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HISTORY

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Baoding Shuaijiao: A critical analysis of teaching content

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Key words: Chinese martial art, Chinese wrestling, tradition, teaching content, curriculum

Abstract
Background. Many Chinese martial arts have been introduced to the West, and Chinese wrestling, more commonly known as *Shuaijiao*, is one of them. Three different styles are found in the West, with the *Baoding* style being the most widespread to date.
Problem and Aim. The problem investigated is whether the *Baoding* style maintains its original structure. The aim of the following study is to present an analysis on the teaching content of the *Baoding Shuaijiao* over printed books written in English mainly by Chinese authors, being accessible to occidental countries.
Method. This documental analysis used the method of classical content analysis through the perspective of Bauer and Gaskell [2002], specifically the one aimed at comparing a diverse range of texts and documents.
Result. Three books that matched these criteria were found by browsing websites. Despite being from authors whose teacher and institution were the same, the results pointed out a lack of convergence between the content presented in these works. What is noticeable is that each of those works presents a particular perspective over the same content, deepening certain elements in different ways and approaching others only superficially.
Conclusions. It is noticed that the original modality was influenced in its development through the experiences of Master Chang Dongsheng and his students at Taipei Central Police University. This implies processes of cultural adaptation and adequacy that Bourdieu [2004] calls social appropriation. Using Hobsbawm's [1997] view, there is still the perception of attempts to create new traditions for this ancient Chinese martial art.

Introduction

Asian culture has been spread around the world since the beginning of the 21st century, which includes martial arts. However, the process of intensification of this spread started with World War II due to migration movements, one of the results of this event. Besides the consequences of the war, the interest of the West in the distinct created the proper ground for the dispersion of Eastern culture. In this movement, many Chinese martial arts masters migrated to different countries far from Asia.

Particularly *Shuaijiao*, also known as Chinese wrestling, a Chinese martial art with the purpose of taking down opponents using projection techniques, arrived in the United States of America during the first half of the 1980's spreading out toward Brazil and other Latin-American countries later on [Antunes 2014]. In the same decade, the modality was introduced to European countries [Chen 2006]. Some Chinese researchers

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understand that the diffusion of the modality through Western countries is one of the important strategies for the maintenance and development of the sport [Su *et al*. 2004; Chen 2006; Chen, Qi 2012].

Shuaijiao is an ancient Chinese martial art modality where unarmed hands are used to bring the opponent down to the ground using projection techniques while preserving one's own balance [Li 2011]. This situation where the attacker stays standing with balance and the opponent falls toward the ground is known as the manifestation of a refined technique. On the other hand, although the sacrificial techniques, where the attacker sacrifices his position of balance to bring the opponent down, are allowed, they are not well-seen. Since there is no continuity of ground combat, *Shuaijiao* differs from Jiu-jitsu, Judo, and Olympic Wrestling besides having a prohibition over the usage of punches, elbows and knee strikes [Su *et al*. 2004; Zhang 2006; Ai 2008; Zhang 2019].

To many researchers, *Shuaijiao* is a synthesis of ethnic cultures that form the Chinese people. Thus, the technical multiplicity and the variability in nomenclatures stand for this diversity. Within this scope, many versions of the modality have developed themselves and were classified by the specialized literature as an ethnic or regional group, the latter being more common. According to some researchers, the *Beijing*, *Tianjing*, *Shanxi*, *Shanghai*, *Neimenggu*, and *Baoding* styles are the most popular of the regional stem. [Fu, Man 2009; Antunes 2014; Wang, Zhang 2015; Kang 2017]. Despite the diversity, some technical and cultural elements are common among them, such as *Jiaoyi*, a thick cotton vest (traditionally, some versions do not use it, such as the *Shanxi* one), footwork, named *Bufa*, techniques to grip the *Jiaoyi*, known as *Jiaoyi bawei*, techniques to grab the body, called *bawei*, techniques of hand movement, *Shoufa*, cushioning and rolling techniques, *Daodifa*, basic training, known as *Jibengong*, and projection techniques, named *Jiaoban*. This content organization is present in all versions of the modality in China. There are still subdivisions of the last two groups of content as follows: The *Jibengong* is divided into basic empty-handed training called *Tushou jibengong* and basic training with equipment known as *Qixie jibengong*. The *Tushou jibengong* can be categorized into Training of The Fundamental Physical Qualities called *Zhuanxiang su zhi jibengong* and Training of Basic Technical Abilities, *Jishu jibengong*. The *Jiaoban* is divided into two distinct groups: attacking techniques named *Jingong jishu* and counterattacking techniques known as *Fangong jishu*. Each group of content differently gains in quantity and in nomenclature depending on the version of the modality; however, this way of organizing the content within the modality is common to all different versions of Chinese *Shuaijiao*.

Shanghai, *Beijing,* and *Baoding* versions are the most often practiced in the West, with *Baoding* prominently being the first version to be introduced into the United States during the 1980s and later into other countries. The spread of this version was mainly due to Taiwanese professors and not the ones from the Chinese city of *Baoding*. The presence of the *Baoding* version on Taiwanese lands may have had an influence on the formulation of the content taught in the West by professors from this region. The characteristics of this version from Taiwan can be verified mostly through English-written books, unlike the available literature in China. In this sense, the aim of this study is an analysis of the teaching content of the *Baoding* style of *Shuaijiao* within the literature of the modality, written by Chinese or Taiwanese authors in English, available in the Occident.

It should be noted that the present study is part of the necessary discussion on the understanding and transmission of martial arts outside the original societies. It is important to understand that the senses and meanings of these practices are transformed in different cultures, creating new forms of use. This process takes place through the subjectivities of these new subjects that attribute new perspectives, objectives, and ways of practicing them, often different from the original activities [Bourdieu 2004]. Therefore, understanding the changes undergone by different social practices based on their transmissions and appropriations by other societies allows for a clear view of their development throughout history and their inherent transformation. This unveils the mysteries that tend to elude those who enjoy such activities.

Material and methods

This study is characterized as a qualitative documental analysis [Bauer, Gaskell 2002]. The search for the targeted literature was made through commercial websites, Google and Google Scholar between January 2022 and March 2022. Martial Arts, Wushu, Kungfu, Shuaijiao, Shuai Jiao, Shuai-jiao, Shuaichiao, Shuai Chiao, Shuai-Chiao, Swai jiao, Swai-jiao, and Chinese Wrestling were used as key-words. The time span was not set up as a result of the little scientific literature on this subject keeping in mind previous searches on Google Scholar, Medline, and Scielo, as well as the perspectives presented by Perez-Gutierrez *et al*. [2011].

The inclusion criteria considered books written in English that explain exclusively the *Shuaijiao Baoding* style presenting the teaching content or the curriculum of the modality and texts mainly written by Chinese and Taiwanese authors. The choice for these authors is justified by the reduction of possible interpretations of cultural translation discoursed by Burke [2009], thus maintaining the study closer to the exposition of the traditional culture. The English language was chosen to have in perspective its capillarity in terms of content diffusion in a wide range of countries.

Among ten books found during the search process, only three satisfied the criteria for inclusion. The Classical Content Analysis through the perspective of Bauer and Gaskell [2002] was the method used, especially the one used in order to compare a diverse range of texts and documents. In this sense, the aim is to explore possible convergences and divergences among the presented content within the selected work while establishing a dialogue with the specialized literature written in the Chinese language.

Content presented by the selected literature

The three selected works have a time span of 37 years, being the oldest published in 1984, the second in 2008, and the newest in 2021. They are still available for online and printed purchase. They have a diverse set of publishing, features and content, allowing different reading opportunities as seen in their following descriptions. It was chosen to present the structure of the selected books separated by chapters so that it is possible to perceive the differences in the organization of the contents of each one of them. This is not a review of each book, but an analysis of how each book reflects the authors' knowledge.

Shuaijiao as an Ancient Art of Combat: First Book in the English Language

The book Fundamentals of Shuai Chiao: The Ancient Chinese Fighting Art, was written by Professor Daniel Weng in 1984 and originally published by the International Shuai-Chiao Association [Weng 1984]. Professor *Weng Qixiu*, or Daniel Weng, was a student of master *Chang Dongsheng* in Taiwan, more specifically at Taipei's Central Police University, where *Chang Dongsheng* was one of its martial arts instructors. Originally, *Weng Qixiu* practiced and became a black belt in Judo and learned a diverse range of Kung Fu styles before starting his *Shuaijiao* studies in 1968. Already in the United States, in 1986, *Weng Qixiu* founded the United States Shuai Chiao Association in California and started the spread of the *Shuaijiao* he learned in Taiwan around many regions in the Americas.

His work is well structured, divided into nine chapters containing even pre-textual and post-textual parts. It follows the academic publishing standard, maybe due to his formation in Physical Education at the National Taiwan Normal University. The Chapters are organized in a way that allows a clear comprehension of the teaching content, making separated blocks of knowledge. The chapters are presented in the following order: 1) A brief history of Shuai Chiao; 2) Characteristics and techniques of Shuai Chiao; 3) Basic forms; 4) Applications of basic forms and throwing techniques; 5) Basic hand techniques and approaching gestures; 6) Grabs and breaks; 7) Training methods; 8) Falls; 9) Warm-up exercises. The first chapter shows a historical description of the *Shuaijiao* in a superficial way detailing the First Republic and going up to 1978. Since it does not present literary references that support the historical descriptions besides theoretical and practical content, it configures itself as an empirical report about the author's knowledge. There is only one moment when another author is cited, and it is for the highlighting of a *Shuaijiao* concept presented by Professor *Hu Shen-Wu* from the Taiwan Provincial Physical Education Institute, as follows:

Shuai Chiao is a kind of self-defense art, which is based on the natural, physical laws of force. Its purpose is to keep your own balance and to make the opponent lose his, taking him down. The methods and techniques of Shuai Chiao can be categorized as attacking, defending and responding to attack (countering) [as cited in Weng 1984: 1].

This concept emphasizes the technical aspect of *Shuaijiao*, where making the opponent lose his balance and throwing him to the ground are the main objectives, excluding kicking and punching techniques. In the second Chapter, there is the characterization of *Shuaijiao* as a system of self-defense with unarmed hands that form Chinese martial arts. Besides self-defense, its goal is the promotion of physical conditioning, body coordination and general physical and psychological well-being. It has a low occurrence of lesions regarding a safe and controlled practice. Despite these characteristics and the objective of destabilizing and throwing the opponent, Weng [1984] affirms that some teachings include punching, kicking techniques, articulation-immobilizing techniques and other forceful ones if necessary. However, the author highlights a diverse range of saying that describe the aspect of the modality of bringing down the opponent through projection and disequilibrium techniques as being its exclusive objective, such as "the moment you are touched is the moment you lose, or are thrown", "one year of Shuai Chiao training is superior to three years of training in any other fist style" [Weng 1984: 4]. Weng [1984] still emphasizes the general techniques that form *Shuaijiao* by showing what the Central Academy of *Guoshu* established at the end of the decade of 1920, as the repertoire of 24 techniques individually practiced that unfolded into many others. However, he affirms that there are 30 movements that form the general *Shuaijiao* repertoire.

In chapter 3, Weng [1984] presents the basic forms of the *Shuaijiao* repertoire learned in Taiwan. He shows 20 different ways of individual practice, despite affirming that there is historical evidence of up to 72 of them, reduced to 37, and then 24, and that master *Chang Dongsheng* taught only 16 of them. The author writes about the execution of the 20 techniques and points out some of the most common mistakes made in each one while using only the English language to name them. The list includes 1) Diagonal striking; 2) Neck surrounding; 3) Elbow locking; 4) Diagonal pulling; 5) March and kick;

6) Backward kicking; 7) Lower body control hip throwing; 8) Lower body control leg blocking; 9) Upper body control leg blocking; 10) Cracking; 11) Pushing; 12) Pulling; 13) Embracing; 14) Bowing; 15) Vertical lifting; 16) Leg seizing; 17) Inner hooking; 18) Horizontal throwing; 19) Shouldering; and 20) Thigh lifting.

In Applications of Basic Forms of Throwing Techniques, Weng presents 30 projection techniques while explaining the execution of each one of them: 1) Shoulder throw; 2) Outer shoulder throw; 3) Lower body control hip throw; 4) Upper body control hip throw; 5) Lifting arm hip throw; 6) Pulling; 7) Lower body control leg blocking; 8) Upper body control leg blocking; 9) Hand blocking throw; 10) Grabbing arm leg blocking throw; 11) Vertical lifting throw; 12) Embracing throw; 13) Thigh lifting throw; 14) Springing and twisting throw; 15) Outer springing throw; 16) Inner hooking throw; 17) Inner thigh thrusting throw; 18) Outer thigh thrusting throw; 19) Knee Seizing throw; 20) Floating throw; 21) Chopping throw; 22) Elbow locking throw; 23) Leading hand kicking throw; 24) Neck mopping throw; 25) Shaving throw; 26) Leg seizing throw; 27) Arm crossing leg seizing throw; 28) Lower inner hooking throw; 29) Cracking throw; and 30) Harmonious hands throw.

In Chapter 5, Weng [1984] writes about Approaching Gestures and the Basic Hand Techniques. The item Approaching Gestures is about the movement of both the arms and legs; however, it is written in a more generic manner. There is no deepening on the Center of Gravity Theme, the different types of steps, and the balancing surface. The theme of Arm Movement is also approached in such a superficial way that leaves the reader longing for more information, despite highlighting the importance of hand and footwork. In the final part, he makes an approximation toward the principles of *Taijiquan*, aiming to establish relations between this modality and *Shuaijiao*. However, it is not explained in a clear way what are the possible relations, being limited only to mention the capacity of feeling the opponent's force and intentionally redirecting it. Furthermore, he affirms that this is the highest level that a practice can achieve. In the Chinese specialized literature, there is a consensus about the separation of *Shuaijiao* from other modalities of Chinese Martial Arts that use Punches, kicks, and weapons [Ji 1994; Ai 2008; Fu, Man 2009; Li 2011; Su 2011; Wang, Zhang 2015; Kang 2017]. In the history of Chinese martial arts, there is the existence of three different groups known as *Quanjiao*, 'Punching and Kicking Methods', *Shuaijiao*, 'Methods of Taking the opponent Down', and *Wuqi*, 'Methods with Weapons', that evolved as different independent groups and under certain cultural and historical contexts came together and separated again. In the West, Chinese Martial Arts are comprehended as a sole group of martial arts, generalizing all the diversity of activities under the term of *Gongfu* or Kung Fu. In the item of Basic Hand Techniques, the author lists 15 hand techniques to be used in different situations. He highlights the importance of this group of techniques by quoting a proverb from. Chinese Martial Arts: "The hands are like two gates for both you and your opponent – you have to open the gate of your opponent to enable you to enter with your leg for an attack" [Weng, 1984: 39].

Grabs and breaks follow the same structure as the previous chapter, as it presents a list of techniques divided into two items: 1) Grabs; 2) Breaks. The item Grabs presents the importance of techniques to grab the opponent, controlling and destabilizing them in order to execute the projection techniques. Weng [1984] demonstrates 10 ways to grab the opponent's *Jiaoyi* explaining that the time between grabbing and taking him down determines the technical level of the practitioner. The item Breaks lists 10 techniques to free oneself from the opponent's grabbing techniques and explains the purpose of each one, avoiding the opponent's control over the practitioner.

In Training Methods, three types of training are described and divided into: 1) Empty-handed Methods; 2) Belt-Cracking; 3) Training Methods with Equipment. The Empty-Handed Training section presents the Training of Foundations with 12 different static stances. Due to the dynamic nature of *Shuaijiao* combat, static training is not commonly considered a good fighter preparation strategy, since they do not fully apply to the functionality of the fighting techniques [Li, Hu 2009]. Subsequently, Weng [1984] cites the Training of Running on Hills as an excellent method toward the development of physical resistance, agility, velocity and balance. Lastly, the author suggests the Walking-in-Low-Posture-Training as a way of favoring the development of leg strength and resistance. The section Belt Cracking presents nine exercises that use the belt, affirming that this training is fundamental to the development of strength and grip force of the arms, which are crucial combat elements. In the last section of this chapter, eight different pieces of equipment are introduced: 1) Grasping vine; 2) Vine pole; 3) Hanging wood pole; 4) Striking hanging bags; 5) Throwing sacks of ball-bearings; 6) Twisting bricks; 7) Holding bottles; 8) Pulling on weighted pulleys. The introductions are superficial and do not allow the full understanding of the training. Although only three pieces of equipment are illustrated, their illustrations leave many doubts about them. The manner in which the training equipment is presented in numeric terms and in terms of a superficial description may lead either to a depreciation of this tradition in the preparation of practitioners or to a low practical contact of the author with them. Training equipment is a set of the important cultural heritage of *Shuaijiao* in which the preservation is vital for the development of the modality, as the Chinese authors emphasize [Ji 1994; Fu, Man 2009; Li 2011; Su 2011]. On the other hand, it is possible to speculate that Weng [1984] is reshaping his curriculum to adapt to Western demands. Or even, the prospect of devalu-

ing equipment training had already been present in the *Shuaijiao* curriculum at Taipei Central Police University.

Falls are presented by the rolling and cushioning techniques. Weng [1984] emphasizes that due to the features of *Shuaijiao,* these techniques are fundamental to the preservation of the practitioner's health during the matches and training, where falling is usual. In addition to the explanations of the stances that the practitioner must have during their execution, the author presents seven different exercises. Finally, in Warm-up exercises, Weng [1984] introduces a series of 20 exercises for warming up. Some of them are similar to the exercises presented in Chapter 3, leading the reader to some kind of confusion regarding the organization, characterization and function of the proposed exercises.

Considering the time that the book was written, Weng [1984] presents the teaching content in an organized way despite leaving some technical aspects discussed in a superficial manner. It is possible to identify differentiated sections that contemplate the history of *Shuaijiao*, the characterization of the modality, body warm-ups, rolling and cushioning techniques, basic training methods and projection techniques, even though they are approached in a diffuse and superficial way. Nevertheless, there is an effort by the author to organize the content to better present it, which may be linked to his academic background.

Shuaijiao as a theory of unarmed combat

The book Chan-Chiao Theory: The Art and Science of Combat Shuai-Chiao written by David Lin (1947-2017) was published in 2008 by Chen Kwan Book Co., Ltd. Professor David Lin, also known as *Lin Qikai*, was a student of Master *Chang Dongsheng* in Taiwan from his childhood to when he instructed Martial Arts at Taipei Central Police University. He was considered even by his contemporary practitioners the best student of Master *Chang Dongsheng*. After many years under the orientation of his master, David Lin migrated to the United States of America along with John Wang, Victor Ke, and Brian Wu, also Master Chang's disciples, and founded the American Combat Shuai Chiao Association in 1990. The work written by Professor Lin is a synthesis of his and his friend's comprehension of *Shuaijiao* applied to real combat situations, a result of their studies of Chinese Martial Arts at Taipei Central Police University under the orientation of Master *Chang Dongsheng*. The book does not present literary references that support technical and theoretical conceptions. He describes a style of combat named Combat Shuai-Chiao, or Chan-Chiao, taught in the United States as a way to promote the knowledge he learned from his master in Taiwan. Here, there is a clear signalization from the author that the composition of these contents is a new way of introducing the learned knowledge from his experience at Taipei Central Police University.

The book is divided into two parts in which the first one approaches theoretical elements, while the second one concentrates on the technical aspects. The first part is an introduction that groups the history of *Shuaijiao* and the directing principles of Combat Shuai-Chiao, such as moral elements and those of etiquette, including the three aspirations and three prohibitions taught in the Chan-Chiao System related to the philosophical dimension of the martial arts. Regarding the history of the modality, Lin [2008] presents a general and superficial view of *Shuaijiao*, including a nostalgic look at ancient traditions related to the battlefields, thus criticizing the sportization process that the modality has undergone since the decade of 1930s. Regarding the auto-education, the chapter develops themes of etiquette and morality that circumscribe the fidelity toward the Master, the behavior of a gentleman when practicing with fighters from other modalities or schools, and that one's actions must be fast and feral when exposed to a survival situation, allowing, however, the opponent's self-evaluation regarding their own expertise level for the combat. In the item where Lin [2008] writes about the three aspirations and three prohibitions, he highlights that one must develop techniques for self-defense and then aim toward physical force and health improvement, and finally, work in search of amusement, leisure and the amplification of social relations through the practice. As prohibitions, the author emphasizes that one ought not to waste time practicing useless or harmful techniques or taking part in high-risk competitions. Lin [2008] always brings to discussion the aspect of self-defense, which in fact, helps to develop the classic *Shuaijiao* curriculum, introducing punching and kicking techniques in its practice as seen in the description of the second part of the book. This approach disregards the nature of *Shuaijiao* as an art of self-defense on its origins, as considered by many scholars [Ji 1994; Fu, Man 2009; Li 2011; Su 2011; Wang, Zhang 2015; Kang 2017].

The second part of the book presents the technical curriculum of the Chan-Chiao divided into technical groups: 1) Projection Techniques; 2) Kicking Techniques; 3) Punching Techniques. The author writes in detail about projection techniques presenting a content structure divided into the following organization: A) Four Sides and Two Gates; B) Butterfly Hands; C) Eel Catching - Body Handle Throw; D) Throw Kick, Punch and Lock. Even though Lin [2008] introduces punching and kicking techniques as part of the curriculum, the emphasis on projection techniques is noticeable, highlighting the proximity toward the original instances of the modality. Besides the number of presented techniques, the importance given to the projection by emphasizing its efficiency is clear when compared to punches and kicks. In this sense, the author cites a known proverb of the Chinese *Shuaijiao* that goes as follows: "Three years of training fist forms is not as useful as one year of learning Shuai-Chiao" [Lin 2008: 10].

The item Four Sides and Two Gates describes 30

projection techniques organized by the position of application upon the opponent's body. The Four Sides refer to the strikes on the internal or external parts of the opponent's leg forward or backward in the moment of combat. In this way, the first side refers to the external part of the opponent's front leg, the second side is the internal part of the opponent's front leg, the third one is the internal region of their back leg and the fourth one is the external part of the opponent's back leg. Lin [2008] lists the most adequate techniques for each one of these sides as described in the following. First side: Forward kick, Scooping, Sticking kick, Trunk hitting, Advance squeeze. Second side: Spring, Back hooking kick, Foot entangling, Inner hook, Inner knee seizing. Third side: Fireman's carry, Foot picking, Inner kick, Inner heel sweep, Inner sickle. Fourth side: Break, Back kick, Knee seizing, Front cut, Sickle hooking. And then, the author presents the two gates as a list of techniques used when grabbing the opponent from their front (Front gate) or from their back (Back gate). Front gate: Wheeling, Pressing, Spine lock, Lifting, and Overhead. Back gate: Back sickle, Back raising, Shoving, Back inner hook, and Leg bending lift. Even though the terms are written in English, Lin [2008] adds the Chinese terms.

In Butterfly Hands, there is a list of the most usual responses to different types of grabs in combat, often taught by Master *Chang Dongsheng*, besides the combination of those responses to the projection techniques presented in the former item. The author named this group "Butterfly Hands" as a homage to his master, known as "Iron Butterfly". The list is made of 30 techniques related to the action of grabbing the opponent's *Jiaoyi*. The item Eel Catching - Body Handle Throw presents grabbing and controlling techniques that are used upon different parts of the body, with the goal of avoiding an attack and applying projection techniques. The grabbing techniques and their respective responses to cease the grabs are known in the specialized literature as *Shoufa*, representing the group of grabbing, preventing and ceasing the grabs on the *Jiaoyi* or other body parts, such as arms, neck, waist and legs [Chen 2006; Ai 2008; Fu, Man 2009; Li 2011; Su 2011; Qi 2012]. In the Item Throw, Kick, and Lick, the Author makes a quick introduction about the importance of punching and kicking techniques, as well as controlling techniques in articulations combined with the projection techniques for self-defense.

The group of kicking techniques is divided by Lin [2008] into three subgroups: Low Kicks, Middle-height Kicks and High-Kicks. The author demonstrates a variety of kicking techniques, but without connecting them to the projection techniques previously presented. The presented punching techniques also follow the same logic of disconnection with projection techniques. The book does not introduce anything new to the combat dynamic of *Shuaijiao*. The combination of the projection techniques with the punching and kicking techniques may be verified frequently in the literature written about *Sanda*, also known as Chinese Boxing [Xiao, Sheng 2006], and in the literature about Mixed Martial Arts in China [Yao, Yao 2017]. Lin [2008], however, does not make this connection. Even in those cases, projection techniques are related to the responses to punches, kicks, and grabs. Thus, it is not usual that striking techniques are exclusively present in the literature on *Shuaijiao*.

The book Written by Lin [2008] is the release of a reinterpretation of *Shuaijiao*, highlighting the self-defense aspect. Nevertheless, projection techniques are protagonists in the book. The inclusion of punching and kicking techniques does not collaborate with the author's idea of releasing a differentiated curriculum since these techniques do not interact with the projection techniques. In this context, the author has left out important elements from the technical culture of *Shuaijiao*, such as basic individual training techniques and the training with equipment, emphasized by a wide range of specialists as elemental toward the development of specific abilities of the modality [Ji 1994; Fu, Man 2009; Li 2011; Su 2011; Antunes 2014; Wang, Zhang 2015; Kang 2017]. This choice of curriculum shows an attempt to create a new modality, the Chan-Chiao or the Combat Shuai-Chiao, that can be influenced by the reinterpretation that the *Baoding* style of *Shuaijiao* underwent through Master *Chang Dongsheng*'s experiences at Central Academy of *Guoshu* of *Nanjing* and at Taipei Central Police University. This project of creating a new version of *Shuaijiao* is already declared in the introduction of the book by the author.

The Reaffirmation of Shuaijiao as a Tradition

The third selected work, titled Chinese Wrestling: A Tradition of Combat, was written by Jeng Hsing-Ping, James Chin and David Ross, and published by the Chinese Swai Jiao Association in 2021. It presents experiences, conceptions, and content learned in Taiwan by Professor Jeng under the orientation of Master *Chang Dongsheng*. Professor Jeng Hsing-Pin, also known as *Zheng Xingping*, was a student of *Chang Dongsheng* in Taiwan, becoming Chief Instructor at Taipei Central Police University, where he taught *Shuaijiao* through the perspective of his master. He incorporated techniques to his *Shuaijiao* repertoire from *Qinna* learned from Master *Han Qingtang*, and from *Babu tanglang quan* learned from Master *Wei Xiaotang*. In 1971, he moved to New York, USA, where he founded the Swai Jiao Association in 1986. James Chin, also known as *Chen Zhimin*, became a student of Professor Jeng Hsing-Ping in the USA after training in the Long-Fist style KungFu for many years. He received the authorization to teach *Shuaijiao* in 1986, being later responsible for the standardization of the curriculum of the modality in the Chinese Swai Jiao Association. David Ross is one of the book authors, a student of Professor James Chin, member of the Chinese Swai Jiao Association, and author of books on Martial

Arts, *Shuaijiao*, and Chinese culture. He has practiced other modalities, such as *Hong quan*, *Lama pai*, *Baimei quan*, *Xingyi quan* and *Bagua zhang*.

The work is organized in the structure of a manual without sequential chapters, uniting a series of texts with low academic organization, but aiming to deliver the content about the *Shuaijiao* that is taught in the Chinese Swai Jiao Association. In the Pre-textual section of the book, there is a series of messages, photos and three different prefaces. The book section consists of a text about the modern history of *Shuaijiao* and the development of the sport, albeit superficially. Next, another text is presented with only two sayings from *Shuaijiao*, not making any connection with the other contents. The following text presents a translation with comments on a list of students of Master *Chang Dongsheng*. Afterward, brief biographies of Professors Jeng Hsing-Ping and James Chin are presented, ending with a description of the teacher lineage within the Chinese Swai Jiao Association, where the name David Ross is introduced. Then, it is presented a text about the composition of *Shuaijiao*, initially bringing up some historical aspects and some questions over the technical repertoire, even citing the Mongol and Manchu ethnicities as the interlocutors of the *Shuaijiao* from the Han Ethnicity. According to the authors, this dialogue generated a hybridism known today as the modern *Shuaijiao*. They disregard the historical construction of *Shuaijiao* under the influence of other ethnicities, including some Western Asian nomads [Li 2011; Su 2011; Wang, Zhang 2015]. The authors complement the composition of the modality by affirming that during the Qing Dynasty (1616 - 1911) there were between 80 to 88 different technical principles, though stating that there is no documental register of them. Additionally, they suggest that even one principle may have 40 variations, citing *Ti* as an example. Finally, they affirm that the Chinese Swai Jiao Association's curriculum is based on 84 principles that mimic the curriculum from *Shanpuying*, a group of *Shuaijiao* from the Qing dynasty, again saying that there are no documental registers of this curriculum. In the last paragraph of this text, they state that the organized knowledge used by Professor Jeng for his teachings at Taipei Central Police University, structured for police officers and military corps, is a foundation for the curriculum of the Chinese Swai Jiao Association. In this sense, the *Baoding* style of *Shuaijiao* taught by Professor Jeng is more focused on the self-defense conceptions of the modality. The influence of the police and military context on this reinterpretation of this version of *Shuaijiao* in Taiwan is, thus, noticeable.

Regarding the technical scope, Jeng *et al.* [2021] present four texts: Falling method, Shuai jiao basics, Shuai jiao 84 methods, and Shuai jiao belt cracking. In the Falling Method, a one-page-text, the authors highlight the importance of training and the differentiation of *Ukemi* from Judo by the usage of head-protection gear for the cushioning of the head for injuries that may occur from falling. They list only seven techniques without describing them deeply, stopping the reader from understanding the cited difference between judo and *Shuaijiao*. The text on the fundamentals of Shuai jiao refers to the basic individual training known in the specialized literature as *Jibengong*, important for guiding the development of specific skills within the modality [Ji 1994; Li 1996; Fu, Man 2009; Li 2011; Su 2011; Zhu 2013; Wang, Zhang 2015; Kang 2017]. However, Jeng *et al.* [2021] begin the text with a criticism of this type of training, affirming that it is a non-authentic invention and that it configures itself as an influence of *Wushu*[1] *Taolu*[2]. Nevertheless, they justify the existence of this type of content by referring to the National Chinese Army training, since they were incorporated, probably by the Central Academy of *Guoshu* and organized by the general *Ma Liang*. Even though they criticize and undervalue the *Jibengong*, they list eight exercises without describing or explaining them to the reader. The eight exercises are: Walking methods, Steal step, Diagonal striking, Elbow locking, Neck surrounding, Diagonal pulling, March and kick, and Backward kicking.

The text Shuai Jiao 84 Methods is the longest of the book. Initially, it explains that these 84 methods were selected by Professor Jeng for the constitution of the Chinese Swai Jiao Association's curriculum. They advise that the presentation of these 84 methods does not have an introduction or learning order. This introduction of content does not follow the pedagogical orientations of any source, being mainly a list of the knowledge that Professor Jeng learned and that is taught in his Martial Arts school in New York. When analyzing the 84 methods, a mixture of *Jiaoban*, or projection techniques, with techniques to block attacks, cease grabs and walking methods, or *Bufa*, is noticeable. All of this includes techniques of floor progressions and *Qinna*, or 'controlling techniques in articulations', while considering the variations of the same technique as a sum on the presented method numbers. In the specific *Jiaoban* techniques, the authors do not separate the attack and counterattack techniques. This division can be noticed in the specialized Chinese literature [Ji 1994; Chen 2007; Fu, Man 2009; Li 2011; Su 2011; Zhu 2013; Hu, Chen 2014]. In this literature, there is also a consensus over the inexistence of ground fighting within *Shuaijiao*, and that *Qinna* techniques must be used in self-defense or military contexts. In this sense, the text shows a clear influence of the knowledge related to the military context learned by Professor

1 The term that refers to the group of Chinese Martial Arts, predominantly those that use weapons, punching and kicking techniques.

2 The term that refers to the standardized attacking and defending sequences, forming the modern Chinese Martial Arts curriculum. It implies a standardized training, either individually, or in groups, that shows the technical repertoire of a certain modality, school or style.

Jeng at Taipei Central Police University, highlighting the interference of knowledge from judo in this space using the nomenclature from this Japanese art to explain some techniques incorporated into *Shuaijiao*.

Next, there is the text Shuai Jiao Belt Cracking which describes three pages of five different exercises, despite the photos not describing all of them. Jeng *et al*. [2021] consider this type of exercise essential for the development of both explosive force and gripping force. The authors do not list any equipment for the *Shuaijiao* training, disregarding the existent repertoire for the development of the modality found in the specialized literature [Ji 1994; Chen 2007; Fu, Man 2009; Li 2011; Su 2011; Zhu 2013; Hu, Chen 2014; Antunes 2014; Chen 2014]. The training with the belt is one of the components of the training with equipment, traditionally known as *Qixie jibengong*, as mentioned in the introduction section of this study. It is considered a cultural heritage from *Shuaijiao* in China and a synthesis of the culture and knowledge of the Chinese people throughout history. In works such as those of Li [1996], Fu and Man [2009], Li [2011] and Su [2011], at least eight different belt exercises, known as *Pitiao*, originally made from leather, were listed. The exclusion of other traditional practice equipment for *Shuaijiao* may point toward a premeditated strategy, an intentional exclusion that emphasizes a new tradition, or even a disregard for their importance. Nevertheless, it may also be related to the lack of knowledge of the original tradition of the modality by the authors.

In the next text, Jeng *et al*. [2021] dissect some aspects of Master *Chang Dongsheng*. They highlight important historical facts about him, his history and his accomplishments as a *Shuaijiao* fighter. They emphasize at the end the relation between Professor Jeng and Master Chang. In the next text, the authors present the *Jiben liangong*, a list of exercises related to breathing techniques, or *Qigong*. There is not a detailed description of the exercises that allow their comprehension, not even mentioning if they are aligned with a specific *Qigong* school, despite the authors stressing a link between the *Baoding* style of *Shuaijiao* and the *Hui* ethnicity. This information on ethnicities does not help in understanding the 24 exercises shown only through photos. There are two texts in the final part, one regarding the biography of David A. Ross, one of the authors, and the second one citing a brief biography of the Chinese Swai Jiao Association, stressing the commitment of Professor Jeng to the promotion of the authentic *Shuaijiao* in the USA, preserving the *Baoding* style taught by master *Chang Dongsheng*.

Convergences and divergences of the analyzed contents

The three selected works were written by authors who had a relation with the teachings of Master *Chang Dongsheng*. The *Shuaijiao* knowledge of professors Weng, Lin, and Jeng was acquired through the context of the Taipei Central Police University, where there is a certain military influence in the curriculum. For certain, the *Shuaijiao* teaching content was linked to this perspective, including the previous experience of Master *Chang Dongsheng* in China, when he served in the nationalist military acting in the Central Academy of *Guoshu* in *Nanjing*, where he witnessed the standardization of the Chinese martial arts with an approach that was fit for the military corps. This bag of knowledge related to the police and military context in a certain way may have delimited the curriculum learned by the referred authors in Taiwan. However, the works walk on diverging paths regarding the structure and the curriculum composition that is currently taught in the West by them.

Weng's work [1984] is more organized, and close to what can be found in the specialized Chinese literature. He presents content about the *Shuaijiao* history, characteristics and techniques such as basic forms, applications of basic forms and throwing techniques, basic hand techniques and approaching gestures, grabs and breaks, training methods, falls, and Warm-up exercises. Nevertheless, the content is not close in similarity to the one that forms the Chinese specialized literature, except in some projection techniques. There is superficiality in the historical approach and a tendency to treat the self-defense aspect as the main focus of the modality, even if it is done only through conceptualization. The nomenclature does not conform to the Chinese one verified in the specialized literature, and there is some confusion within the understanding of the differences between basic forms and training methods. Finally, there is a disregard toward the training with equipment, strengthening a diversion from the traditionally practiced content in China.

Lin's work [2008] shows a strong reinterpretation of the Chinese *Shuaijiao*. He presents a superficial text over its history, articulating ethical and moral values of the modality, yet specifically related to Master Chang's teachings. He brings up the collaboration of his practice friends to find the structure of a martial art that emphasizes self-defense. The book divides the technical aspect into projections, punches, and kicks, yet without presenting a solid articulation among these three areas. In the projection section, there is a deeper understanding of the structural organization of the separated technical groups, working with the Four Sides and Two Gates, with a special highlight to the group titled "Butterfly Hands". There is still an item presenting hand techniques for grabbing and blocking the opponent's grabs in different parts of the body without the *Jiaoyi*. The book clearly releases a new curricular structure, including a nomenclature different from the original modality with the purpose of creating a new tradition in the meaning proposed by Hobsbawm [1997], stressing the self-defense aspect as the guiding one of the modality.

Jeng 's [2021] book follows a different path from the other two in terms of its structure. The book is carefree with the logical organization of the teaching content; they are presented randomly. Another example of this is the fact that the book starts with two biographies and ends with almost another one. There is a depreciation of some classical content, as with the *Jibengong*, 'empty-handed training' and the *Qixie Jibengong*, 'training with equipment'. Some other important pieces of content are cited: *Shoufa*, 'hand techniques', and *Dao di fa*, 'Rolling and cushioning techniques'. Like the other books, the texts about the history of the modality are superficial and do not present deeply its genesis and development. The authors spend a considerable number of pages to write about the 84 methods with the objective of introducing the projection techniques. Nevertheless, they mix them up with some other techniques such as blocking techniques, falling techniques, ceasing grabs, leg and footwork, ground techniques, and other ones. At first, it seems that this strategy is linked to a low comprehension of its fundamentals. On the other hand, it may indicate that there is an international strategy to construct a new way of comprehending the modality, conforming it to the demands of the West while trying to form a new tradition of martial arts.

It is perceptive that the three books have some convergent and divergent aspects. In reference to the common content, projection techniques may be cited. This content occupies a central role in all analyzed works, despite the existing differences in terms of quantity of techniques, such as the 30 techniques presented by Weng [1984], 60 from Lin [2008], and 84 from Jeng *et al.* [2021]. Weng's [1984] 30 techniques in chapter 4 are directly related to the 20 basic forms presented in chapter 3. Lin's [2008] 60 projection techniques are divided in two main groups, being the first one related to specific principles and the second one a variation based on grabbing the *Jiaoyi* and their responses, which seems more like a variation from the first group than something new or different. The 84 methods presented by Jeng *et al.* [2021] are a collage of different techniques such as falling blockage, ceasing grabs, movement techniques, variations on projection techniques and ground techniques. In this context, the projection techniques are drastically reduced.

There is a clear divergence in the nomenclature of the different techniques in the three books. The nomenclature of the projection techniques diverges significantly. Nevertheless, it must be considered that there are differences among the accents and writings of the diverse ethnic Chinese groups, including Taiwan, that adopt a different phoneme romanization system and the maintenance of the ancient ideograms. However, there are still important differences among the authors that learned from the same master, in the same temporal and regional context. This may point toward the different cultural baggage and goals in the development of the modality. The statement of preserving Master Chang's teachings is present in all works, but with the absence of its guarantee, since all three differ in nomenclature, technique listing and curricular organization when compared to each other.

Conclusion

Shuaijiao is a modality that is present in different countries today, both in the West and in the East. Its expansion dates to the decade of the 1980s, continuing its diffusion in other countries. The *Shuaijiao* from *Baoding* was the first version to spread in the West, leaving important marks on the knowledge of a wide range of people. However, there are significant differences that are verifiable when observing the modality in Taiwan.

This study aimed to investigate these differences through document analysis of books published by authors who learned *Shuaijiao* in Taiwan, specifically those who learned *Shuaijiao* with Master *Chang Dongsheng*. It is noticeable through the analysis that there is a great distance between the Chinese *Shuaijiao* and the one learned in Taiwan. The differences in teaching content, nomenclature, and other cultural aspects are shown in the analysis of these documents mainly when compared to the specialized Chinese literature. It is possible to see a clear movement to emphasize the axis of self-defense, justifying the curricular organization of the modality, besides the devaluing of some traditionally incorporated *Shuaijiao* content in China. The differences are perceived in the comparison between the analyzed works, where the authors have in common their Master's and Chinese works. It is clear that the original modality has suffered influences in its trajectory of development mainly through the experiences of Master *Chang 1 Dongsheng* at the Central Academy of *Guoshu* in *Nanjing* and at Taipei Central Police University. This implies processes of adaptation and cultural adequation that Bourdieu [2004] refers to as social appropriation.

Martial arts face dilemmas and challenges in their development and transmission to future generations, whether in the East or in the West. The transmission of these practices to people other than those who originally created them implies that they are subject to re-readings, translations, and interpretations. These different perspectives arise from the process of cultural translation, as understood by Burke [2009], which is a natural phenomenon when two cultures or peoples come into contact. It is through this translation that new possibilities for practice emerge, allowing new individuals to approach these activities and introduce new elements to their content while removing others. Understanding that this dynamic offers a broader view of the possibilities for the development of martial arts is a great challenge for practitioners and researchers in this field.

It is understandable that this study has limitations, since other works about the *Shuaijiao* from Taiwan were not analyzed, such as documents, videos, and observations of teaching practices, aiming to investigate technical and cultural content including pedagogical and more specific aspects. However, it signals the necessity of observing the maintenance affirmation of many traditions in the light of contextual and cultural influences they are exposed to, with a deeper lens of analysis. Thus, paths to new studies of the phenomena of Chinese Martial Arts taught in the Occident are open.

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Baoding Shuaijiao: Krytyczna analiza treści nauczania

Słowa kluczowe: chińska sztuka walki, chińskie zapasy, tradycja, treści nauczania, program nauczania

Streszczenie:

Tło. Na Zachód sprowadzono wiele chińskich sztuk walki, a chińskie zapasy, bardziej znane jako *Shuaijiao*, są jedną z nich. Na Zachodzie można spotkać trzy różne style, przy czym styl *Baoding* jest jak dotąd najbardziej rozpowszechniony.

Problem i cel. Badanym problemem było to, czy styl *Baoding* zachował swoją pierwotną strukturę. Celem poniższego opracowania było przedstawienie analizy treści nauczania *Baoding Shuaijiao* w stosunku do drukowanych książek napisanych w języku angielskim, głównie przez autorów chińskich, dostępnych dla krajów zachodnich.

Metoda. W analizie dokumentacji wykorzystano metodę klasycznej analizy treści z perspektywy Bauera i Gaskella [2002], a konkretnie tej, której celem było porównanie różnorodnego zakresu tekstów i dokumentów.

Wynik. Przeglądając strony internetowe, znaleziono trzy książki spełniające te kryteria. Wyniki, mimo że pochodzą od autorów, których nauczyciel i instytucja były takie same, wykazały brak zbieżności treści zawartych w tych dziełach. Zauważalne jest, że każda z tych prac prezentuje określoną perspektywę na tę samą treść, w różny sposób pogłębiając pewne elementy, a powierzchownie zbliżając się do innych. Wnioski. Należy zauważyć, że na rozwój oryginalnej modalności miały wpływ doświadczenia Mistrza Chang Dongsheng i jego uczniów z Centralnego Uniwersytetu Policyjnego w Tajpej. Oznacza to procesy adaptacji kulturowej i adekwatności, które Bourdieu nazywa zawłaszczeniem społecznym. Kierując się poglądem Hobsbawma, nadal istnieje postrzeganie prób stworzenia nowych tradycji dla tej starożytnej chińskiej sztuki walki.