

Origin of Wing Chun Boxing

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Abstract: The origin of Wing Chun Boxing is explored by using the method of documentary materials, historical textual research and field investigation. The study found that Wing Chun originated from the Hongquan secretly practiced by artists belonging to the "Qiong Hua Guild", a branch of the Tiandi Association of Guangzhou in the late Qing Dynasty. After the failure of the Guangdong Tiandihui uprising, Cantonese opera was banned. In order to conceal the surviving artists, Hongquan changed its name to Wing Chun and continued to inherit. After the relaxation of the ban, Wing Chun gradually developed into a unique boxing system.

Keywords: Wing Chun, Hong Quan, Tiandihui, Cantonese Opera Troupe, Red Boat, Wusheng, Lan Gui

1. The legend of Wing Chun and its origin

1.1 Legends related to Wing Chun

There are only legends and no written records about the origin of Wing Chun in the early days. At present, there are mainly five versions of Shitai Chuangquan, Yan Yongchun Chuangquan, Shaolin Zhishan Zen Master Chuangquan, and Yichen'an Master Chuangquan [1].

(1) Five Master Tai Chuang Quan said. Legend has it that in the middle of the Qing Dynasty, five Shitai lived in seclusion in Daliangshan. One day, she happened to see snakes and cranes fighting each other to trigger inspiration to create Wing Chun. She later passed it on to her disciple Yan Yongchun. It is also said that the five masters first passed the martial arts to Shaolin disciples Miao Shun and Yan Er, and later Yan Er passed it on to his daughter Yan Yongchun.

(2) Yan Yongchun said that he created boxing. According to legend, Yan Yongchun and his father Yan Er sold tofu at the foot of Jiulian Mountain. Inspired by the battle between snakes and cranes, she has been practicing martial arts with five masters since she was a child. Later, under the guidance of five masters, Yan Yongchun's martial arts finally achieved great success. The five masters named the boxing Wing Chun boxing in memory of the disciple's creation of boxing.

(3) Yichen'an's main creation boxing said. The earliest Wing Chun was called Yongchun. It was a boxing technique practiced by members of the Heaven and Earth Society. It was passed down by Yichen, a disciple of Northern Shaolin. Yichen first passed the boxing skills to Zhang Wu, a martial artist of the Kunqu Opera troupe, and then Zhang Wu passed it on to the disciples of the Cantonese Opera troupe. After the Tiandihui uprising broke out, in order to avoid the investigation of the imperial court, they changed Yongchun Boxing to Wing Chun Boxing.

(4) Shaolin Zhishan Master Chuangquan said. Wing Chun originated from Shaolin Yongchun at the Shaolin Temple in Putian, Fujian, and was first taught by Zen Master Zhishan. After the Qing court set fire to Southern Shaolin, Zhishan once worked as a cook in the Le Ronghua Red Boat Opera Troupe in Foshan Cantonese Opera Organization. Later, he showed his kung fu because of the injustice, so the people in the troupe worshiped him one after another as a teacher.

1.2 The origin of the text of the legend of Wing Chun

The legend of Wing Chun is closely linked to the stories of "the Qing court burned the Shaolin Temple" and "the monks of the Shaolin Temple conquered Xilu". The burning of Shaolin Temple by the Qing court comes from "Xishan Magazine • Shaolin Temple", the original text records: In the tenth year of Hongwu in Ming Dynasty (1377), monks from Shaolin Temple in Quanzhou, Fujian taught

martial arts to Quannan. Cai Yangeng learned from Shaolin monk Zhiming since he was a child and is proficient in all eighteen martial arts. Later, Cai Yangeng passed on his art to Feng An. Feng Anchuan's apprentices Huang Mei, Bai Mei and Feng Daode. And Wumei, Miao Xian, Zhishan, Liaofan, and Liaoyin are his disciples and nephews. Later, the father of Hu Huiqian, a native of Jinyi, was beaten to death by Yangcheng Lunfang workers while working in Guangdong. In order to avenge his father's revenge, Huiqian went to Fujian (Jiuhua Mountain) to learn martial arts in southern Shaolin. Desperate for revenge, he escaped from Shaolin before his martial arts skills were completed and killed many Lunfang workers and caused a disaster. The Cantonese were unwilling and contacted the government to put down the ring. Later, Fang Shiyu was kicked to death by five nuns in the fight for his friend. In the autumn of the twenty-eighth year of Qianlong's reign, the imperial court ordered the Shaolin Temple to be burned down. After the destruction of Shaolin, Zhishan and others took refuge in the people, among which they took refuge in Yongchun County, Fujian Province. So there is the theory of Yongchun, Dazun, Taizu, and Houquan. Shaolin Temple monk Zheng Xilu came from Tiandihui's "huiibo", the original text records: During the Kangxi period, there was an invasion of Xilufan that no one could match, and the court was forced to issue a list to summon heroes from all over the world to go to the national disaster. After the Shaolin monks were recruited to defeat Xilufan, they gave up the reward and returned to the temple. Soon after, because someone wrongly accused the Shaolin monks of plotting a rebellion, the Qing court sent troops to attack and burn down the Shaolin Temple. After this disaster, Shaolin monks suffered heavy casualties. Only five people, Hu Dedi, Li Shikai, Ma Chaoxing, Fang Dahong and Cai Dezhong, escaped successfully. Later, they met Wan Yunlong and others, formed an alliance of blood, and rebuilt the Shaolin Temple in Jiuhua Mountain, Fujian, and were honored by the Heaven and Earth Society as the five ancestors of Hongmen.

Comparing the above two stories, we can see that the legend of Wing Chun is actually a continuation and reconstruction of the stories recorded in Huiibo and Xishan Magazine. They have similar characters, locations and storylines. The difference is that in the legend of Wing Chun, Wing Chun changed from the place name and boxing name "Yongchun" in "Xishan Magazine" to the person's name and boxing name "Wing Chun". According to Zhou Weiliang's research, there was indeed a temple called Shaolin Temple in Yongchun, Fujian during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, but these have nothing to do with martial arts [2]. As for Wumei, Zhishan, Baimei, Hu Huiqian, Fang Shiyu, and others, they are the names of the characters in the Qing Dynasty novel "The Prosperity of the Holy Dynasty". "The Prosperity of the Holy Dynasty, Evergreen" is also known as "New Biography of Embroidered Image of Evergreen Wizards" and "Qianlong's Excursion to Jiangnan". The novel mainly tells the story of Emperor Qianlong's private visit to the south of the Yangtze River, punishing evil and promoting good. Among them is the story of the host of Shaolin Temple in Fujian, Zhishan, and his apprentices Hu Huiqian and Fang Shiyu who bullied the weak and were annihilated by officers and soldiers jointly with Wumei, Baimei and others. By comparison, the stories contained in "Xishan Magazine • Shaolin Temple" are highly similar to those in "The Prosperity of the Holy Dynasty". Judging from the time of publication, the text content of "Xishan Magazine • Shaolin Temple" is basically a copy of the content of "The Prosperity of the Holy Dynasty". The difference is that the characters in "The Prosperity of the Holy Dynasty" and "Xishan Magazine • Shaolin Temple" have "reversed roles". The villains in the former all become heroes in the latter, while those in the former Positive characters are described as negative characters. In addition, Jing Dali and Zhou Weiliang and others have verified that the records in "Hui Bo" and "Xishan Magazine • Shaolin Temple" are obviously inconsistent with historical facts, and cannot be regarded as historical facts. The burning of the Shaolin Temple by the Qing court is purely fabricated [3]. From this, it can be seen that the legend of Wing Chun has no factual basis. Most of them are deduced from the above text. However, although the legend of Wing Chun is not true, its origin is closely related to the Heaven and Earth Society and Shaolin Temple. In the legend of Wing Chun, although the stories cannot represent the facts, the stories are indeed a reflection of the facts.

2. The origin of Wing Chun, Tiandihui and Cantonese opera troupe

2.1 The relationship between Tiandihui and Shaolin and Hongquan

Tiandi Association, also known as Hongmen, was originally active in Fujian and Taiwan and other regions. In its founding and development, there are distinct martial arts characteristics [4]. After Jiaqing (1819), the Heaven and Earth Society was introduced from Fujian to Guangdong, Jiangxi, Guangxi, Hunan and other regions [5]. By the Xianfeng period (1851-1861), the Tiandi Society had become a common practice in the Pearl River Delta region of Guangdong and developed into a powerful civilian

armed force. According to records, there were as many as 17 Tiandi Society organizations seized by the Guangzhou government at that time [6]. At that time, the members of the Tiandihui were mainly from homeless people who lost their land, unemployed small handicraftsmen and social idlers. These people from the lower classes of society and all over the three religions and nine streams are involved in many industries and groups. In order to improve the combat effectiveness and strengthen the cohesion of the organization, the Tiandi Association places special emphasis on learning martial arts. Due to the great military exploits of Shaolin Temple in Ming Dynasty and the outstanding dissemination of Shaolin Wushu by Shaolin disciples Bian Cheng, Cheng Zongyou, Shi Jingyan, Gao Ru, etc., Shaolin Temple in Qing Dynasty had a huge social influence and became synonymous with Chinese Wushu and a symbol of chivalrous spirit avatar. Therefore, in order to gain the support of the people, the Tiandi Society has spared no effort to describe themselves as Shaolin disciples, and describe all the martial arts Hongquan they practice as Shaolinquan.

The name Hongquan originates from the Heaven and Earth Society and is also known as Hongmen. For example, the "Church Origins Test" records: "What is 'Hongmen'? It was named after the reign of Emperor Taizu of the Ming Dynasty, Hongwu. It refers to the heaven as the father and the earth as the mother, so it is also known as the 'Heaven and Earth Society'... All allies, both are called Hongmen, and the door is also the door of the door, so it is also called the Hongjia." Therefore, all the boxing techniques practiced by Tiandi will be named Hongquan. Although Tiandihui tries to describe Hongquan as a boxing technique originating from Shaolin Temple, research proves that it came from Hongmen organization and is the product of Hongmen martial arts activities [7]; Therefore, the missionary process of the Tiandihui is also the spread of Hongquan. The Tiandihui organization spread from Fujian to the Pearl River Delta region, and Hongquan naturally spread from Fujian to Guangzhou Prefecture. The Hongmen disciples in the Pearl River Delta are undoubtedly Hongquan practitioners. However, the Tiandi Association is only a loose secret alliance, not a highly organized party. Although the Hongmen brothers from all over the world collectively refer to the martial arts they practice as Hongquan, their technical systems are not necessarily the same.

2.2 The martial tradition of Cantonese opera troupes and the Cantonese Tiandihui uprising

In the past, the Pearl River Delta region had a vertical and horizontal water network, and land transportation was inconvenient. The troupe traveled mainly by boats. And because all the carrying vessels are painted red, the Cantonese opera troupe is also called the Red Boat Troupe, and its performers are called Red Boat Disciples. Like other Chinese operas, Cantonese opera mainly uses "singing, reciting, acting, and fighting" as the main means of performance. Among them, "do" and "play" are the "wuxi" or "playing" in drama. As an important expression of Cantonese opera, fighting opera is performed by specialized martial arts students. Therefore, the disciples of the Red Boat have always had a tradition of practicing martial arts. It is a common phenomenon for members of ancient Chinese opera troupes to practice martial arts. As one of the basic means of human struggle, martial arts in the age of cold weapons has both the function of combat and the role of catharsis. Therefore, as early as the early days of human society, martial arts were often incorporated into various martial arts. In the Yuan Dynasty, folk martial arts began to be fully integrated into theatrical performances after losing the space for public practice under the strict prohibition policy. By the Ming and Qing dynasties, the practice of martial arts in opera troupes had become a tradition.

In the late Qing Dynasty, there was political corruption, social order was chaotic, and the people were struggling. There are millions of unemployed refugees in the Pearl River Delta region, and various criminal cases emerge one after another. In order to protect themselves, many people have to join secret organizations such as Tiandihui to seek asylum. At the same time, since the Ming and Qing dynasties, Guangzhou has been an important foreign trade port in my country. Prosperous industry and commerce and the custom of Cantonese people like to watch operas have made the performing arts in Guangzhou Prefecture particularly prosperous. Its grand occasion is just like the "Fen Shui Bamboo Branch Ci" written by Foshan people in the late Qing Dynasty, which recorded that "the song and dance competition in the pear orchard is prosperous, and a generation of red boats moored in the evening sand. But when the festival comes every year, thousands of people surround and watch Qionghua." The Red Boat Opera Troupe's business is booming, and it is naturally the best target for refugees to rob. In addition to performing martial arts, the martial artists of the troupe are also responsible for protecting the safety of personnel and property. Therefore, as soon as the Tiandi Association with the slogans of "Anti-Qing and Fuming" and "Unity and Mutual Aid" was introduced to Guangzhou, most of the members of Foshan "Qinghua Guild", the largest Cantonese opera guild in the Pearl River Delta, joined under the influence of Li Wenmao and others in.

Li Wenmao was not only a famous performer of the Cantonese opera troupe in the late Qing Dynasty, but also a martial arts leader of Qionghua Guild Hall. He is also the main founder and leader of Foshan Tiandi Club[8]. He organized the three armies with the martial arts artists in the play as the backbone, and in July 1854 launched the Guangdong Tiandihui uprising [9]. The insurgent army quickly captured more than 40 counties in Fuzhou within a few dozen days, but in the end, it was forced to move to Guangxi after barely holding on for more than 7 months under the counterattack of the Qing army in Guangzhou. According to Ren Junsan, the person in charge of the Cantonese Opera Guild Organization "Bahe Guild Hall", there were more than 1,000 artists from Qionghua Guild Hall who followed Li Wenmao's uprising at that time. The uprising lasted for 11 years (1854.6-1864.5), which dealt a heavy blow to the Manchu Qing regime, but when they evacuated from Guangdong, the Qing court immediately launched a hunt for the bandits. According to records, hundreds of thousands of people were arrested in the Pearl River Delta region at that time [10]. In the fifth year of Xianfeng (1855), Cantonese opera was banned by Tiandihui, Qionghua Guild Hall was destroyed, almost all the suspected insurgents were hunted down, and the surviving artists hid incognito everywhere.

3. The Legend and Historical Facts of Wing Chun Boxing

3.1 *The martial arts masters in the Cantonese opera class after the Tiandihui uprising*

The characters in the legend of Wing Chun have obvious identities. Most of its founders and early successors are set as "Shaolin disciples" or "Heaven and Earth Society members" with strong rebellious spirit and glorious heroic deeds. From Langui, the legend of Wing Chun has returned from the transcendent "heroism" to the "secular society". At present, the mainstream theory of the inheritance of Wing Chun in the later period is: Liang Botao, the legendary nephew Liang Langui, the husband of Yan Yongchun; Chen Huashun biography Chen Rumian, Wu Zhongsu and Ip Man and others, Ip Man biography Bruce Lee, Liang Shaohong, Liang Ting and so on [11].

"Lan Gui" and "Hua Bao" are the heroes of Cantonese Opera ZTE. There are indeed people in history, but they are both stage names rather than real names. At present, little is known about Huabao, while Lan Gui has a simple record. Lan Gui (1813-1886), whose original name was Xu Guiyou, scientific name Xianchang, was originally from Longguibeicun, Guangzhou. He began to study in Guangzhou at the age of 10 and later became a famous actor in Cantonese opera [12]. He is a "playing martial artist" and "Er Hua Mian" in the troupe, and changed his name to Lan Gui (1855) after the Guangdong Tiandihui uprising army moved to Guangxi and Cantonese opera was banned. Around the seventh or eighth year of Xianfeng (1857-1858), although the ban on Cantonese opera was still not lifted at that time, because the Cantonese opera class changed to the Jingban guise class has become more and more prosperous, the supply of Cantonese opera talents exceeded the demand. Therefore, profiteers have set up a special Cantonese Opera talent training organization "Cantonese Opera Class". At that time, there were as many as 17 or 8 classes in Guangzhou Yifu alone teaching children's arts. According to Ren Junsan's recollection: "The 'boy class' usually consists of seven masters who are divided into four groups to teach. Among them, two martial arts masters are responsible for the teaching of martial arts such as Wusheng, Xiaowu, Erhuamian, Liufen and Wujunhu. Artists from the former Qionghua Guild Hall must be hired to teach. At that time, there was a 'Celebrating Yuan Class' in Guangzhou. Surviving artists Lan Gui and Hua Bao and others taught for the master [13]." The Qingshang Yuan class trained five pillars of the Cantonese opera troupe, including Wu Sheng Kuang Xinhua, Xiao Wu Beng Yaqi, Hua Dan Jiao Po Mei, Xiao Sheng Yang Lun, and Ugly Sheng Sheng Gui Bao [14]. It was the efforts of the five of them that marked the reconstruction of the "Bahe Guild Hall", a guild organization of Cantonese Opera ZTE. Guangzhou Qingshangyuan Class was only opened for more than a year and was disbanded with the death of the owner, Wu Ziyuan. Later, Lan Gui held the "Qing Shangyuan" children's class in the former residence of Longguibe Village [15]. The boys' class was held until 1884, two years before Lan Gui's death.

Although Ren Junsan did not elaborate on the teaching content of the Cantonese Opera class, according to the experience of Lan Gui and Hua Bao and other surviving artists of the former Qionghua Guild Hall, it can be seen that as members of the former Tiandi Guild, they must have generally learned Hongquan. Later, as the main martial arts masters of the Cantonese Opera class, they will certainly spare no effort to continue to inherit the Hong Quan that they depend on for their lives. It's just that Hong Quan at that time has been renamed Wing Chun. This can also be proved from the legends related to Wing Chun. While legend is not historical fact, it is a reflection of fact.

3.2 The origin and technical form of Wing Chun

A legendary storyline doesn't represent the truth, its meaning lies in what's hidden behind its structure. As far as the legends of Wing Chun are concerned, they are not true in the plot but are a true reflection of historical facts. The Tiandihui organization originated in Fujian began to spread to Guangdong during the Jiaqing period. According to the "Recording of Supplementary Records", it is recorded that Chen Linan, a native of Tong'an, Fujian, came to Guangdong to work in the first month of Jiaqing six years [16]. By the Xianfeng period, the Heaven and Earth Society had become a common practice in the Pearl River Delta region of Guangdong. The members of Tiandihui not only practice martial arts generally, but they also call the martial arts they practice Hongquan or Shaolin Boxing no matter what they practice [17].

In order to improve their business and strengthen their combat capabilities, the members of the Cantonese opera troupe who were originally martial artists joined the Tiandi Association under the leadership of Li Wenmao and practiced Hong Quan. The Hongquan of Tiandihui is a broad concept of martial arts, rather than a specific technical system. The martial arts practiced by each branch and faction are not necessarily the same. This can also be proved from the complexity and variety of Hongquan Taolu drills today. The members of the troupe who survived the failure of the Guangdong Uprising of Tiandihui changed the name of the Hongquan they used to practice in order to hide from the public. They are naturally very familiar with the legend of Tiandihui and renamed Hongquan as Yongchunquan according to the story of the destruction of Southern Shaolin and the refuge of Shaolin disciples in Yongchun. This can also be proved from the technical form of the two. So far, many of the typical movements and terminology of Wing Chun are still highly similar or even identical to Hong Quan. For example, there are both: the typical two-toed pincer; the basic footwork triangle; the basic terminology long bridge, short bridge and bridge hand; the typical exercise equipment wooden man pile. In addition, Hongquan has "seven and a half sticks", and Wing Chun also has "six and a half sticks". Hongquan routines are created by imitating the action patterns of "dragon, tiger, lion, leopard, snake, crane, elephant, horse, monkey", while Wing Chun is mainly based on the action pattern of "snake and crane" competing. . Because the practice and use scenes of Wing Chun are mainly located in small spaces such as boats and stages, the action structure is restrained and the temperament type is similar to the reserved female behavior characteristics, so that the original "Yongchun", which was originally a place name, was personified and finally built into a legend of Wing Chun Chuang Quan said.

3.3 The significance of the legend and an important time node for the independent inheritance of Wing Chun

As far as the legend of Wing Chun is concerned, it is very obvious that the general Chuangquan legend model of traditional Chinese martial arts is applied. Through ingenious appendages, fictional characters and real events are combined to construct a story system that is both true and false and highly contagious, and finally achieves a "true and false, sometimes false, and true, and there is no action" effect. These legends that are difficult to distinguish between true and false, full of national emotions and mysterious colors undoubtedly played an extraordinary role in the early spread and development of Wing Chun. The legend has not only successfully shaped Wing Chun into a boxing style derived from a famous martial art, but also the legendary heroes have set a shining example for those who follow. This is very beneficial to constrain the behavioral norms of its disciples, improve their self-identity and strengthen the cohesion of the sect. At this time, the storyline is no longer important, and the technical system can be continuously improved in continuous iterations and finally form a unique combat style.

Today, although most of the characters in the legend of Wing Chun are no longer available, according to the history of the Tiandi Association, Hongquan was introduced to Dajiwei, Foshan, Guangzhou, about 220 years ago during the Jiaqing period (1796-1820). The survivors of Qionghua Guild Hall renamed the Hongquan they practiced as Wing Chun after the Tiandihui rebels left Guangdong (1855), so Wing Chun officially appeared less than 170 years ago. The Cantonese opera troupe martial artist who survived after the Tiandihui uprising left Guangdong was forced to change his name because he dared not mention the word Hongquan again. As the martial arts artist of the former Qionghua Guild Hall and the martial arts master of the Cantonese Opera class, Lan Gui and Hua Bao, who have been incognito for a long time, are the parties to the Hongquan renaming Wing Chun event and the main founders of the later Wing Chun technical system heir. According to the iconic Wing Chun training equipment "Wing Chun" standing on the bow of the Red Boat miniature model of the

Foshan Cantonese Opera Museum, it can be seen that after the failure of the Tiandihui Guangdong Uprising, Wing Chun was mainly secretly inherited in the Red Boat troupe [18]. In order to protect themselves from the surviving artists at that time, they quickly distanced themselves from the "Qiong Hua Guild Hall", and under the leadership of Lan Gui and others, the "Bahe Guild Hall" was established as a new guild organization for the Cantonese opera troupe. According to Ren Junsan's recollection: "The word 'eight' means the separation of the herringbone, and 'harmony' means that harmony is precious. 'Bahe' implies the separation of Cantonese opera practitioners from the Qionghua Guild Hall, which led the Guangdong Tiandihui uprising. ". At the same time, Cantonese opera performers returned to their old jobs under the guise of Peking opera. Therefore, the practice of martial arts by the disciples of the Red Boat was tacitly approved by the imperial court.

In the inheritance of Wing Chun, Liang Zan, a famous doctor in Foshan, is recognized as an important figure in carrying forward Wing Chun. Since then, Wing Chun was no longer limited to Cantonese opera troupes and began to spread to the outside world. Ryazan was previously restricted by the ban, and Wing Chun could only be passed on secretly in Cantonese opera troupes. Ryazan began to draw a clear line between the "Bahe Guild Hall" and the "Qiong Hua Guild Hall", and the disciples of the Red Boat were no longer regarded by the imperial court as remnants of the Heaven and Earth Association, so the boxers gradually broke the restrictions of blood and industry barriers and began to teach boxing for a fee. . Later, because of the high fee for Wing Chun, it was even called "Young Master Fist" and it entered the public eye, and finally became famous in martial arts with the efforts of wealthy children such as Ip Man and Xiao Lilong.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, Wing Chun originated from Hong Quan secretly practiced by artists from the "Qiong Hua Guild Hall", a branch of the Guangzhou Futuandi Association in the late Qing Dynasty. Cantonese opera was banned after the failed uprising of the Guangdong Tiandihui. In order to conceal the surviving artists, the original Hongquan practiced was renamed Wingchun and continued to be passed down. After the relaxation of the ban, Wing Chun, which has become quite distinctive, has gradually developed into a unique boxing system with the public teaching of artists from the original Qionghua Guild Hall. Although the legend of Wing Chun does not match the historical facts, they are of great significance to the inheritance of Wing Chun.

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