

Interview with Ma Jianglin

Ma Jiangling

(* 1947)



Ma Jianglin is a teacher for the
Jianquan Taijiquan Association Shanghai

On the occasion of the European visit in 2003 of Ma Jianglin, the younger brother of Ma Jiangbao gave an interview to the Forum for Traditional Wu Tai Chi Chuan.

Forum: Dear Mr Ma. Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity for this interview. You have now been for three weeks in Europe and you have seen a lot of students of Wu Tai Chi Chuan. We and our readers are very interested in your impressions. We would like to ask what kind of tips you might have for the students who are just beginning to study Taijiquan?

Ma Jianglin: My Father Ma Yueliang gave a five-character motto for the learning of Taijiquan: stillness, lightness, slowness, conscientiousness and perseverance. Besides learning the movements, these are in the centre of the learning process. In my opinion, stillness is very important. And by learning the Slow Form and through perseverance you can deal better with stress. You can have patience for other people and their problems. This is the same for students in East and West.

Forum: What do you think about the students who train the Long Form very intensively?

Ma Jianglin: The quality of these people is mostly very good.

Forum: Are there some problems?

Ma Jianglin: Some people can still make progress in their postures. For example, sometimes gongbu or xubu is not completely correct. In xubu people do not sit in a relaxed posture, and in gongbu the back is not completely straight. Sometimes the postures are not stretched enough or not precise.

Forum: Meanwhile, in Europe there are a lot of students learning the weapon forms. Do you have some hints for these people?

Ma Jianglin: The weapon is an extension of the hand. I saw that the weapon was being held stiffly. This is of course a question of being used to it, but you really have to take care to develop skilfulness in your wrist. When you do the weapon forms faster, you are allowed to use force, but you must not become hard or have stops in the form.

Forum: Beside the weapon forms, Pushhands is becoming popular. You have trained with a lot of students. What is your opinion?

Ma Jianglin: Very good. The students train hard and intensively. I am happy.

Forum: But what should the students be aware of?

Ma Jianglin: Wu Taijiquan has a lot of techniques. You should train them all. To have a large repertoire. When you train with another person, you should be able to change between the different techniques. Here there are still problems for some students. They keep on going with the technique they have decided on, without reacting to their partner's movements. The ability to change between different techniques comes with experience. Because the Wu Taijiquan has developed so well in Europe, I am very optimistic that pushhands will develop as well.

Forum: Many thanks for the Interview. We are looking forward to seeing you again.