

THE INTERCEPTING CIRCLE PRINCIPLE OF THE FIVE ELEMENT FIST

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The intercepting circle principle of the Five Element Fist reveals conceptual differences that are not commonly known or understood by many practitioners or teachers of Chinese martial arts. These differences are based on fundamental principles that have not been hidden but many times ignored or overlooked. The intercepting circle method requires an understanding of the principles of push and pull (yin and yang) and axial transitions that are applied to non-directional pass of force. With the use of positions that offset direct force with continual response using circular and pivotal methods, the intercepting principle is clearly demonstrated. It is understood that while we have been taught to resist force with force, we find that this idea is not always possible. Because of our lack of strength or underestimating the strength of others, it is important that we learn to rely on no more than we can produce. Therefore, the balance of and focus of energy for resistance must be used differently. The most effective pass of energy is from one direction to the other not moving in the same pass in the opposite direction.

The Shaolin boxing principles incorporated different methods and principles depending upon the skills taught. However, they are not totally dependent upon physical strength. By the same token, physical posture and positional (or forms) are important. The understanding of external and internal flow of energy is important. For conservative purposes and focus we need to include these understandings in our training. The idea of the intercepting circle boxing method is to avoid meeting force with force, to get into by countering the undefended places and to strike the weak points and to absorb the energy of the adversaries. This is also the fundamental tactics of Shaolin boxing. There are very few schools that teach this method and because of the conceptual differences in applications are not ever considered. Since fighting in the Chinese

marital arts is primarily focused on reaction and principles, it is important to have a perception that is clear and a concept that is practical. The emphasis on this boxing style is put on centering on circular counter methods requiring little resistance as possible.

The recorded origin of this southern style dates back to 1775. According to historians, during China's most progressive period of expansion, which was during the reign of Qing Emperor Qionlong (1736-1795), the intercepting circle as it is called now was called the "Gate Fist" style by the Yue family. Yue or "Yuen" was from a small province called Dongsheng located in Sichuan. It is believed that this style may be even older tracing back to the period of the three kingdoms of Emperor Wei Mingdi (227-239). Historians record that during this time a famous doctor named Hua Tuo created one of the most popular exercises, "The Five Animal Play" (Wuringsi). Over time he passed this information down to a few of his students who traveled throughout southern China combining these exercises and teachings with herbal medicines. While traveling it was said that they had come upon the Yue family who shares with them new herbs. In exchange, the students taught the Five Animal Play to the Yue family who were farmers. Down through the years the five animal teaching was modified to include fighting techniques and principles. During the last year of Qing Emperor Qionlong (1795), Yue begin to teach this style openly in Sichuan and later relocated to Hunan and taught this style and the fighting principles that was handed down by his family. After years of keeping the style within the family because of threats and danger from government regulations, the Yue family no longer taught the style to outsiders. As the family had spread across southern China, the boxing style was only taught within the family until the early 1800's.