

Audio file

[The Secrets of Xingyi Quan – REDUX Episode 1 -gnkGbwG8ow8-.mp3](#)

The Secrets of Xingyi Quan – REDUX Ep1 Transcript

Byron

Alright, welcome to this very special episode of something that we're calling the Secrets of Xingyi Quan Redux. The purpose of this show is to revisit the episodes that have been released and discuss aspects that were raised in them, whether they. Accurate, inaccurate, interesting, not interesting, etc. Just to flesh out these points for the audience. I'm joined by my two good friends that I couldn't be happier to have you two on. I wouldn't want to do this with anybody else. We've got the enigma Jarek Szymanski and we've got Jon Nicklin. So I'm really happy to be doing this with you guys and you know you guys have been very, very supportive of the work and also of coming to do this. So I'm very happy, welcome you two.

Jon

Thanks, Byron. Always a joy to be on your program. I do have my beer chilling in the fridge, all ready to come out. Thank you. Thank you for, for having me, Byron. Thank you for having me. How was..... It's a pleasure to be with you guys and John and you?

Speaker

Good, good.

Byron

Good brother. Thanks for joining us.

Jarek

Yeah. Well, we're, we're.

Byron

Glad we caught you in between hunting down caves of ancient hermits in the middle of nowhere, so I'm glad you had the time to do this today. Yeah. If anybody hasn't seen China Off The Beaten Track on Facebook, Jarek regularly documents his travels and his adventures going to see ancient places and what goes on when he goes trying to find these places and the people he meets along the way, it's really interesting.

Jarek

Thank you.

Jon

I mean, yeah, Jarek, I know I've said it to you before, but your website China from inside was the reason I moved to China. One of the main reasons I moved to China.

Jarek

I'm very sorry for that, you know, I know there are so many beautiful places in the world and you should have probably chosen better, more wisely. Don't blame me please. [laughs]

Jon

[laughs] Done. Now it's done. Now there's no, no blame going around. I'm sorry.

Byron

All right, today we're going to focus on the 1st 3 episodes, so episode 1-2 and three of the series up to now, up until we're recording this, I've released 8. There's probably about, I would say, 3 or 4 left and then it will be done. It was a rather long documentary that they released, but I think about 12 episodes should cover the whole thing. So we're going to do it in little pieces and we're going to talk about episode 1-2 and three today and some interesting bits that were raised from there. Now I want to say and then you guys can chime in. The first thing that really became apparent to me when I was, you know, not only watched this series a while ago, but then decided, let me translate it for people to see big, mainly because it's, you know, it's a mix of very interesting information. But the first thing that stood out to me was it's very much a Shanxi propaganda, kind of, there's a lot of Shanxi bias and there's a definite goal with what they're presenting and how they're presenting.

Jon

I mean and even to the point of representing maybe only one viewpoint within Che style. Actually, like, you know, even other branches of Che style might not agree with some of the things said in the documentary.

Byron

Yeah. Yeah.

Jon

Like, never mind Hebei people. And like you know other branches.

Byron

Right, right.

Jarek

We should be happy that they recognize Li Luoneng was from Hebei. I think we should be happy for that.

Byron

[laughs] Very true, very true. Right. So.

Jon

They had to admit in some way that he's a Hebei guy, yeah.

Byron

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. So the first thing that you know was interesting which I think is something that the West somewhat knows about, but in some senses I don't think they knew or they haven't been exposed to this aspect so deeply and so clearly. And that's the connection between the Shanxi merchants and of course, the Piaohao system and how all of this is connected to China's history and why certain things occurred in in Shanghai. And I think that's a really interesting point for people to if they weren't aware of this, apart from the, you know, Li Luoneng went to the Dai family learned this, created that. That the impetus and the reason for them to, for this to happen in that space, a lot of it is connected to the merchants and the trade that was going through there.

Jon

I mean, yeah I'm sure Jarek is gonna have a view on this, but that's a key period of history for especially in northern Chinese martial arts right. The Piaohao and the caravans, not just Xingyiquan, but like other styles, you know the 3 Emperors Cannon [fist], Sanhuang Paochui. Like you know, so they were heavily involved in the caravan guarding, I think in Shandong, you know one of the main styles would have been Mantis, you know, it was a way for them to make a living.

Byron

Yeah, yeah. Jarek, you got something to add to that?

Jarek

Well, you know, this is actually this the mentioning of Jin Shang, the Shanxi merchants. It's...I think there's some local, I would say patriotism when they talk about it. We know that

currently Shanxi, its position on the economic map of China And because of the coal, yeah. And then they like to look in the back in the history, talk about how well the architecture is preserved there. And about, you know, the glorious times when the Shanxi merchants actually invented the pre banking system, let's say Chinese so....

Jon

Yeah, the precursor of the modern banking system, yeah.

Jarek

And so linking, Xingyi and I think in that in that movie linking Xingyi to that particular period of time and the importance of Shanxi at that time in China it was made also on purpose. I'm not really sure and convinced how really that had impact, on Xingyi. I'm not convinced, you know. When you look at the at the materials from the books, you know, explaining, talking about martial arts in Shanxi at the time, we see that a lot of caravan bodyguarding services were Shaolin practitioners.

Jon

Ah.

Jarek

You know, and you know, even the famous Meng family that is in the movie, in the documentary presented as the one to a large degree responsible for development of Xinyi into Xingyi.....The guy who was who was working for that particular family in Taigu, was Shen Tianbao. He was from Hebei. And he was also Shaolin.

Jon

Yeah. So yeah, I was just looking at that, Shen Tianbao. Yeah, he recommended Li Luoneng, right. They're from the same county or something, right?

Jarek

Probably, I'm not really sure if he was exactly. Yeah. So I'm not really sure how, how important Xingyi was in... for all those services. Because the movie, the documentary clearly points out that there was a need for a very practical oriented martial art. And it was the response to that particular demand, but it was just one system among many others. Yes. And we know that there's, you know, like Zuo Jia Qiang (Zuo Family Spear). And there was some family doing Chang Quan. And then Wang Changle, who is.

Jon

One amongst many.

Jarek

Mentioned on the Che Yizhai memorial tablet is also was one of these teachers and apparently. Till this day, we still have a lot of Shaolin in Taigu.

Jon

Yes. For example, how important was Gong Li Quan / Gong Yi Quan?

Jarek

Exactly. But I'm talking about Wang Chang Le, who is mentioned on the on the on the tablet was doing Shaolin. Of course there's so many systems and then Xingyi was just one of them and then you know.....

Jon

Right. Even if you just look at Shanxi, yeah.

Jarek

I just.... I would love to see one document proving that Xingyi practitioners were involved in the caravan protecting business apart from the from the story about the, I think it was about Dai Longbang who crossed paths through Cangzhou and then was challenged.

Jon

Right. I was about to ask you about this Jarek. What do you say? I think Byron and myself, we've both heard the story, you know, Li Luoneng is supposed to have heard about the Dai family because he went through Cangzhou and had an encounter with one of the local masters like...Do you think that story is true?

Jarek

You're asking me? You. Yeah. I don't know. It's just another story. I mean, so many stories have been made-up so far. And to support certain agendas. So I don't know. I don't know it's just Cangzhou, we know it was famous for martial arts.

Jon

For Baji, for Pigua, for Tongbei, yeah.

Jarek

Yes, and if you prove that you are so skillful that you can pass through Cangzhou without being bothered and you know there's, there's, you know, once you put your banner up and then it says "I'm from Dai". Yeah. Yeah. Then then you know, everybody lets you pass. Well, it's just a story, it's just a story.

Jon

Right. It's just the same. It's just the story.

Byron

Yeah. I mean, if we're thinking about it in a realistic sense, it's probably been exaggerated. So if it did, if something happened, it definitely wasn't the way it was portrayed. If you did go through, I think it's definitely been exaggerated, but that's the beauty of the stories that we get in Chinese Martial Arts.

Jon

In martial arts history, allI was actually just discussing Wing Chun history with a friend. Like, that's even worse.

Byron

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Well, that's a whole other topic, but you know that's why it takes an experienced person, culturally, linguistically, and I would say to a degree also living within the environment there to understand this aspect of the culture. So you can actually know you will learn it. We listen to it. We know the stories, we repeat them, but we also know, as does everybody else, that there's a lot of exaggeration.

Jon

But then think critically about it, yeah.

Byron

Which aspects you want to pluck out of these stories as pearls that actually have value but the package as a whole, and I think that that's one of the Western things that is a problem for me when they want to cut everything off, you know, but the package as a whole, it is Chinese martial arts because it includes these fables. You just need to know what to look at and what to understand is what.

Jon

Right, right. I mean actually on that point..... Jarek has mentioned to me and probably to you several times like places that he's been, you know, back in the 90s where you know the next

year they put out a pamphlet with a completely made-up history. Or like exaggerated history, (not specifically talking about Xingyi right now), right?

Byron

Right. Yeah, very true. Well, you've mentioned something there Jarek, which is quite important and it was somewhat really shoved down our throats in the first couple of episodes of the series and that's about Meng Furu and his role in all of this.... So I don't know if you guys want to share your understanding from before the series and what you feel about what was presented.

Jon

I mean, his role is massively exaggerated, no?

Byron

I agree.

Jarek

[laughs] I mean, you know, it was so funny to watch that episode and see three guys, you know, on the courtyard and two of them are practicing and the scholar is teaching [xingyi]. They're showing them the movements. I mean, I don't know who decided to make it like this. Like you know, and I were just, you know learning from from Meng [Furu]. Yeah...so which is ridiculous. I mean, yeah, that idea that... I mean Meng was a a merchant and probably.....

Jon

I'm wondering. An educated merchant, right? Yeah.

Byron

He's like a patron.

Jarek

Right, right. But that doesn't mean he had any martial skill at all. Well, right, you, you know, one of his descendants, Meng Xianshi, he wrote a book which is called Xingyiquan Shu Tanwei ("A Research into the art of Xingyiquan"). So he wrote a book and he mentioned that his family was always fond of martial arts.

Byron

Sure.

Jarek

It was being *fond* of martial arts class. Not being that they were martial arts, you know, mastering martial arts. Of course they were scholars. And that was, we know that in China, martial artists have very low social status. I mean, you know, if you look at this objectively, the right way was to study Confucianist classics, go through the Imperial examinations, become an official then.

Jon

Yeah.

Jarek

Which meant high social status and good income and you know, basically you were a man of success, so they probably, you know, he actually mentioned that they were fond of martial arts, his ancestors were fond of martial arts. They were patrons, they were employing martial artists. But they I don't think to the point that they were able to teach, as it is shown on the documentary.....

Jon

Right. I mean that's totally the wrong way around. I mean, if anything, probably the Meng family, you know Li Luoneng was working for their family, taught Che Yizhai and then maybe the sons studied their Xingyi from Che Yizhai, no?

Byron

Yeah, maybe something like that.

Jarek

We don't know. That's exactly we because the documentary shows basically, you know this what was shown there was more like probably the vision of those people who did not really know much about Chinese martial arts history and Xingyi history. Yeah. So maybe I shouldn't really talk about that particular scene. It just made me laugh. It was why I found it funny. And you know it, it reminds me of the idea of Chang Naizhou, who had his brother or somebody in the family helping him in with theory of Chang family boxing and there was quite a common case that there was always someone in the family who knew Yijing (Book of Changes), who knew Bagua (8 trigrams), Wuxing (5 elements). And we are putting some kind of theoretical frame on the martial arts and we know that. It the more there is of Confucianist ideas or maybe you know Confucianist really but, you know, those ideas that are at the core of Chinese culture. I.e. the more references to the classics, the better.

Jon

Yeah, in more respected.

Byron

Exactly.

Jon

I mean....at this point can I mention Sun Lutang?

Byron

Yeah. Go ahead.

Jon

No, I just mean Sun Lutang is an example of the same thing. Like, the more theory you have the better.

Byron

I mean, that's a really, really....and the way Jarek put it is perfect is like....You have a martial artist who's created some form of a system of martial arts, but then he wants to not only classify it using classical Chinese philosophical ideas. But also does this because it elevates the status of the art and it's a really important thing for people to realize, because a lot of the time they take it, and they put the cart before the horse and they think the martial art evolved out of the philosophy. Meanwhile, the philosophy or the philosophical frame was one way that martial artists used something to organize and categorize their arts. And again, I mean this is why a lot of people get confused and they think that these temples and these places are where martial arts came out of, but in reality it was the martial arts that put that stuff into it. It wasn't that martial arts came out of that stuff.

Jon

Meeting different branches of the same system..... sorry for using non-Xingyi examples but like Wang Peisheng right, who is famous for a lot of things. But his Taiji is famous for using acupoints to teach, right? But the thing is, I've met lots of other branches of [northern] Wu style taiji that, you know, they do almost exactly the same form as him and also have some skill. But they don't use acupoints [to teach]. Right and to me, that's a classic example of overlaying a theoretical thing on top of the original art.

Byron

What you mentioned Sun Lutang.... Sun Lutang also had a big emphasis of mixing classical medical theory into the teachings that he wrote about when Xingyiquan and Baguazhang, et

cetera, and heavily focused on that now. Why? For the life of me, the person, one of the famous previous generations of Xingyi people, one of them that Sun Lutang did spend time with, and he was an imperial court doctor.... for the life of me, his name has just slipped my mind.

Jon

Are you thinking of Shen Wanlin?

Byron

No, that's it, that's it, its...

Jarek

Or Bai Xiyuan.

Jon

Oh, who's that?

Byron

Well, I mean, Jarek, if you want to talk a little bit about it.

Jon

Yeah, you know more about that connection. The Bai Xiyuan and Sun Lutang [connection]?

Jarek

And I believe he was.... was one of the most famous Xingyi practitioners back in Beijing in the times of Sun Lu Tang. And he was actually kind of a recluse in those Xingyi circles. He didn't teach many students. Sun Lutang in his Quan Yi Shuzhen book, and actually there's a there's a chapter about Bai Xiyuan. So he was apparently very respected at that time.

Jon

Right.

Byron

But he was a Chinese medical doctor and quite a good one.

Byron

By the way, there's a plug for my.

Jon

Sorry, I apologize for my cleaner. No worries.

Byron

No problem for my book. I actually have a biography in the biography section of my Dragon body Tiger Spirit book, about Bai Xiyuan. A little bit of information.....

Jon

Which is a great book everyone, honestly.

Byron

But for me, but this ties back to what you were just talking about where the person's ideas or maybe the people that are available to him from a philosophical point of view. Also, maybe the person that he learns with, for example, Sun Lutang spending time with Bai Xiyuan, would definitely affect why and how he learns certain things and maybe expounded upon certain ideas and then use those into his system which might differ from other systems. But we're coming back to your example of Wang Peisheng's differences so there could be something in Wang Peisheng's background that influenced him quite heavily and he thought it was a very valid or important or useful aspect to add to his art. These acupoints or even using it as a tool to explain how power transfers, meridians, jingluo, etc. This is we do know this from a lot of the older Xingyi writings than when they talk about the different channels. They're not talking about magical power, they're just trying to tell you a chain of motion to a degree using older terms, you know. So there is a lot of that too. And coming back to Meng Furu in the Xingyiquan documentary series. Maybe he was the person that had some understanding of philosophy and Chinese aspects, but to sit and try to say that he was sitting there trying to tell them how to alter their footwork and to change Piquan and revise Dai family Xinyi into what we now know is Xingyiquan is a little bit silly.

Jon

Right. I mean that's that's the case of revisionism, revisionism going too far and part of the same thing is I'm sure both of you have heard this where certain people say that Che Yizhai himself invented six of the animals.....

Speaker

Yeah.

Jon

Right. So it's something I've heard going round Shanxi and you know it's totally wrong.

Byron

Well, yeah. I'm pretty sure it's wrong, but I wouldn't be surprised. I mean, you know, the common story that Guo Yunshen went to Shanxi and then Che Yizhai taught him the animals. You know? You haven't heard?

Jon

Yeah. No, no, I know the version [of the story] that you're talking about.

Jarek

Yeah. You know, there's, there's actually, you know, because in Shanxi, yes, you probably have noticed that they also try to make direct connection to Dai family. Yeah. So they try to skip Li Luoneng, to say that the part of what is now the contents of Xingyiquan comes directly from Dai family, not through the learning, and I think this is also the case of those six animals..... Is that Li Luoneng learned only six of them and topped only six of them, and then and then Che Yizhai learned the rest from the Dais. And then I think it was, it was Li Cunyi or I think was Li Cunyi, who went to Shanxi and learned the rest of the [animals]. But I'm not sure maybe Guo Yunshen... because Guo Yunshen apparently also visited Shanxi. Yeah. As we know from the famous or infamous photograph on which is also which you've made such a beautiful picture of Byron.

Jon

Get your T-shirt tomorrow, yeah.

Jarek

So I think there's...a lot of propaganda we don't know. Perhaps Che Yizhai learned a little bit about Dai style, but from the from the Dai family members, we don't know ifthere is no proof whatsoever that that happened and this would be actually quite against the traditional the way of passing the art unless Li Laonong agreed to that but.

Jon

Right. I mean in traditional Chinese Martial arts like it, it's actually frowned upon to go to your Shiye (grand-teacher) and learn directly, right? Like he's not supposed to directly correct the to *Tusun* (grand-student). Yeah, grand. Fortunately, that was not mentioned in the in the documentary. So we cannot blame the documentary for that. These are.

Byron

Of course, yes. Grand, yeah.

Jon

I would say like think things are often the opposite way around to how it was presented in that documentary. For example, you guys know I do Song [style], you know it's mentioned that Song [Shirong] actually had to go to Hebei to finish his studies with them because by that time Li Luoneng had moved back to Hebei.

Byron

Are you agreeing with that statement or?

Jon

Yeah, that was sort of like I think I think the thing that surprised me when I actually looked into the dates when everyone became disciples of Li Luoneng, you know, the 8 main disciples. They all became disciples of Li Luoneng really close together time, and very soon after that Li Luoneng moved back to Hebei. So I think the place that he moved, it wasn't Shexian (Shen County), it was another place called Xiling or Yizhou or something like that....

Jarek

Xiling, yeah, yeah.

Jon

Right. So it's it's written in the Song style book that, you know, Song Shirong had to finish his studies in Hebei. He didn't finish his studies in Shanxi, right?

Byron

Yeah, well it does make sense.... We also know from our own experiences, if you've trained long enough with one teacher how things get finalized as he gets older, how he formalizes certain things, how he revises, and even might even change things completely towards the end of his life. My teacher is an example, as he's gotten older. If you look at..... I've got writings of his from when he was young and also writings now and you can see a a focus change certain aspects changing certain things changing. Even for example, he has a Zonghe Gun routine, which is a really nice staff routine. And I've got, like, rare footage of him in his 30s just going through it. And then the version he taught me, he had many more movements, you know? And I asked him about this. He's like, yes, I found it was lacking on certain things. So I added these things into it here. And I found a couple of the techniques to be too repetitive. So I changed them up for something else.

Byron

So it happens, right? But you can see if somebody is developing something and he hasn't had time to finish it. He's going to, he's not going to stop developing when he moves back to

Hebei. Li Luoneng wouldn't be like, oh, I've left Shanxi. I can't change or add anything to my system. We'll just leave it like that. Of course, he developed more so. It makes sense.

Jon

I mean, I don't. I don't know how you guys would feel about this statement but.....I think a lot of the non-spear weapons in Xingyi were not there. They were just developed by each line.

Byron

Independently.

Jon

For example, the broadsword, the broad sword and the straight sword. The Dao, Jian that we [Song style] have is not standard across the. You [Byron] have a very nice five element, broadsword right, yeah.

Byron

Yeah, we have 5 elements both.

Jon

I mean that probably did come directly from the five elements empty hand.

Byron

Yeah, most likely all of the five. We have 5 elements for all of the main weapons, right? So they're very similar and they've got, you know, a strong connection to the five element bare hand. So and you can share the five elements bare hand is a strong connection to the five element sphere you know. But anyway that's that's it. I've actually told you my theory on the sickle kind of blade that you guys use in the Song family that.

Jon

Uh. The Lin Jiao Dao...

Byron

Exactly. I mean, I've got a theory that there might have been some interaction with regards to Islamic ideas and the Zulfikar, I don't know if you know what that is. It's a split sword in Islam. It's exactly the same thing.

Jon

I know the word, but I don't know what it looks like!

Byron

Literally a sword that split at the top like that, it almost looks identical.

Jon

Oh wow.

Byron

I have no proof of this, it's just a theory because I've seen the swords and I can't remember which country actually has it on their flag. In fact, you could see it on their flag.

Jon: But, well, I mean the Song brothers, Song Shirong and Song Shide, the brothers traveled a lot, travelled very widely, so it's possible, I mean, and you know most of the far northwest of China is Islamic and if you go beyond the modern Chinese borders, it's entirely Islamic.

Byron

Right, right. So. And Song Shirong was a native of Daxing anyway, wasn't he?

Jon

Right. Yes, the family's originally, you know *Zuji* (ancestral hometown) is Daxing county near Beijing.

Byron

OK. So we've gotten into certain aspects that that are quite important in the in the book, they talk about a couple of things. The renaming in episode 2 from Xinyi to Xingyi, and the focus of some of the presenters in there are talking about it only happened at Globe that the. The name change was formalised and finalised 1900 sometime. It was formalized and finalised. you've got somebody in Shanxi saying no, it might have been a dialect accent issue, for example, he uses the example of Anshenpao and Aishenpao changing, saying Che Yizhai created Aishenpao, which means close body and in Hebei we call it Anshenpao which means safe or protect the body.

Byron

The partnered, you know Pao routine. And in fact they then try to make full circle with their Shanxi propaganda, trying to say that Anshenpao is the wrong name because it changes the idea.

Jon

On that point, there's a couple of things there. I mean, anyone who's been to Shanxi like there is quite a strong dialect. Yeah, Jarek has [been]. And so the dialect of the Dai style people

speak over in Qi County is different from Taigu. Yeah. Jarek, did you ever managed to understand some of the dialect that they speak?

Jarek

Well, I was lucky to have them speak standard Chinese soo.....

Jon

Well, I have a video of my grand-teacher translating for Wang Yinghai from Dai style now like so I I don't know how he would do it because type Taigu dialect is different from Qi County dialect. Yeah. So the dialect thing is real. I mean like even now like when I go every year, if you hear them say Xing-Xieng-Xiong. Yeah. Right. They don't really distinguish [the sounds]. Like but the whole Aishenpao - Anshenpao thing, I mean that's a kind of a.....that's a propaganda thing.

Jarek

I think you know there's another aspect the problem that with literacy or the lack of literacy among the practitioners, this is one thing. The second thing is the access to boxing manuals. I mean, even if you have access to the boxing manual and then you cannot read it, then it's it's of little use anyway. Yeah, so even probably the name of the of the style unless. somebody explained it to you, you could easily kind of mix and and fuse we know that for sure, the first book that was published using Xingyi as Form and Intent was Sun Lutang's book in in 1915. That was the first public book published widely and publicly that that made the system kind of popular among people who could read, but we don't know what was happening before that. The names probably were, you know, used without much putting much importance on the exact meaning. So I think.... we now we often attach a lot of importance to the name of the style. Yeah. So, yeah, Bagua is 8 trigrams. Yes. So the trigrams are.... and you know there's some building up the whole movement kind of structure on the concept of triage.

Jon

Right. Right, right. So first I must master the trigrams, yes.

Jarek

Yes, and there was taiji as well, but taiji is yin-yang. It's just, you know it's basically exists everywhere, offense, defense, you know, attack, defense, whatever. Wherever you look at it, there's always this dualism of.....

Jon

Reality, yes.

Jarek

It's not about taiji only, this you can find it everywhere. You could call it even Xingyi because there's also, you know, emptiness and fullness and all those ideas. But of course we in case of Xingyi we have the link, the historical link to the origins of the style which is, which was called, whatever Yiquan or Xinyi, and so on, and we have some old manuals that that pointed out was called Xinyi, but I think changing it into Xingyi, but I don't know how important was that actually.

Jon

Right, exactly. Like in modern times, we focus too much on theory and the naming of things you know, thinking that that will make us, you know, super good practitioners. But the reality is like if we go back to Li Luoneng's time and maybe the time of the day, great disciples, very few of them could read or write or write, you know, because education in China was only for the rich or the, you know, the aristocracy.

Byron

Right. Well, even said like Li Guangheng's 1895 book was called Xingyi Jingyi. They said he named it because he was honoring its Dai family Xinyi roots. I was like, not necessarily. How did you come to that conclusion? You know, I mean to say that so clearly is it's just not honest. I mean, like I've said, this a million.....

Jon

I mean almost certainly that's based on like nothing. Exactly. I mean because there are, you know, vanishingly few Li Guangheng practitioners around to say anything about it.

Byron

Right. Well, I mean, my teacher, Xingyi teacher was illiterate. He could not read or write. But he everything was memorized, you know, so.

Jon

Is that Liu Huafu?

Byron

No, no, that's my grand teacher.

Jon

Oh, grand teacher, sorry.

Byron

I mean Zhao Zhong and... even you know, my teacher would say Wu Binlou was not very literate either so.

Byron

He couldn't kind of, but you know when he had somebody went, for example, after he'd teach you something, below will give you a QuanPu... But a lot of the time he would have recite it and somebody would have written it down for him. So you know, so that has happened with a lot of our QuanPu in the past and that's why things change and that's why discrepancies come in. You know it happens. So it's not unusual.

Jon

Ah, OK, that makes a lot of sense.

Jon

But also, I think like in the old days I think the Quanpu was given at the end right? You know once the disciple had been training with the teacher for 8-9 ten years, you know, then you know he's saying "you need to get this down, you need to memorize [it]". Before that, just train!

Byron

Yeah. Well, they're.... In the documentary, they basically try to give Meng Furu the credit for naming Xingyi as well. So I'm, you know, the key repetition of Meng Furu's prominence is an important person in aspects that we kind of find hard to accept. I'm wondering if there's any descendants of Meng Furu that had some financial contribution to this documentary.

Jon

Funnily enough during the documentary trip with Will (Monkey steals Peach) we actually met a Che style practitioner called Meng Qingwei. OK. I did want to ask him if he was related to the Meng family but. It wasn't really the time, right? Right.

Byron

So anyway, that's what we got today. We understand it. The style is quite crystallized as we call it Xingyiquan. How that came, we can only speculate. I don't want to give any single person credit, but I will give a lot of credit to Sun Lutang because (not that he named it), but that he popularized the name, which probably in essence set it in a way that probably wouldn't have happened if he didn't publish that book. And you know, so early and it wasn't

disseminated. So why..... I do wanna say you mentioned Jarek earlier that you know older names, Yiquan included. Do you wanna elaborate on that?

Jarek

Well, actually I was when I was thinking about, you know, this kind of double way of thinking. On the one hand we see that the movie shows how important Meng Furu and Che Yizhai were to the creation of a better, more effective martial art. On the other hand, we see how important it was to keep the old names. So because as the Confucianist, the logic always pointed at the past, as the times of where the true ideal society and moral norms and the norms in the society were applied and and now is always worse than it was before. Yeah, it's kind of old men's thinking.

Jon

So I mean, I think I think we don't have as much of that in the West in, in the West it's..... I can feel it very strongly with certain groups in China like, you know, the older version is always the best.

Byron

Well, that's the classical thinking, right? That has to do with filial piety. That's directly connected to Confucian thought so, the extrapolation of filial piety and Confucian thought would lead you to the understanding that if your father is a greater person than you, your grandfather is an even greater. And as we go further back, they just become more and more amazing even when they were clobbering each other over their head and living in caves, they were just superior. You know, in all ways to us. You know, so I mean, you see it even in like in other manuals, you know, so like, the veneration for the old is always better than the new. So yeah, but, you know, it's quite interesting, because my teacher would always say the five elements used to be referred to as Yiquan. And the 12 animals used to be referred to as Xing Quan. Yeah. Yeah. So you know that there is something there, you know? So we're just coming back to what you said, but I've just, I've just got my notes from episode 2 here, and I'm and I'm like, yeah, Meng Furu did all of that then Meng Furu also helped Li Luoneng select disciples. Then Meng Furu is responsible for Che Yizhai having his destiny and again, like I said earlier, I just can't understand why they've elevated him in every single aspect. You know, if he was a patron.

Jon

Right. And unless they're sponsoring the entire documentary, right?

Byron

That's what I think. They were rich merchants. The chances of them still having.....

Jon

I mean, they were definitely very rich, back at the time, but are they rich now? No.

Byron

We could try to figure that out, you know? But you know what's interesting? As we get to episode 3, they say that competition amongst the Biaoju, the escorts, the bodyguard services, etcetera, is what created Xingyi. The impetus for creating Xingyi to become effective and more focused on effective and turned it. They use the word into a type of a weapon, not a physical weapon, but a weapon. You know the style. Became a weapon to be used in that environment that helped them secure business and et cetera, et cetera. So again, apart from Meng refining the Xingyi style itself, apparently according to the documentary it's because of the silver minting that Li Luoneng went along at Meng's behest to go watch them minting silver, and he saw the type of footwork they used which became the stepping pattern which they, you know, they called the Seven star stepping or. Santi Shi, the basic stepping that we do in China. Yeah. And whatever name you want to call it, previously called the silver shearing step. And it came directly from silver minting. Now, if anybody has a logical brain, those two comments will be a contradiction in your head. Immediately one you're trying to create an art that is trying to compete with other martial arts. And the impetus for that art becoming the way it is effectiveness. And two, they go watch some people minting silver. And like, you know. We're going to use that footwork that doesn't connect to me. That's illogical, you know? So it sounds like a nice story, but realistically, it would be practicality and other aspects that creates techniques, not something so disconnected like I'm going to watch a striptease and I see some movement there. You know what, this is what I'm going to put in my art now. I'm not going to tell you why. But it just you know.....

Jarek

That, but I think it's, you know, it's like a more general trend in in which we observe in China that all that changes reforms, revolutions come from the from the working people from those at the very bottom the, you know, the core, the blood and the flesh of the society. So if all the reforms come from them and in martial arts, you know we when we talk about the Xinyi Ba they also talk about this, that it is based on the movements of peasants, of this tool. I don't know how you call this tool? [Hoe] Jue Ba, so, you know, we know there's a very famous discussion in Taiji circles. And on the one hand, we have Zhang Sanfeng. All the legends of Taoists saints, immortals creating martial art, and then we have that, you know, when you read the books from the 50s, especially 50s 60s 70s, we there's this whole idea of classes in the society and the most important one is the class of farmers/workers. And they are the

ones who contributed most to all the changes and inventions in the society. So perhaps this one thread concerning the silver smithing was linking, you know this idea of martial art that is that has contribution from working people, you know.

Byron

That makes sense. You could have you could have nailed it right there. But you know they had. I don't know if you want to add something Jon?

Jon

Actually, Byron, the only thing I have to add to that is so there was a Song style guy who is very interested in history actually, trying to do some independent research about this several decades back. And apparently, he actually tracked down like a great grandson of Li Luoneng we don't know who, who didn't do any Xingyi at all, but he repeated this thing about like some connection to the silversmith. Right. So I think you know one is the story and the other is the reality. So I think it's likely some of the changes came from some of the working class students, but it's not that they went to a silversmith and just looked at his legs.

Byron

Yeah, I mean, I don't think that. And even if there was some similarity, I don't think that it would have been the primary catalyst. Personally, when I looked at our stepping pattern. And you hold the spear and you understand how spear works. You see a universal type of stepping in spear and it it's not only China, you know, if you look at old formations, even like the phalanx of ancient Greece, the stepping method was pretty similar. And so was the weight distribution.

Byron

Yeah, you know, I mean, we get to it because there's a person in the episode 3. Named Wang Wenqing, who I know personally, I've actually taught at the same courses that he's taught at in Guangzhou before, and even in Italy, we taught together once as well, and he says, you know, if you look at Santi and the footwork, it's very similar to boxing. Well there you go, boxing didn't need to look at silver miners Sober, you know forward, like pressing and minting to come to that conclusion because it's the demands of combat that did that, you know, so.

Jon

The demands of combat.

Byron

You know, I mean maybe there was a little bit of influence, but how much? And I think it's....

Byron

It's exactly, exactly so they talk about the footwork being good for closing distance very quickly. Indeed. The footwork in Xingyiquan closes distance very quickly within a couple of steps, I can move two or three meters, and I can launch my mass into it. That's what it's about.

Byron

So you know for me that's pretty interesting. Pretty interesting. So yeah. I mean, those are my notes that I took from the first 3 episodes, and I don't know if you had any any topics and points that stood out to you.

Jon

Yeah, yeah. I mean, I think you felt they were playing down the Dai style almost completely, right?

Byron

It wasn't even.....

Jarek

Yeah. Not really. I mean there's an error obviously when they talk about Li Laonong / Li Luoneng. By the way the name is also kind of being used, there are so many versions of the name you know, which we this is also another topic probably that should be addressed but anyway it's the second part it mentioned that on the 29th year of Daoguang (emperor) Li Laonong became a disciple of Dai Erlu. And this is not exactly the truth, because it was 1849 and that was exactly the year when Li Laonong was employed by Meng family so I think something/someone at that at some point got confused. So this is, of course it it's not true obviously Li Luoneng was studying with the Dai family before that and he studied as far as we know for 10 years. He arrived in Qi County at the age of 37. We don't know exactly when he was born. There are many, many versions of the [history].

Jon

Many versions. This is the problem.

Jarek

Yeah. So, so if Li Luoneng was 37, if he was born in 1808. Yeah, which is usually the most common date, then he would have come to Qixian in 1845. Studying for 10 years would be 1855. But he was already employed by Meng family in 1849, 6 years before he finished his studies with Dai family!

Jon

Right. Some things have been wrong with some of the dates I've got a lot of...One thing that strikes me about all this is that the key, the sort of "white heat"-like that period when the Li Luoneng was teaching, you know, learning himself from the Dai family and then teaching the 8 great disciples. That was actually a very short period of time. Like it was only the space of like, 25-30 years because think about it, Sun Lutang was already like third generation Xingyi.

Jarek

Right, yeah.

Jon

Yeah, and. And he [Sun Lutang] is releasing his book in 1915. I mean, that's really not a very long time.

Jarek

Exactly, yeah.

Byron

Well, they didn't mention much about the Dai family. They didn't mention much about the background, or even who, what, where, when in the documentary. I know the documentary was focused more from Xingyiquan, but you, you know, you can't disconnect it from.....

Jon

You can't tell the story of Xingyiquan without talking about the Dai family. And yeah, sorry. Jarek, this is a bit of a slightly different point. But do you remember in one of your articles you mentioned like the last surviving... daughter of the Dai family? Dai Guilan, right? Like many like a long time later, like maybe just recently actually, in the last several months I saw a picture of her correcting someone's Xinyi Quan. So she did practice the family art.

Jarek

Obviously, I mean, I learned about it also later you, you know, I mentioned that I met her in in Qixian because I was expelled or I was, you know, I was the person who was not well received when I arrived in Wenqu. Yeah. So they said, you know, you should have come with the introduction letter from a *zuzhi* (organization). I don't know. Anyway, so I just left the place of, you know, the house Pan Yuejia (Guo Weihai's [student]) of was also not mentioned here.....

Jon

Right, right. They, they, they didn't mention the Dais very much. They didn't mention Guo Weihan at all. I mean, it's.....

Jarek

You know, why Guo Weihan would be important for that particular issue of evolution and development of Xinyi into Xingyi. Because according to certain books, one of them is Gao Jiangheng [said] he [Guo] was the one who taught Li Luoneng. He was the one who taught him like a stripped out, stripped down version of Dai or made-up version of Dai style, but of course this kind of idea comes from the Dai family who wants to protect their own....

Jon

Well, I mean we're getting beyond the realms of the three episodes that we were supposed to be talking about. But I was just shown a set of five fists from a Dai style teacher that isn't their five elements, but looks a lot like Xingyi's 5 elements.

Byron

Well, what is it?

Jon

So I'll send you guys the video after this. I yeah, I can't prove it. I don't have any written proof, but I think Guo Weihan taught.... something. But it wasn't the Dai five elements because it looks too different, right?

Byron

How do you know this person showing you wasn't influenced by later learning?

Jon

Right. Of course. It's so difficult now, now that we're standing, you know, so many years later, it's so difficult to tell, you know what the true story was.

Jarek

Exactly. And you know, with Guo Weihan, we know that he studied also Tongbeiquan, Tongbeiquan was very strong in Shanxi. I mean even in China the famous Taiji clan, the Chen family, Taiji is basically a form of Tongbei. That came from Shanxi, yes. So of course we....

Jon

Right, Hongdong Tongbei right.

Jarek

Yeah, of course. Well, there's another version. That is you...Very sorry to repeat this again. Everybody works and makes up history to serve his own agenda. So of course Chen style talks about what was his name, Guo Yongfu who went from Chenjiagou or whatever. He was somebody from, from Henan, from Chenjiagou. He changed his name into Guo and went to Shanxi to teach Tongbei there. Yeah. So, yes, there's this idea. Yes. That he was from Henan. And he taught Tongbei in Shanxi. Well, you know, that's one of the of the stories that you hear so.

Byron

He changed his name *and* he was teaching Tongbei.

Jarek

Yeah, because, you know, he was said to have, I don't know, killed somebody or whatever. He changed his name then and he went, he escaped to Shanxi, where the Chen clan originally came from. Probably they had some family there, and he went there then taught martial arts or taught Tongbei there. The family must have forgotten it, in Shanxi there, obviously. You know, there is so much of that white noise that we hear and this white noise gets [amplified]....

Jon

Revisionism. Revisionism. Yeah.

Jarek

You know, certain people promote it and it you know, it serves certain groups and those people repeat it and then they teach students and the students strongly believe their teachers.

Jon

Oh yeah, by this point it's you know, 3 or 4 generations removed from the person who started saying that particular story or angle. Right?

Jarek

Yeah, sorry for going off topic, but. It's just, you know, it reminded me of...

Jon

No, I mean it's a great point actually to go back to something that you know, yeah, you said at the beginning of the episode, like this chat, like we often look back on things based on the style that are popular that have survived now, right? Yeah. But often, you know, styles are

popular because they're good for health or you know, it doesn't mean that they were the bodyguard style or the caravan guard style. Well, back 100 over 100 years ago, right? So you know, what about Liuhequan? What about, I don't know, what about what about Jarek? That type of Tongbei that you actually do, Heyi Tongbei, which is apparently is very practical, very usable.

Jarek

Well, you know it's. I'm just thinking about those styles and how we have to deal with certain trends and the propaganda that is that is being promoted by the styles and it's just going back to the documentary I just see it very much just as just like you both gentlemen pointed out at the very beginning. That is, it presents one version of and it's not representative to Che style, but one branch of Che style. So I think when we watch this documentary we should be well aware of.... that we shouldn't consider this as the ultimate truth or *the* version of history that is closest to what really [happened]...So I think this is like Byron you mentioned also in the West there's, there's so much importance put on history. It's the history that proves that my martial art is efficient. It is not the history. It's just a bunch of fables and legends and stories and what really matters is how we practice it and how good we study it, but of course. It's to us as people who are interested in history. We like to dig into that and we like to.. we would love to know what really happened and how this great martial art as we know it, Xingyiquan, what it originated from and how it evolved into what we see now.

Jon

Yeah, how it developed.

Jarek

Yeah, yeah, this is. This is really interesting and we can only take references from other martial arts. We have Brazilian jujitsu, we have MMA. It's happening for the last certain decades, we've been watching it and seeing how things change and we can talk about rules of tournaments changed the technical repertoire of those people taking part in the MMA competitions. But over the history, I'm sure there were so many different aspects that made Xingyi become what it has, with stress on Santi Shi, you know different stepping methods, different striking methods. And I think it all boils down to looking, you know for looking for the best way of training one in to become efficient in fighting, in defending himself. Yeah, it's not the theory. It's not about Yijing [Book of Changes]. It's not about the meridians. It's not about the acupoints. It's nice stuff when you teach. And it makes your students say, you know, feel that their teacher is awesome. He's so well educated because education.....

Jon

Right. I mean, I think a lesson for all of us is not to buy into, you know, my version of history or your version of history. Whoever is, I mean, you know, I feel like that is happening a lot nowadays. It's probably always been like that, but, but particularly so now.

Byron

So what you're saying is his story and his story and his story might have certain bits and pieces that are useful, but don't only refer to one.

Jon

Oh well, I mean, if Jarek ever releases his book, then *that* is the official version of history. [laughs]

Byron

That's the official one, but he's an exception! [laughs]

Jarek

But speaking of books.....and I think this particular book [Wu Dianke's *Xingyiquan Shu Daquan* or *A Compendium of the Art of Xingyiquan*] had a heavy influence in the series, so possibly connection to these people along with among family funding and apparently, but this book which I'm sure is mentioned and you guys we've discussed it a little bit....

Jon

Ohh, who's the author of this one? I know the cover but.....

Byron

Wu Dianke

Byron

So the only reason I'm bringing this up is because of the aspect with regards to twisting and changing.

Jon

(Byron recommends recognizes the Beijing beer)

Byron

So the....because we're talking about certain aspects of the history kind of been changed and pushed forward and focused on ignored and twisted, but there's actually a little bit of controversy when this book was first published, and in fact, there's quite a good connection

with Jarek with regards to that aspect of this controversy. This particular edition is 2019, and it's changed from the original one. The original one had this famous photo that everybody knows.

Jon

Right, the Guo Yunshen and Che Yizhai photo.

Byron

Yeah, yeah. You know the if you know the picture, you've got the 2 characters in the front, one with the spear and one with a broadsword. However, on the initial publication of Wu Dianke's book, they mirror-imaged the picture. So they turned it around, right? So it was mirror-imaged for specific reasons. The specific reasons is the seating placement of Guo Yunshen and Che Yizhai, you know as far as we know that's Guo Yunshen. This picture is not something that was in circulation for the last 100 years. It became probably one of the most famous Xingyiquan photos after it became publicly known and because of it, people would be using using ways and means to try either pick themselves up or distort history in certain ways. So what they did was they turned the seating arrangement around, because the story goes that Guo Yunshen (or the Shanxi side of the story goes) that Guo Yunshen came to Shanxi to finish learning with Che Yizhai. You know, and he finished teaching him the animals and whatnot and whatever. But the seating arrangement, according to Chinese culture and Chinese ways [etiquette], would be the other way around. If Guo Yunshen was the man of honour, he wouldn't be sitting on that side. You'd be sitting on the other side. And that's exactly why. They flipped the image around because they knew there's a discrepancy in what they're trying to say and what the photo is showing you, so it's quite interesting because I forwarded you guys that article that I got out of a magazine from the 90s about the initial publication of this. Look, and I don't actually recall who wrote the article. I must go back and dig it up. I have the article somewhere, but he probably.....

Jarek

I know the author. Jia Chi....

Byron

OK and what?

Jarek

Yeah, sure. The ultimate author of the article.

Jon

Jia Chi, he's a Che Xingyi guy himself?

Jarek

No, he was a teacher at the Normal College in Shenxian (Shen county) in Hebei. He was from Shenxian. He was not a Xingyi practitioner. He was doing basically taijiquan and he was he was like a local scholar. So I met him in 1997 and here, you know, that was actually that was when the controversy about the book came came to light.

Jon

But it said he wrote [the article] to correct the mistake?

Jarek

He wrote the article, he was one of those who noticed that the guy holding the spear, Li Fuzhen, has his right hand at the front and the left hand at the back [base] of the spear. Yeah, which is the reverse.....

Byron

Broadsword was being held with the left hand.

Jarek

Yeah, the broadsword was also held with the left hand, so that was..

Jon

Which is not [likely]....

Jarek

You know... I mean, unless they were left-handed, both of them.

Byron

But here's the funny thing about this. I mean, we know the percentage, first of all, in China, you know what it's like if you're left-handed, you're still damn well right-handed.

Jon

Right, [forced] to be right-handed up until very recently, yeah.

Byron

So that doesn't matter, but also the person in the background, in the middle. He's holding something in his right hand. If the photo is the right way around, he's holding something in

his right hand. So what would the chances be that there's three left-handed people in this photo? Pretty low.

Jon

That it's almost zero. Yeah, especially in that period of China.

Byron

The article itself goes on to kind of eviscerate the whole the whole thing, and the guy actually went and he asked questions to the vice editor or the assistant editor of the book and asked him why he did it. And you know the I'm going to translate the article and I'm going to release it. So people can read it for themselves, but it is really interesting to see that somebody did such a thing, but it also brings back the question about. If that really is what you said, which you know so far, we can probably say it is, especially with a more recent photo that came up that purportedly had Guo Yunshen in it as well. In another location, a much older Guo Yunshen, you can see it's the same person to a degree.

Jon

What is thatI haven't seen that one. Like where did that come out from, the older Guo Yunshen picture?

Byron

I don't know who released it, but it I only saw it maybe five years ago. Do you know which one I'm talking about?

Jarek

Yeah of course, I put it on my on my Facebook page. That photo was actually published in a in a book about Sanhuang Paochui that you actually mention and talking about the bodyguards and the escort bureaus.

Speaker

Oh, there you go. Maybe.

Byron

That's the word on Jarek's Facebook.

Jon

The picture wasn't released by the remaining Guo Yunshen inheritors?

Jarek

No, it was not actually released by.... It was a part of the book and the photos of Li Yaochen from Sanhuang Paochui. Yeah. Yeah. He was like one of the most influential figures in the in the system of [Sanhuang Paochui]. Anyway, let's focus on Xingyiquan. So anyway, the photo was there.

Jarek

And the photo was was showing Guo Yunshen in Beijing sitting which.... so that's that's the photo I understand Byron that you're talking about.

Byron

Yeah, he's quite he's quite a bit older.

Jarek

Yes, yes. And the whole idea, because the original photo was was actually found by Wang Jianzhu

Jon

Oh, who is a Xingyiquan practitioner right?

Jarek

Yes, Wang [Jianzhu] is a Xingyi practitioner and researcher and he was working for this electric company travelling around Taigu and of course using the convenience of his of his job to meet people.

Byron

You're talking about this photo now, right?

Jarek

I'm talking about this photo. Yes, exactly this. He found the photo. I don't know exactly who from? He said the photo was kept by I think one of Li Guangheng's disciples. Or anyway a little-known branch of.

Jon

Maybe maybe one of the He Yunheng or... [branches]

Jarek

Well, right now I don't remember exactly right now.

Jon

One of those small branches that are in Shanxi, yeah.

Jarek

But you know in that book Byron that you had in your hand, they list everybody in that photo. And by the name and actually the only known thing was at least the one the only four names that Wang Jianzhu was able to recognise were Che Yizhai, Guo Yunshen, Fan Yongqing and Li Fuzhen. Only the those four people.

Jon

Fan Yongqing, right, who is also supposed to have been quite good. You know his grandson and everything.

Jarek

Yeah, he was one of the great disciples of....no wait. He was a disciple of Che Yizhai. I think, yeah, I don't know. I don't know. I had never seen this branch but anyway so we see a lot that in-depth very book. A lot of things were added. I don't know how they were able to find out the names of those people? Perhaps they really did do the research in Taigu talking to people showing them the photo and and somebody was truly able to recognize or maybe it was just a wild. Yes, or maybe it was just all made-up.....

Byron

Maybe they just added themselves. Through lineage by putting people into the names of who's ever standing there, yeah.

Jarek

Yeah. And of course, you know, Liu Jian had to be in the middle of that. Yeah. The one the most important because the people who made this, wrote and edited the book, and those are the same people who are behind the documentary [Liu Jian's disciples]. Yeah. Right. Yeah, they just made things happen. And so the documentary is it's a nice documentary about again buyers be warned (caveat emptor), it's just one.

Byron

Well, the Liu Jian story is very interesting because even this Liu Jian character in the middle here has basically the whole idea, can be basically thrown out the window. It can be thrown away. This yeah, that's more than 98% 99%.... It's not him. But what's funny is, even when this article that I'm referring to was in the 90s and it totally destroys the idea that this could be Liu Jian. Even so, as I said to you, this is a reprint from 2019 and they've corrected the photo. It's not mirror imaged anymore, but if you go to the first few pages, they still list Liu

Jian. Now that is the common, you know, naming of the people in the photo. OK, fine. But they know better because according to his age, it couldn't have possibly been him. These other chaps are in their 40s. He would have been 16 or 17 or something [at the time].

Jon

Right, Liu Jian was one of the youngest, right, of Che Yizhai's students. Yeah.

Byron

And he wouldn't be there.... like, if it is him, he wouldn't be standing there [in the middle], he'd be somewhere else. In this photo.

Jon

Right be way off because he was a kid at the time.

Jarek

Yes, but you know this sort of that, you know, one thing, this explains why they put this date in 1903 or 1902 on that photo that was taken at that time and it doesn't really work with the date of death for Guo Yunshen.

Jon

That date doesn't really work either, right?

Jarek

Because you know only then would Liu Jian be old enough to look like that guy in the middle, in the back row. Yeah, so this photo....

Jon

Wait, I think what by that time, like wasn't Guo Yunshen (a) living back in Hebei and (b) quite old.

Jarek

He probably passed away by that time already.

Jon

Right, exactly. The dates don't work either. I mean yeah, the photo is real. But like some of the names and the date is wrong.

Byron

Photos real. Let me tell you, because I colored this photo and because I colored this photo over a very, very long time and I was looking at this thing on deep levels for such a long time. I've discovered things about this photo that you wouldn't if you just stared at it. This person in the middle has nothing to do with martial arts. Zero.

Jarek

Wow.

Byron

Why? He has nothing to do with martial arts. So when they released this book, they said the location for this photo was in Che Yizhai's courtyard.... Nonsense. You cannot move camera equipment from that time around. Nobody had 6 million cameras. They weren't portable. It's just not plausible. Additionally, if you actually see the photo, this is a backdrop. It doesn't make sense to move backdrops around. It does make sense for you to go to a camera studio and have this photo taken.

Jon

Right, yeah camera studio.

Byron

OK, so if you know those old photos machines, there was a cord with a manual button that you had to push to make the thing shoot.

Jon

Yeah, the flash.

Byron

This person in the middle from me coloring the photo he's holding that thing in his hand. You can see it. Wow, he's the photographer.

Jon

He's the photographer. Oh my god.

Byron

And the reason why they've got this thing around his neck is because he looks out of place. So they put like at Qi Jie Bian or Jiu Jie Bian (7- or 9-joint whip) around his neck, just to make him fit in.

Jon

Right. Just so he looks like he fits in with.

Byron

So he fits in.

Byron

Why would you stand like this? Look at how everybody else is standing in the back, on the sides. They're not. They're standing upright as you would not like this.

Jon

Right.

Byron

And he's looking directly at the camera. He's the operator.

Jon

Yeah, he's operating the first, I mean that makes a lot of sense like you know. You can't take. It like I've been to the Che Yizhai courtyard. old, you know, I've been to the courtyard. As well, but the Che Yizhai..... It doesn't look like that as well.

Byron

Not. Not that it's not his courtyard. It's definitely not his courtyard. So you know this, this would bring a lot of questions to even why Guo Yunshen was really there. Questions we'll probably never have the answers to. But this kind of thing, the seating arrangement, all of that, the fact that they changed. A lot of this, they deliberately flipped the photo around to me. Kind of means they're trying to play things down and possibly there's more to it, why Guo Yunshen was there. Who knows what the real story is? If you ask the Hebei people, they're going to tell you that Li Luoneng appointed Guo Yunshen as the inheritor, and he said to him, go back and finish teaching them this other stuff, you know. Go teach them the.....

Byron

The Dai family had asked that Li Luoneng doesn't let the stuff disappear from the area. You know, maybe it's Li Luoneng telling Guo Yunshen to go finish this task of making sure everything is transmitted there too, you know, and that would put people in different positions from Che Yizhai to Hebei to Shanxi. So you can understand how they want to like twist things and turn things upside down.

Jon

Yeah, of course. Everyone. Everyone has an axe to grind or an angle to play.

Byron

Right. So I'm just glad that we still have the arts, so whoever the hell is in charge thank you, guys. You know how you wanna sit? I don't really care. I'm glad that we still got it. Thanks to you guys.

Jon

I mean, I just hope some of the, you know, regardless of which branch we're talking about, I I'm actually really glad that certain small branches survived like non-famous, you know recently like we mentioned today like the Li Guangheng and the He Yunheng. And I also met with Liu Yuanheng (branch). I mean.... their practice is almost identical to Che style. But yeah...Maybe it's just me as a person, I like those unusual, not unusual branches, but branches that aren't famous, right?

Byron

Yeah, look, everyone's got.....

Jon

Right, because you can also find like those guys, you know those guys don't care at all whether they're well known or whatever. But they actually tend to be quite serious about their practice.

Byron

Yeah.

Jon

Right, I find the opposite with....you know about this, Wulin Dahui. I find that's the opposite situation where people want to be famous, but they aren't actually as good as they make out.

Byron

Well, I try not to watch China's version of the WWE so you know I don't pay attention to Wulin Dahui.

Jon

You know, it's scripted, that's why.

Byron

People believe it, man. I've seen people resharing these fights like look how amazing this guy is. I'm like, have you ever seen a real fight? If you think that's real.

Jon

Yeah, have you ever seen a real fight?!

Byron

Well, those are my points that I wanted to, you know, that stuck out to me in the first 3 episodes. I mean, I think we've fleshed out a lot of stuff. You guys had anything else you wanted to add?

Jon

We've got a lot of stuff coming up. I mean, I've either looked at the episodes after and there's still so much more to unpack, right. You know, we've got the whole of the Republican period coming up, we've got all of the most famous Xingyi masters ever, right? Like this is gonna be great.

Byron

Right, well, I'm glad that we started. Jarek, did you want to add anything? From the first 3 episodes.

Jarek

Well, I think we've covered everything. I mean all the main aspects and I'm really happy that this meeting happened and then you guys..... I haven't been talking to people for a long time. I've been doing different things all by myself and now it's such a great opportunity and thank you, Byron for arranging that and inviting me and having me here. Great to see you, John, too. And then talking to you. It's been a real pleasure.

Byron

The pleasure has been mine. Thank you for coming and being part of it. I'm just happy to have you guys. I mean really I....

Jon

Yeah, exactly.

Jon

Jarek, you are the fount of wisdom.

Byron

I wouldn't want to do this with anybody else, so I'm glad you guys that we're doing this. I'm not going to make any promises.

Jarek

I want to tell it to my my wife. You know, I wanna tell her, you know, no recognition in in the family! [laughs]

Byron

[laughs] I don't want to make any promises to the.... I don't want to make any promises to the viewers about when we're going to do the next three episodes or whatever, but we will get to it in between Jarek seeking out places where Immortals dwelled. So we'll figure it out at some point, but we'll definitely carry on looking at the series.

Jon

Yeah. And I and next time we do it, I hope to be wearing Byron's, "it hurts when I Pi" T-shirt.

Byron

That's the best one, isn't it?

Jon

That's my favorite one. Right. I got to get that.

Speaker

All right.

Byron

I'll get you one. I'll get you one. Alright guys. Well thank you for that. It's been great. I hope the viewers enjoyed it. There's still a lot to there's still a lot to unpack, but I think there's a lot of food for thought right there already.

Jon: You really enjoyed it. Looking forward to the next one, Byron.

Jarek: Really enjoyed it, looking forward to the next one, Byron.

Byron: Yeah. Bye, bye bye.

