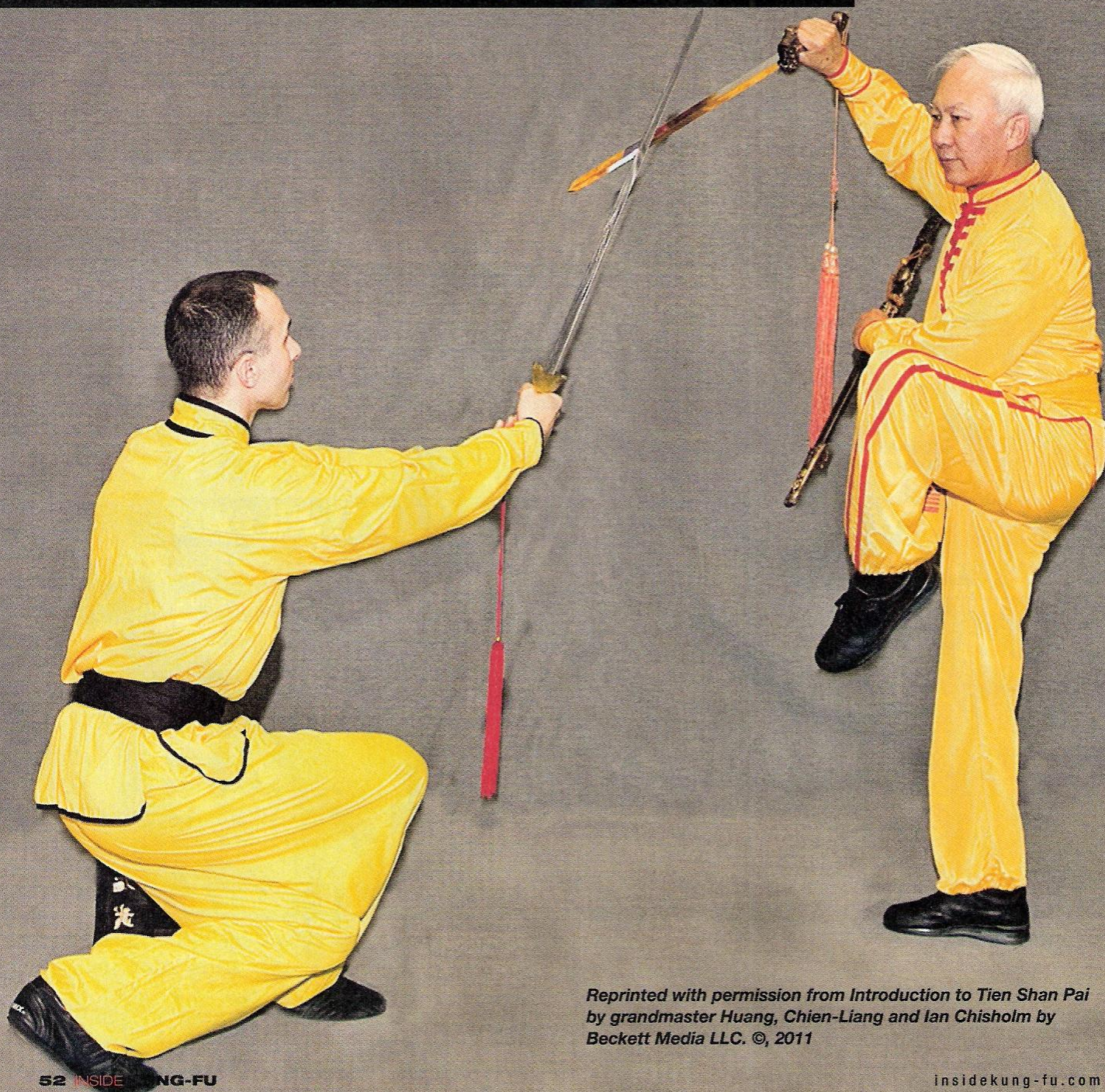


Back to Basics

TIEN SHAN PAI CONTAINS AN ARRAY OF KICKS AND PUNCHES THAT WILL SATISFY ANY TRADITIONAL STYLIST

By Huang, Chiang-Liang and Ian Chisholm



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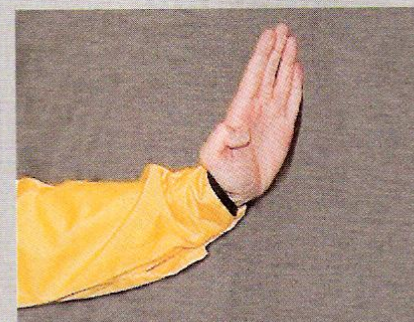
LI QUAN

In tien shan pai, it is characteristic to deliver a punch with the fist held vertically, known as li quan, a common northern style trait.



PING QUAN

Both forms and self-defense techniques will also utilize horizontal punches or ping quan. Generally speaking, the vertical punch is delivered more quickly, while the horizontal punch contains greater power.



LIU YE ZHANG

The palm strike is formed by extending the fingers and thumb while keeping them together tightly. This hand position is known as liu ye zhang, or willow leaf palm. The thumb and fingers should always be closed tightly together to create a stronger strike, as well as to prevent injury to the fingers. The striking area of the hand is referred to as the shou dao or "hand knife." The wrist should be bent with the fingers raised to deliver the strike with this part of the hand, which can be toughened and hardened through power training, such as iron palm.

Like all martial arts, tien shan pai utilizes the hands and feet offensively and defensively, as well as the legs, arms, knees, elbows, hips, shoulders and head. Depending upon the distance between opponents and one's level of training, different strikes using these different parts of the body can be employed.

Within tien shan pai, it is understood that kicking and punching are the most basic forms of striking, and are employed as long-range techniques. The second level of striking is more close range and involves striking with the elbows and knees. This level is more difficult to achieve; it requires the fighter to develop enough skill to close the distance between himself and an opponent.

However, it also offers greater defensive protection, because it applies more offensive pressure, making it more difficult for the opponent to counterstrike. The highest level or class of striking is done from very close range in which the tien shan pai stylist uses his shoulders, hips or head to deliver blows. It requires the greatest level of skill, while also offering the most difficult techniques against which to defend. At this close range, the tien shan pai fighter can put



tremendous pressure on an opponent, and utilize full-body power to strike, throw or sweep.

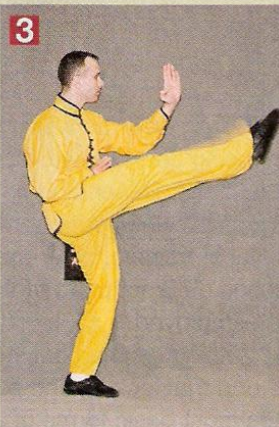
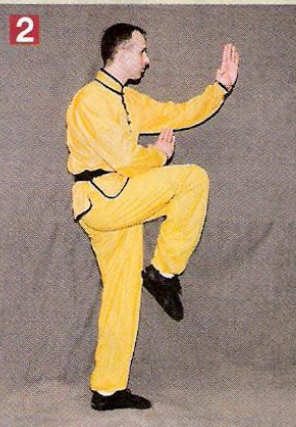
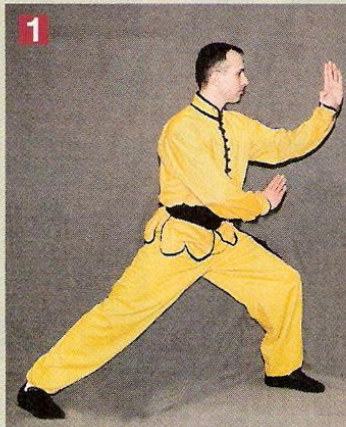
Making the Punch Effective

Basic hand-striking techniques are the punch and the palm strike. The punch is executed by grabbing a tight fist with the fingers curled into the palm and the thumb resting against the middle section of the fingers. The thumb should never extend beyond the fingers or rest inside the fingers, since this could result in serious injury. When delivering a punch, the arm should stay relaxed to allow the hand to travel forward with speed and deliver power all the way to the fist. Tensing the arm or shoulder causes the power of the blow to be diminished; it cannot flow freely to the hand. Impact is made with the first two knuckles (index and middle) of the striking hand. The wrist should be kept straight and firm to prevent it from bending at the moment of impact, which could also cause injury. 🐉

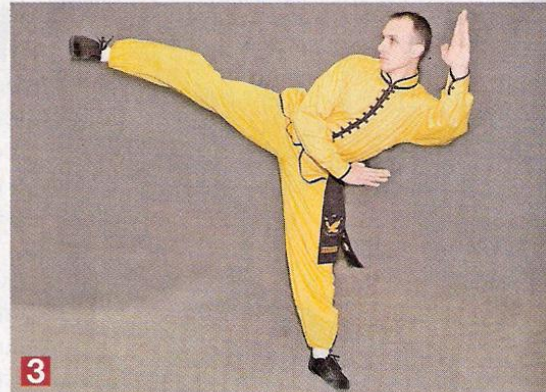
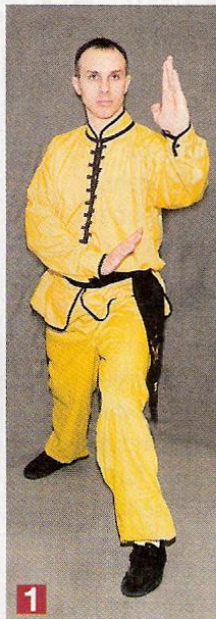
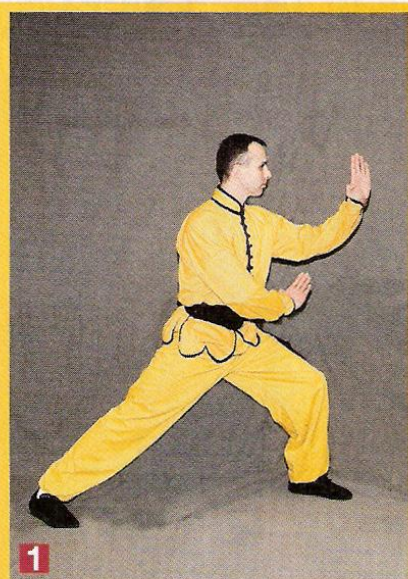


TIEN YING SHOU FA

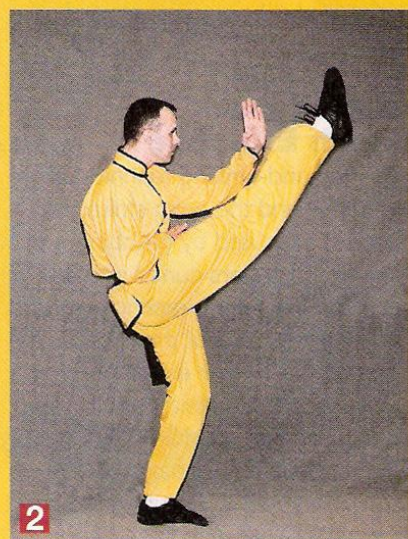
At its highest level of training, tien shan pai practitioners study tien ying shou fa, or "eagle claw" techniques. Trained through iron palm practice, throwing the bag, and other techniques, the hand develops strong grasping abilities, which enhance qin na and other grappling techniques. The eagle claw consists of the fingers held tightly together and bent at the middle joint, while the thumb remains open and bent to facilitate grasping.



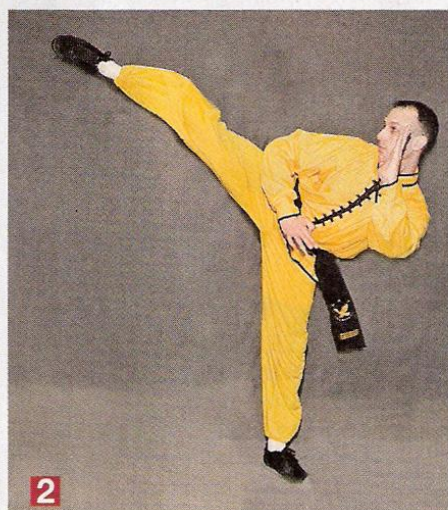
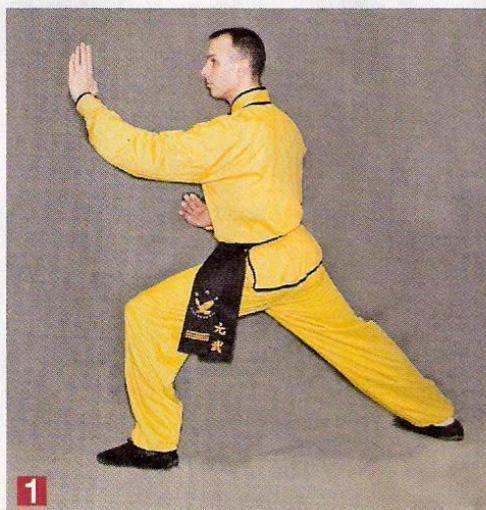
To perform a front snap kick, assume a gong bu stance with the right foot back (1). The left hand should be up, with the elbow bent so that the hand is about eye level to protect the head. The right hand should be under the left elbow to protect the body. The right and left hand form a classic guard position. Both hands should be held with the fingers and thumbs closed. Lift the right knee toward the chest (2) and quickly snap out the foot, pointing the toes down (3). This kicking posture in which the toes point down is known as tan tui. Execute the strike with the top or instep of the foot.



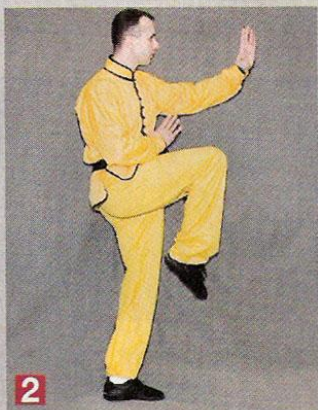
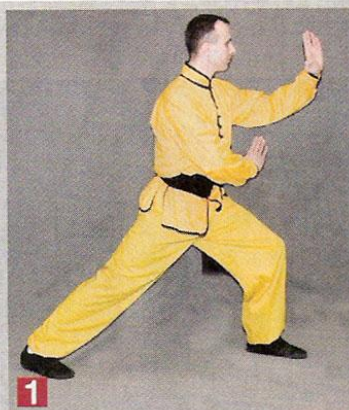
To execute a sidekick, begin from the gong bu stance with the guard (1). Lift the right knee toward the chest (2) and look to the right to focus on a target. Thrust the foot out to the right while pulling the toes back to deliver a forceful blow with the heel of the foot (3). Alternatively, the kick can also be delivered with the knife-edge of the foot between the heel and the small toe.



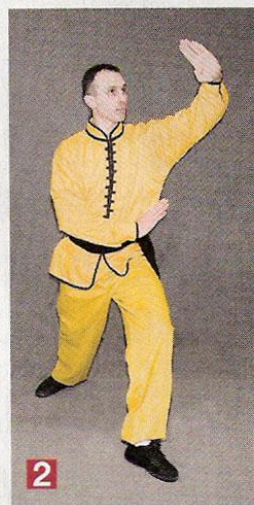
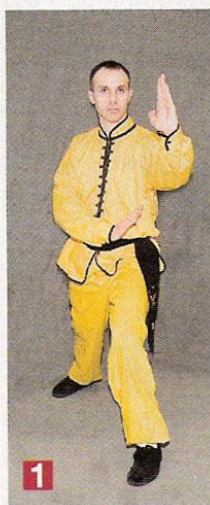
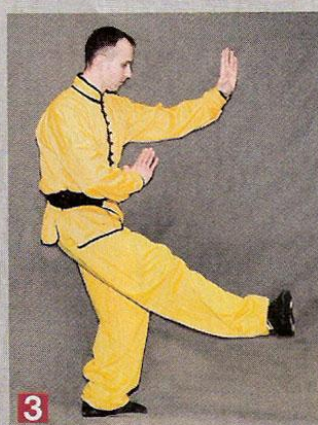
To perform a rising kick, assume a gong bu stance with the right foot back and your guard up (1). Kick up with the right foot, keeping the right knee straight and pointing the toes down (2). Execute the strike with the top of the foot, concentrating power to the toe. Step back down to a gong bu stance. The rising kick can be delivered to a variety of targets, including the groin, solar plexus or chin.



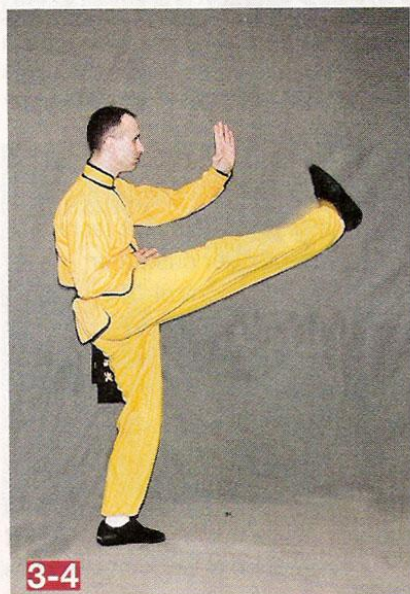
The roundhouse kick, or juan jiao, is one of the most widely used kicks in self-defense. It is extremely powerful, practical, and can be delivered to an opponent either high or low to hit such targets as the head, neck, ribs, thigh or knee. The roundhouse involves pivoting on the supporting leg to increase one's range of motion and to deliver strikes with greater power. To execute a roundhouse kick, begin from gong bu stance with the guard up (1). Open the left foot to approximately 45 degrees from center by pivoting on the heel and then lifting the right knee toward the chest. Continue to pivot on the ball of the left foot and snap the right leg out at the knee while rotating the hips to the left. Point the toes of the right foot and strike with the right instep (2). Bend the knee to bring the right foot back in toward the left knee and pivot back to the center on the ball of the left foot.



The thrust kick, or *chuai jiao*, can be applied to an opponent's knee or solar plexus. From the starting position of *gong bu* stance with the guard up (1), lift the right knee toward the chest (2) and then thrust the foot forward, pulling the toes back and striking with the heel (3). This kicking posture in which the toes point up is known as *tai tui*. When striking toward the solar plexus, point the toes straight up and strike with the heel.



The crescent kick, or *gua mian jiao*, earns its name from the arcing motion of the foot throughout the kick, which creates a shape similar to that of the crescent moon. Begin from a *gong bu* stance with the guard up (1). Open the left foot to 45 degrees from center by pivoting on the heel and simulta-



neously rotating the left arm out to block (2). Raise the right foot while keeping the right knee straight by kicking up (3) and then rotating the waist to the left. Strike the left palm with the arch of the right foot (4). Sink the body weight by bending the left knee and allowing the right foot to cross the left as it returns to the ground. Step back with the left foot to *gong bu* stance and assume the guard with the right hand up and the left hand under the right elbow. Repeat the kick with the left leg.