are extended straight out to the side with the palms upright. The kick should be fast and powerful. The body remains straight, with the chest out, the lower back flat, the head straight, and looking straight ahead. See figure 30 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: The kick should increase speed when it passes the waist, snapping into the head. Do not attempt to kick to the head immediately. Start out kicking softly and to a reasonable height at first, then gradually increase the power and range of the kick. The most important point is to perform the kick correctly, and it will gradually improve.

COMMON ERRORS: Lowering the head and bending the back; bending the legs; kicking slowly with no power; kicking with too much tension; raising heel of the supporting leg or letting the hip move forward.

SOLUTIONS: To stop from bending the back and head, pay special attention that the foot is coming to the head, never allow the head to go to the

foot. Concentrating on pushing the arms straight out to the side helps keep the body straight. The coach could place one hand on the back and one on the jaw while the student kicks, to maintain the body position. To stop from bending the legs, practice more stretching, straight leg extensions, and stationary kicks. To kick with more snap, practice holding on to an object and kicking as fast as possible, pulling quickly in at the last part of the range. Kick with power but lightly and relaxed. To keep control of the supporting leg, take a smaller step when advancing, concentrate on keeping the supporting leg straight, and kick a bit lower.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice the straight front stretch, trying to touch the head to the foot; practice the assisted straight front stretch; then practice leg controlled extensions and swings holding a support. Before practicing the walking alternating kicks, first practice walking holding the proper body position, then practice walking with low kicks. Always emphasize correct body position.

5. OBLIQUE STRAIGHT KICK (XIE TI TUI): The same as the front straight kick, except that the foot approaches the ear on the opposite side. See figure 31 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS, SOLUTIONS AND PROGRESSIONS: The same as the front kick, except that the line of the stretches are at an angle.

6. SIDE STRAIGHT KICK (CE TI TUI): The same as the front straight kick, except that the foot kicks at the side towards the back of the head. The supporting foot is turned perpendicular to the line of action. See figure 32 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: The same as the front kick. Also, not turning the supporting foot out; not turning the body adequately, thus performing almost a straight kick.

SOLUTIONS: The same as the straight front kick. To keep the supporting leg turned, pay attention to the proper position when stretching, and practice the side splits with the feet turned up.

PROGRESSIONS: The same as the front kick, except that the line of the stretches is to the side.

7. OUTSIDE STRAIGHT KICK (WAI BAI TUI): The supporting leg is naturally straight with the foot flat on the ground. The kicking leg swings up the opposite side of the body, then in past the face, then out to the side of the body, then down in to the starting position. The foot is dorsi flexed and turned in. The rest of the requirements are the same as the front straight kick. See figure 33 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: the kick should make a full circle; the kick should snap quickly past the face. Pay attention to snapping from the hip as the foot goes by the face.

COMMON ERRORS: The same as the front straight kick. Not performing a full circle; slapping on the edge of the foot instead of the flat.

SOLUTIONS: To ensure that a full range of motion is performed, practice the front and side wushu stretches. Practice putting the hip through the range of motion while holding the knee, moving the leg with the arms. Also, with the

student against a wall, the whole leg could be moved passively through the range of the kick. Stretch the ankle so that the foot is able to turn in.

PROGRESSIONS: Stretch in the front and side positions; swing the leg through the range while holding an object, gradually increasing speed and range; practice walking alternating kicks.

8. INSIDE STRAIGHT KICK (LI HE TUI): The supporting leg is naturally straight with the foot flat on the ground. The kicking leg swings up the side of the body, then in past the face, then down in to the starting position. The foot is dorsiflexed and turned in. The rest of the requirements are the same as the front straight kick. See figure 34 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS, SOLUTIONS, AND PROGRESSIONS: The same as the front straight kick and outside kick. Make sure that a full range of motion is performed.

9. BACK STRAIGHT KICK (HOU LIAO TUI): The supporting leg is straight. The body leans forward with the head and chest raised. The kicking leg swings up in the back.

COMMON ERRORS: Not having height in the kick; bending the leg.

SOLUTIONS: Stretch the hip flexors, with the student facing a wall, raise the leg behind, keeping it straight.

PROGRESSIONS: Stretch in the back position; swing the leg through the range while holding an object, gradually increasing speed and range; practice walking alternating kicks.

10. SINGLE SLAP KICK (DAN PAI JIAO): The supporting leg is straight. The kicking leg swings straight to the front with the foot plantar flexed. The hand of the kicking leg slaps the foot in front of the forehead. See figure 35 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: The slap should be sharp and precise; the kicking leg remains straight; the foot is tightly plantar flexed.

COMMON ERRORS: The same as the front kick. Leaning forward to reach the foot; not slapping sharply or loudly enough, bending the kicking leg.

SOLUTIONS: The same as the front kick. To correct a poor slap, emphasize plantar flexing the foot and slapping quickly and accurately; stretch the ankle so that it is able to fully plantar flex.

PROGRESSIONS: First practice the straight kick without slapping; then add slapping and advancing performing alternate slap kicks.

BASIC BODY POSITIONS: The head and neck are straight, the shoulders are settled, the chest is open, the abdomen is held in, the lower back is straight, and the buttocks are pulled in.

COMMON ERRORS: Tilting the head; hunching one or both shoulders; caving in the chest; leaving the abdomen relaxed; over arching the back; hunching the back; sticking the buttocks out.

SOLUTIONS: Pay attention to the proper positions at all times, whether stretching, practicing basics, or practicing combinations.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice single hand techniques standing in an open parallel stance, paying particular attention to proper body position; always hold the body properly aligned when practicing walking alternate kicks; practice stepping from a parallel stance into another stance with a hand technique, keeping the body aligned.

BASIC EYE COORDINATION WITH TECHNIQUES: In static positions the eyes look in the direction of the line of action or the hand or foot. The look should be spirited and attentive to the technique.

COMMON ERRORS: Looking at the hand or foot instead of the line of attack; not focussing the eyes; trying to look overly fierce; looking vacuous.

SOLUTIONS: Pay attention to the proper eye coordination at all times; do not get bored when practicing, always put spirit into every technique; understand that anger has no place in the martial arts, but that attentiveness is mandatory.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice single hand techniques standing in an open parallel stance, paying particular attention to watching the line of attack of the hands; always look straight ahead when practicing walking alternate kicks; practice stepping from a parallel stance into another stance with a hand technique, watching the hand technique with the proper spirit.

TUMBLING

1. FORWARD ROLL (GUN TOU): Jump off one leg and roll on landing, successively on the arms, shoulders, back, lower back, and buttocks. The roll should be light and agile, and should rise to the feet quickly. See figure 36 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Not rolling, landing on a flat back; being unable to get up.

SOLUTIONS: Receive the force without caving in; keep momentum going.

PROGRESSIONS: Start standing still and placing the hands on the ground; gradually increase the length or height of the jump into the roll.

2. SHOULDER ROLL: (QIANG BEI) The same as the forward roll, except that the roll is done on one arm and shoulder then across the body diagonally. See figure 37 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS, SOLUTIONS AND PROGRESSIONS: The same as the forward roll.

3. BACK ROLL (DAO GEN DOU): Roll the body back, successively on the buttocks, lower back, back, shoulders, and hands. The roll should be light and agile, and should rise to the feet quickly. See figure 38 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS AND SOLUTIONS: The same as the forward roll.

4. CARTWHEEL (HU TIAO): Place the hands in a straight line and swing the body vertically along the same line, landing with the feet alternately on the same line. See figure 39 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Not following the line; bending at the waist or legs; swinging too slowly.

SOLUTIONS: Draw a line on the ground to check alignment; use the waist to throw the legs over.

PROGRESSIONS: Start standing still and place the hands on the ground; gradually increase the length or height of the jump into the roll; practice continuous rolls, keeping the momentum going.

JUMPS

LEAD IN JUMPS

1. VERTICAL JUMP: Jump straight up off the right foot, using the left leg to swing up and the arms to aid the height. See figure 40 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Jumping forward; not using the left leg and arms to aid height; not driving up with the right leg.

SOLUTIONS: Practice near an object which prevents forward jumping; practice jumping up to strike objects with the hands.

2. VERTICAL SPINNING JUMP: Jump straight up off both feet, turn around 360° in the air and land on both feet. See figure 41 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: Tilting the body in the air; landing on one foot; losing balance on landing; not using the arms to aid the turn.

SOLUTIONS: Practice half turns until they are controlled, then gradually add rotation.

3. RUN-UP VERTICAL JUMP: With a three step run-up, jump vertically off the right foot, using the left leg and arms to aid height.

COMMON ERRORS: Jumping forward; jumping off the left foot; not using the left and arms properly to aid height.

SOLUTIONS: Run towards an object to prevent forward jumping; always take three steps so that the take-off is automatic; pay attention to driving upwards.

4. RUN-UP VERTICAL SPINNING JUMP: With a three step run-up, jump vertically off the right foot and turn 360°, either clockwise or counter-clockwise, landing on both feet.

COMMON ERRORS: Jumping forward or to the side; jumping off the left leg; not jumping up; not spinning enough; not using the left leg and arms to aid height.

SOLUTIONS: Pay attention to driving upwards; always take three steps so that the take-off is automatic; use the body to prepare for the spin prior to jumping.

5. JUMP SNAP KICK (TENG KONG JIAN TAN): Jump vertically, and while in the air, snap the jumping leg forward in an instep kick (foot plantar flexed, force applied to the top or toes), at waist height. See figure 42 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS: The same as the run-up vertical jump. Not coordinating the hand technique with the kick; letting the left leg drop when kicking.

SOLUTIONS: Practice tucking the left leg when kicking; practice jumping and kicking while holding the left leg; concentrate on driving up and kicking quickly.

6. JUMP HEEL KICK (TENG KONG DENG TI): The same as the jump snap kick, except that the foot is dorsi flexed and the force is applied to the heel.

COMMON ERRORS AND SOLUTIONS: The same as the jump snap kick.

7. TURNING LEAP: Leap forward at least the distance of a bow stance, stretching out the chest, head and body in midflight. Turn the body 180° in flight.

COMMON ERRORS: Not gaining full extension in flight; losing balance on landing.

SOLUTIONS: Pay attention to controlling the body in flight and on landing; gain as much height as possible to give time to extend the body.

8. REACHING LEAP (DA YUE BU QIAN CHUAN): Leap forward at least the distance of a bow stance, stretching out the chest, head and body in midflight. See figure 43 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS AND SOLUTIONS: The same as the turning leap.

BALANCES (PING HENG)

1. FRONT KNEE RAISE (QIAN TI XI PING HENG): The supporting leg is straight and steady. The upper body is straight. The lifting leg is raised in front of the body with the knee bent and tucked in to the chest, the lower leg is pulled in with the foot plantar flexed. See figure 44 of Appendix B.

IMPORTANT POINTS: The knee must be raised high and the lower leg pulled in tightly. The knee should be pulled up quickly, as this balance is both a protection against attack and a knee strike.

COMMON ERRORS: Not raising the knee high enough, letting the foot hang loosely far away from the body, losing balance.

SOLUTIONS: Train flexibility by pulling the leg into the body; practice strength and balance by holding the position for increasingly long times.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice the stationary balance, increasing the length of time held; practice stepping into the balance and holding it immediately; practice stepping quickly into the balance combined with a hand technique, holding steady. Always practice both sides.

2. SIDE KNEE RAISE (CE TI XI PING HENG): The supporting leg is straight and steady. The upper body is straight or leaning to the side. The lifting leg is raised to the side above the waist with the knee bent. The hip is turned out and the

lower leg is pulled in with the foot plantar- or dorsi- flexed. See figure 45 of Appendix B.

COMMON ERRORS, SOLUTIONS, AND PROGRESSIONS: Same as the front knee raise.

WEAPONS SKILLS

SHORT WEAPONS

SABRE (DAO)

DESCRIPTION: A light, flexible weapon with a curved blade, sharp on one edge and at the tip. The handle is made of wood and the guard and blade of metal. The tassel is made of one to three pieces of stiff silk, and may be no longer than to reach the tip. See figure 1 in Appendix C.

LENGTH: Proportionate to height. To measure length, stand with feet together holding the sword handle at the side, blade vertical. The top should reach at least the bottom of the ear lobe. The length of a sabre for a sparring routine is to the shoulder.

CHARACTERISTICS: Sabre technique is characterized by power and speed. It develops power and spirit, and strength of the upper body. Normally a routine contains many jumping and spinning techniques.

SWORD (JIAN)

DESCRIPTION: A light, flexible weapon with a straight blade, sharp on both sides and at the tip. The handle is made of wood and the guard and blade of metal. The tassel is made of braided silk and is attached to the end of the handle. It is approximately 25 cm. long on the standard sword. See figure 2 in Appendix C.

LENGTH: The same as the sabre.

CHARACTERISTICS: Sword technique is characterized by agility and swiftness. It develops flexibility and grace. Normally a routine contains many balances and a great deal of body work.

SHORT WEAPONS SKILLS

1. PIERCE (ZHA): A sabre technique. With the blade facing down, up, or left, thrust forward with the tip, the force reaching the tip of the sabre. The arm forms a straight line with the sabre. A level pierce is at shoulder height; a high pierce is higher than the head, and a low pierce is at knee height. See figure 3 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Not snapping the sabre, so that the sound is not sharp or there is no sound.

SOLUTIONS: Practice a standing pierce, using the torso and snapping the forearm.

PROGRESSIONS: Ensure that the student has the correct punching technique; practice standing pierces; practice stepping into a bow stance, coordinating the pierce with the stance.

2. STAB (CI): A sword technique, the equivalent to the pierce of the sabre. The sword blade may be flat or upright as the tip thrusts forward, so that the force reaches the tip. The arm forms a straight line with the sword. A level stab places the tip at shoulder height, an upward stab places the tip higher than the head, a lower stab places the tip at knee height, and a low stab places the tip close to the ground, though not touching. A back stab is done by either turning around or arching back. A probing stab is done by internally rotating the forearm so that the palm heart faces out and passes by the shoulder, stabbing with an upright blade to the upper or lower front, sending the upper body and shoulder forward with the sword. See figure 4 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Not focussing the force to the tip of the sword; allowing the tip to drop so that the sword is not in line with the arm.

SOLUTIONS: Focus always on aligning the sword with the arm. Keep control the wrist firm at all times. Control the sword lightly with the thumb, index and middle fingers.

PROGRESSIONS: The same as the pierce for the sabre.

3. CHOP (PI): With the blade upright, chop down from above, the cut is done with the body of the sabre or sword. The arm forms a straight line with the weapon. A swinging chop swings the weapon in a vertical circle by the right or left side of the body before chopping. A back chop is coordinated with the turn of the body. See figure 5 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Bending the arm and snapping the weapon at the end; putting too much force at the shoulder joint, so that the force does not reach the blade.

SOLUTIONS: Use the waist to swing the arm, so that the weapon follows along; keep the wrist firm; pay attention to relaxing and using the force from the body to cause acceleration of the arm.

PROGRESSIONS: Ensure that the student has correct fist and palm chopping technique; practice standing chops; practice stepping into a stance, alternating a bow stance and open bow stance, coordinating the chop with the stance.

4. HOOK (GUA): Hook the tip from the front up and back, or down and back. The force is applied with the back of the weapon. An upper hook hooks up and back; a lower hook hooks down and back; a swinging hook circles around in a full vertical circle. The blade always stays close to the body. See figure 6 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Letting the blade travel away from the body; not applying force with the back of the blade, letting the blade swing loosely.

SOLUTIONS: Use the waist to bring the weapon through the line of application; keep the wrist firm; pay attention at all times to the vertical circle.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice while standing close to a wall to prevent the weapon from swinging wide; practice coordinating the hook with the knee raise; always practice both sides.

5. SLASH (LIAO): The blade slices forward and up, cutting with the forward edge of the blade. A normal slash is performed with the forearm laterally rotated and the palm facing up, the blade circling by the right side of the body; a reverse slash is performed with the forearm medially rotated, the blade circling by the left side of the body. See figure 7 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Not reaching fully to the front; not slicing with the forward edge of the blade, letting the tip hang down; not forming a vertical circle.

SOLUTIONS: Control the tip with the fingers, keeping the wrist firm; practice shoulder flexibility to obtain the fullest use of the forearm rotation; turn the waist to aid the circle.

PROGRESSIONS: Ensure that the student has correct upward palm strike technique. Practice standing, alternating normal and reverse slashes using the waist; practice moving into a stance while performing either slash.

6. WRAP (CHANTOU, GUONAO): This is a sabre technique only. The sword never passes over or around the head, so performing this technique with a sword is an error. 'Chantou' is performed by wrapping the sabre around the left shoulder, around the back then by the right shoulder, with the tip pointing down and the back of the blade close to the body. 'Guonao' is similar, reversing direction, from right to left. See figure 8 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Swinging the blade too far from the body; ducking the head; not keeping the blade vertical as it passes in the rear.

SOLUTIONS: Keep the hand high when passing the blade around the head; always remember that the sharp edge of the blade must not touch the body.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice standing alternating directions, cutting down to the waist after 'chantou', and wrapping fully down to the waist to hide the sabre after 'guonao'; practice the same sequence, moving from bow stance to empty stance.

7. HIGH BLOCK (JIA): With the blade facing up, push the blade directly up, above the head and slightly to the side. The force is applied to the body of the weapon. The palm may face either in or out. See figure 9 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Letting the tip drop; not raising the blade high enough.

SOLUTIONS: Emphasize the application of the technique as a high block to protect the head.

PROGRESSIONS: Ensure that the student has the correct arm blocking technique; practice standing blocks; practice stepping into a stance, coordinating the block with the stance.

8. HIDE (CANG): This is primarily a sabre technique. The 'waist-hide' has the blade curling around the left side of the body, the tip pointing back and the blade facing out, hidden behind the back. The 'upright-hide' has the blade vertical behind the left shoulder. The 'flat-hide' has the blade pulled back with the tip facing forward and the blade facing down, at the right hip. The sword is never laid on the body, but may sometimes use the 'flat-hide' position. See figure 10 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Not controlling the tip.

SOLUTIONS: Keep control over the whole blade at all times.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice the hides together with the wraps; practice moving from stance to stance, combining the wraps with the movement and the hides with the stances.

LONG WEAPONS

STAFF (GUN)

DESCRIPTION: A light, flexible weapon made of wood, thicker at the butt than at the tip.

SIZE: The circumference at the middle is 7.2 cm. for men, 7 cm. for women, 6.7 cm. for over 14 boys, 6.4 cm. for over 34 girls or under 14 boys, and 6 cm. for under 14 girls.

LENGTH: Proportionate to height. To measure length, stand with feet together holding the staff vertically at the side, with the butt on the ground. The top should reach at least the top of the head. See figure 11 in this Appendix C.

CHARACTERISTICS: Staff technique is characterized by power and speed. It develops power of the torso. Normally a routine contains many spinning and ground slapping movements.

SPEAR (HONG YING QIANG)

DESCRIPTION: A light, flexible weapon made of wood of the tree, with a metal attached tip. The tassel is made of silk, and is attached to the base of the tip. See figure 12 in Appendix C.

SIZE: The circumference is the same as the staff. The circumference of a spear for a sparring routine is 6.5 cm. at the middle.

LENGTH: Proportionate to height. To measure length, stand with feet together holding the spear vertically at the side, with the butt on the ground. The top should reach at least the fingertips of the outstretched hand overhead. The length of a spear for a sparring routine is the height of the athlete.

CHARACTERISTICS: Spear technique is characterized by full extension and fluidity. It develops full body movement and coordination. Normally a routine contains much body movement and techniques performed on the run.

1. **THRUST (CHUO):** A staff technique. Thrust the tip or the butt in a straight line directly to the front, side or back. Force is applied with the end of the staff. See figure 13 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Moving the end sideways instead of in a straight line.

SOLUTIONS: Practice thrusting either end of the staff, starting from the waist. Be clear on the difference between a strike and a thrust.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice thrusting with the tip while moving into the left bow stance, then switch to the right bow stance while thrusting with the butt. Bring the hands in to the waist each time.

2. **PIERCE (ZHA):** A spear technique. Thrust the tip forward using the back hand, sliding the spear through the forward hand. The spear must travel in a straight line, and the force arrives at the tip, causing the spear to snap. The back hand must touch the front hand at the final moment. A flat pierce must be parallel to the ground, an upper pierce is no higher than the head and no lower than the shoulder; a low pierce is no higher than the knee and must not touch the ground. A high flat pierce is at chest height, a middle flat pierce is between the

chest and the waist, a low flat pierce is at waist height; a lower flat pierce is about 20 cm. from the ground. See figure 14 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Not snapping the spear, so that the tip does not jingle sharply; not controlling the placement of the tip; not controlling the tip after the pierce. The most common error of the flat pierce is letting the tip drop.

SOLUTIONS: Ensure that the student has correct punching technique. Practice aiming at a target while piercing; practice shoulder, forearm, and wrist strength to be able to hold the spear out; make sure that the arms form a straight line with the spear.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice the parry, parry, pierce while switching from open horse stance to bow stance; practice the same while moving in either cross step or back cross step, always finishing with the bow stance pierce; practice the pierce in a variety of stance.

3. CHOP (PI): Grasp the weapon with both hands and chop it down strongly, hitting with the forward portion of the staff or the tip of the spear. See figure 15 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Not snapping the weapon; putting too much force in the shoulders so that the force does not arrive at the weapon tip.

SOLUTIONS: Ensure that the student has correct fist and palm chopping technique; fix the back hand firmly by the body so that when the forward hand hits, the weapon will be stable.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice standing chops; practice stepping into a stance, coordinating the chop with the stance.

4. SLASH (LIAO): Swing the weapon in a vertical circle on the left or right side of the body, slashing either to the back or front. This must be done quickly, with the force applied through the forward portion of the staff or the tip of the spear. See figure 16 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Not swinging in a vertical circle; hitting the ground with the tip.

SOLUTIONS: Practice the slash standing close to a wall to prevent the tip from swinging wide; pull the hands up high as the tip swings through.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice a standing slash, alternating sides; practice stepping into a stance, coordinating the slash with the stance, ensuring that the tip has swung through before the body drops into the stance.

5. HIGH BLOCK (JIA): Raise the body of the weapon above the head, with the body either horizontal or slightly tilted. See figure 17 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Not raising the weapon high enough; not keeping the arms firm enough.

SOLUTIONS: Understand the application clearly; practice the high block as a partner practices the chop.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice a standing block; practice stepping forward or backward into a stance, coordinating the block with the stance.

6. REST (BEI): Hold the weapon behind the shoulder or back, usually holding it with one hand. The body of the weapon rests tightly on the back. See figure 18 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Letting the staff or spear swing around, not keeping it tight on the body.

SOLUTIONS: Swing the staff firmly into the body, but not so hard that it bounces off; do not relax once the weapon is correctly placed.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice bringing the weapon into the body with increasing force, as control is gained.

7. COUNTER CLOCKWISE PARRY (LAN): This is primarily a spear technique. Circle the spear tip counter clockwise, no higher than the head and no lower than the hip. See figure 19 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS: Not forming a perfect circle with the spear tip; coordinating the body technique incorrectly, not using the waist.

SOLUTIONS: Practice with a target, circling around the target; practice alternating the counter-clockwise and clockwise parry around the target, concentrating on waist technique.

PROGRESSIONS: Practice with an increasingly smaller target; practice alternating the circles with the clockwise parry; practice the counter-clockwise parry, clockwise parry, pierce while switching from open horse stance to bow stance; practice the same while moving in either cross step or back cross step.

8. CLOCKWISE PARRY (NA): This is primarily a spear technique. Circle the spear tip clockwise, no higher than the head and no lower than the hip. See figure 20 of Appendix C.

COMMON ERRORS, SOLUTIONS, AND PROGRESSIONS: The same as the counter-clockwise parry.

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