

Contents

List of Illustrations	
Foreword	v
1. Basic Training	1
2. Zhang Sanfeng	28
3. Animal Prowess	52
4. Theories and Concepts	79
5. Stories of a Martial Life	105
6. Preparation and Prerequisites	122
7. The Form	148
About the Authors	235

Chapter One

Basic Training

“Jump!” Master Du Xinling commanded most insistently, addressing his young disciple, “or I cannot advance you any further into the internal secrets of Zhang Sanfeng Taijiquan.”

On that day, Master Du’s words echoed through canyons and valleys, where teacher and students reached the heights of the steepest and tallest peaks in Xinjiang, an autonomous territory of mountains and deserts in northwest China. As was often the case, Master Du’s powerful voice would make Wu Baolin tremble down to his core. This was certainly not the first time the master commanded his undivided attention. Whenever the venerated teacher erupted at this level, the youngster felt the earth rumble underfoot, his breathing shattered by bolts of bioelectricity appearing before his very eyes without strain.



These were not uncommon occurrences during his training days as a fighting monk in the White Cloud Temple (Baiyun guan) in Beijing. The forceful air that arose from the bellows of Master Du’s concentrated source repre-

sented over a hundred years of *qi* (life-force energy) cultivation inspired by a love of fighting. His brash method was not meant to rouse fear, although that certainly was a motivational feature. It was rather a didactic conveyance, a person-to-person charging system, signaling out and impressing upon a disciple various sought-after Confucian virtues—filial piety, wisdom, justice, integrity, loyalty, and continence—believed to be uniquely humane qualities, crucial to their enduring social customs and therefore dear to Chinese culture. Theirs was a mutual understanding and an unbreakable bond, a tacit agreement, which had evolved through a near-death hardship during their first year together.

Zhang Sanfeng Taijiquan is an internal martial art Daoists consider supreme when fully matured and developed within the dedicated practitioner. Beyond the general training and rehearsal of various forms of taijiquan, its highest levels require participation in a series of dangerously impromptu challenges and hurdles, intended to allow unfettered access to the nonphysical realms of the transcendent Chinese fighting spirit. As far as Wu Baolin was concerned, it was the golden key to the temple gates, something he had coveted ever since becoming a resident monk at the monastery in 1955.

Young Wu, without self-concern or emotional expression, unflinchingly turned away from his treasured teacher's penetrating glare. Fueled by divine impulse, his little feet beat the dusty ground and lifted plumes of fine powder that followed him as he ran full-sprint directly toward the cliff's edge. No one tried to stop him and no one followed. Without breaking stride and zero trepidation, he jumped off the mountain wingless, his last step displacing a scree that went cascading down the cliff's face along with him. Fearless! As he disappeared into the vast cerulean blue, gravity instantly embraced, escorting him to the valley floor thousands of feet below. The winds of change fluttered through his black monk garb as if insulated with butterflies. Another dare he refused to ignore. He had never been so far from home. He was convinced that this time was a dead end...

In the decade before making this grand gesture, Wu Baolin had come to be fully entrenched in one of the oldest religious institutions in the world, the White Cloud Temple, the northern headquarters of Complete Reality or Complete Perfection (Quanzhen), the major school of Daoism since the 13th century. The temple thus was a primary depository of Daoist knowledge, encapsulating millennia of Chinese thought, culture, and spiritual practice, vigilantly committed to safeguarding the delicate assemblage of Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian doctrines that make up the core of Complete Reality teachings. Its administration was under the custodianship of the Dragongate lineage (Longmen pai), the leading line of the Complete Reality or Complete Perfection School, founded by Qiu Chuji (1148-1227), one of the Seven Perfected and leader of the school after its original founder, Wang Chongyang (1113-1170). Over the centuries, it attracted numerous masters of immense talent and capacity and supported the development of cutting-edge methodologies of spiritual cultivation and enlightenment.

In the 20th century, the school trained disciples in the main subjects of study, healing exercises (*daoyin*), energy work (*qigong*), martial arts (*gongfu*), and divination based on the *Yijing* (Book of Changes); the essential elements of taijiquan. The entire curriculum consisted of seventy-two classes, each of which was fundamentally grounded in the same philosophy as taijiquan—that is, seeking to balance the two polarized energies of the universe known as yin and yang. Another major center of the school, moreover, was in the Wudang mountains, covering the dense forest reserves of Hubei, which places dominant emphasis on the development of martial arts, both external and internal.

Master Wu Baolin spent twenty-three years at the White Cloud Temple, thus advancing in its most complete and comprehensive system of taijiquan. He learned all 464 movements directly from Master Du, lineage holder of both the Wudang sect and Nine Palaces Taijiquan. Master Du first taught him the classical form, then graduated him to the Zhang Sanfeng system through daily routines of advanced qigong exercises as well as the study of the *Yijing* and various martial arts. In addition, he had to endure the ten-thousand knife cuts of the Buddha. Young Wu's training meant that he constantly had to knock on death's door, storm through the doorway as and when his teacher unlatched it, time after time facing the worst fears of humankind. In the end, he attained the distinction to attach his name to the cherished practice, which came to be known as Zhang Sanfeng-Wu Baolin Taijiquan.

The form is quite unlike popular taijiquan undertaken by ordinary people in Beihai Park or on the grounds outside the Temple of Heaven. It is also different from the circulating style of taijiquan commissioned by the emperor to be taught to his concubines in the Forbidden City. In fact, it is a temple form, reserved for members of the



Daoist order. Although Master Du taught martial arts publicly around Beijing for many decades, he never shared this particular practice, reserving it for his most gifted disciples. Admittance required not only various unorthodox tests of Daoist and martial arts acumen, but also a degree of personal karmic affinity (*yuanfen*). Wu Baolin's life and growth present a good example of how karmic affinity and destiny work hand in hand in securing disciples a position in specific martial arts training with a monastic institution and show how the Daoist tradition conceives of taijiquan and its training as transmitted in the White Cloud Temple in Beijing and the Purple Cloud Temple (*Zixia gong*) on the Wudang mountains.

Encountering the Master

For Wu Baolin, it began at the age of four when his parents offered him to the temple. This was not a voluntary gesture but one born out of necessity and a state of emergency. Little Wu was suffering from a severe disease that even two hundred years of ancestral medical knowledge and good family connections could not cure. There were no solutions for his extremely volatile health condition in Beijing or elsewhere, so that the family came to make a plea to the gods. They would give up their son in exchange for the remote possibility that his life could be spared. Thus they surrendered their boy to the temple. Once taken in, the monks performed a medical assessment under the leadership of the incumbent abbot, Master Du, who in due course became the last leader chosen by the rank and file of the Daoist monastic community. Little Wu was found to suffer from whitewater blood disease, requiring admittance as an inpatient.

Medical treatments commenced, but for two months the child would remain in dire straits. After six months of round-the-clock biorhythmic acupuncture, herbal prescriptions, and qigong treatments, he was better yet not strong enough to lift his head and often fell into states of delirium. Still, the temple physicians persisted and kept up the good work, “treating the dead horse as if it were alive” and believing that anything was possible. While making all-out efforts, they were yet prepared to acquiesce to the will of heaven for the final outcome. Promises and commitments were made, and a silent agreement was reached that, should the child be cured its karmic affinity to the temple would be so strong that he belonged there. In the end, Wu Baolin had to choose his destiny, but he remained indebted to the Daoists. As the saying goes, “When a maiden contacts the blood of a man on her birthday, even if by extraneous circumstance, they are destined to marry.”

One day, the dark brooding clouds of ill health began to dissipate, the shadowy mist and windblown smoke, as if scattering off a campfire, started to move away from Wu Baolin’s frail ecosystem. Soon he experienced an emerging renewal of strength, like a phoenix rising from the ashes. He was able to walk and do moderate exercises, his appetite growing steadily. He was taught to mold clay in order to rebuild his strength, while continuing to take medicinal herbs and eat a unique steamed pork dish for the regeneration of blood cells—prepared specially by the temple chef. Unlike household priests of the Celestial Masters or Orthodox Unity School who eat meat, monastic Daoists are vegetarians, consuming animal products only for medicinal reasons. The method of preparation, moreover, was essential for increasing healing properties and effects, especially for neuron production in the brain.

In this particular case, using a switch plucked from a willow tree, a live suckling pig was whipped repeatedly across the upper portion of the hind legs and rump, until all the blood and *qi* of the animal rushed into that circle. Once the skin complexion changed color and muscle density softened, that slim por-

tion of flesh would immediately be sliced off cleanly with a sharp cleaving knife and placed into the cooker. The animal was treated for its wounds and promptly reunited with the drift of piglets and their sow for feeding—its sacrifice considered a good deed, likely to lead to reward in a future life.

The healing of Wu Baolin is not unlike the transformation Buddhist monks undergo on Mount Wutai, both of the Chan (Zen) and Lama (Tibetan) schools, wearing vivid green and scarlet with gold robes, respectively. Before a monk can wear his robes, he must first practice fasting for forty days, living as a recluse behind the Buddha's altar in the main hall of the temple. He purges himself physically while renouncing the ways of the secular world, disconnecting from the matrix of illusion—what Daoists call the “ten thousand beautiful things.”

Sitting in meditation on an elevated wooden platform, bordered by four white- or saffron-colored curtains hung from the vaulted ceiling, he recites sacred spells and scriptures, inviting the Buddha's blessing. Guards surround him for the entire period, since practitioners must not leave the platform. In the course of the ordeal, they pass through several near-death encounters, not unlike the disease that matured Little Wu beyond his years. Both the Buddhist and the young Daoist emerge in revisiting life as a new being, the feverish or ascetic journey to the cusp of the abyss in fact a rite of passage.

When his health was restored and the time came to go home, Wu Baolin returned to his family. They were ecstatic, gleefully optimistic, and showed immense gratitude and generosity toward Master Du and the Daoist institution. They handed over donations in the form of cash, land, food, and herbal medicines, hoping that family life would soon be back to normal. However, after living for a full year in the monastery and mingling with the monks and the many animals, both wild and domesticated, of the temple, Young Wu did not easily take to civil life. Rather, he missed the elements of austere living, increasingly coming to crave the monastic life, repeatedly returning to the temple—whether it was to visit Master Du, get help for a relapse of his condition, practice martial arts, or enjoy only for the special taste of the distinctive steamed cabbage doused with black vinegar and a dash of salt, there was always a reason to go back to the temple. For Wu Baolin it was the pulling of heartstrings and the inexplicable call of the wild.

Whenever he was in the temple, his life was simple and any questions about his future were relaxed. All seemed to coalesce fluently as he affirmed his place in the monastery, making himself the decision to stay and thus choose his destiny. With some reluctance his parents agreed to let him go, realizing that living and studying there would ensure his strong and healthy future. After all, their son had shown clear signs of advancing talent and compatibility with Daoist philosophy, and as the saying goes, “Every parent wants their child to become a dragon.” Healthy and vigorous, Young Wu found the pursuit of a Daoist calling to be the opportunity of a lifetime. The decision was made to

commit himself to the training absolutely and positively, leaving no way of getting out again.

Inside the Temple Walls

Wu Baolin began his Daoist training under the guidance of Master Du, a top fighting monk of modern China and a resident of White Cloud Temple since the early 1930s. This was one of several conditions stipulated by the Wu Family. If they were to permit their son to become a Daoist monk, Master Du would have to be his primary teacher and guardian, exercising meticulous oversight. Up until this point, Master Du had never indicated that Wu Baolin was a prospective student of the White Cloud Temple: he had just been an in-patient.

But it soon became clear that he had become Wu's leading spirit or *guiren*. This term indicates someone of high nobility in society or an affiliated fraternity, with a rank based on wealth, wisdom, or virtue, who has the means to make a serious difference in people's lives. It also has the implication of savior, a person who has granted, spared, or saved a life by virtue of his own merit. When Master Du cured Wu Baolin from his ailments and snatched him from certain death, he essentially earned the right to use him as he believed necessary. By the same token, Little Wu was indebted to him who had saved or spared his life.

At this point, when Wu Baolin's monastic education was getting started, Master Du had, at least on the surface entered semi-retirement, approaching the milestone of one-hundred years of age, a corollary of his dedicated training in taijiquan and the Daoist martial arts. When teaching the temple monks, he emphasized with more and more regularity returning to the source and embracing Dao by practicing the rainbow transformation (*honghua*), whereby the flesh and soul of the adept transform into pure light, bypassing the six realms of reincarnation in a dramatic departure using the Nine Palaces qigong practice, a solar energy purification system.

Master Du's goal, as he often mentioned, was to continue his edification at the feet of magnificent celestial immortals, most notably Laozi and Wang Chongyang, in the ninth level of the sun, the highest Daoist heaven. After turning eighty-one, he only practiced Zhang Sanfeng Taijiquan using his mind and his spirit body as his main focus turned to qigong. He spent increasingly lengthier periods of time deep in isolation and refinement, his sabbaticals becoming months long as he explicitly prepared for the rarest of feats. His schedule was not conducive to teaching anymore in the traditional sense. And besides, he had not taken on a new student in many years. To some insiders of the temple it clarified in part the end of a tenure—yet still unclear who would be his successor.



After a formal announcement, the temple registrar recorded the adoption, introducing Wu Baolin to the order of monks. Immediately, it was presumed he would be groomed to be Master Du's successor as there was no other justification for this grade of commission. It would have been utterly inconsistent with Master Du's well-known character, accountable position and his perfectionist attitude, ways and means to make any imprudent assessments, his approach to matters often circumspect.

Objections were founded upon this declaration by some of the temple council members. Most of the council members did not see there being enough time to impart Dao to Wu Baolin who despite his cleverness, had shown a penchant for questioning everything taught or applied, seen as obstinate and disbelieving in religious creed, and he was so young. There was genuine shock and surprise, followed by a great deal of speculation and heated discussion. It changed the entire climate at the monastery for a time. It was even eluded to that Master Du was thinking irrationally. Concerned opinions flooded and philosophical debates volleyed. The reactions were completely normal and necessary to objectively observe through the filtering lens of the *Yijing* every possible outcome, a Daoist trait invariably instigated.

Master Du valued the input but he was the *Yijing* expert and visionary fortune-teller at the temple, his skills exceeding other members of the council. Master Du was keeping to himself important secrets, which if revealed too soon could alter those secrets. Since he was the head abbot of the temple his unshared strategy needed to be adhered too. Master Du was never casual about the importance of any decision, so his approval of enlisting a five year old boy possessed the tenor of something greater and something premeditated.

Predisposed sociopolitical environments in China, most remarkably the recent introduction of Maoism, had prompted Master Du to "prematurely" make, what appeared to be at the time, an ostensibly reckless decision regarding the future of the Daoist association, but, social reform was in the air and Dao was the master of change.

A New Era

The changes to traditional Chinese culture in the 1950s were astonishing. Almost overnight, the Chinese way was modified and/or diluted with many western inclinations. The differences between producing traditional eastern medicine and modern western medicine illustrate one example the changes.

When traditional Chinese herbalists' produce medicine pills, the ingredients are rolled together into a ball using one accumulative direction, a procedure myriad centuries old. In this way, the medicine grows larger and larger as does a snowball rolling down a mountainside. The result of the snowball effect is a soft mud pill, which is quickly soluble, easy to digest, and natural in color usually browns and blacks. When making modern pharmaceuticals such as Western medicine the chemical process is more industrialized, pounding and pulverizing ingredients into slightly coarse powders and synthesizing them into large tablets or loosely encapsulated for quick release to facilitate entry into the bloodstream. These tablets are multi colored and signature branded with unique identifiers, usually cryptic symbols or number codes in order to responsibly track their recipe and dosage. This process results in a hard and dense substance, a stone pill, occasionally found difficult to swallow. They are the soft and the hard, respectively, yin and yang.

That is to say traditional Chinese culture goes with the flow of nature, a long-standing philosophical paradigm, which is in essence Daoism, a ten-thousand year old indigenous shamanic culture based on free association and mysticism at its very substance. In contrast, reaching the goals of a communist ideology requires the consolidation of human resource and of materials for a greater purpose, in this case growth through Chinese industrialization. After enduring over half a century of civil in-country fighting compounded by the invasion of foreign powers, China finally became thoroughly annexed by Maoist revolutionary theory with the forming of the People's Republic of China (PRC), established October 1, 1949. Despite any misgivings, it was a time to reunify China.

Master Du had calculated long ago the new springtime and turning over of Chinese soil. Although the country's new path and transitional methods initially unmelodic, he could not argue with the calculations arrived at by the *Yi-jing*—voicing imminent changes. In the new era he was witnessing interruptions to cultural resonance and a devaluation of traditional Chinese wisdom, the exclusion of ancient customs. There was the deconstruction and simplification of written language, a brilliant policy to expand literacy, but, by extracting vital formulaic radicals from the ideographs, by definition, eliminated key elements of the Chinese intellect, i.e., its unique reasoning in association with nature, putting ancestral knowledge at risk. Master Du wanted to prevent such an interruption in his own line. Master Du was already an immortal and his depar-

ture from earth was not long relatively. He was born to be a monk. Exchanging his black robes for a modern Chinese tunic suit did not fit the elder master.

When China centralized power, the White Cloud Temple lost its anonymity and began slowly moving with the changes. It was not decision by committee any longer in the way Master Du had been voted the leader of the Dragongate lineage in the 1930s as an example. His unanimous appointment to head abbot came after two weeks of examinations. Rigorous Daoist service testing covering all subjects of the Complete Reality School were administered, including fighting competitions where Master Du excelled. Over seven-hundred eligible monk entrants tested and interviewed for the esteemed position. Master Du had been the clear-cut favorite to preside over the affairs of the White Cloud Temple, however, everyone deserved a chance to compete. Formalities were absolutely necessary to remove all doubts and to mitigate the political fervor and argument that would ensue otherwise for such an honorable standing. That was and this was the “end” of autonomy. Master Du surmised that openly announcing the future of the Dragongate lineage during the new era would inevitably expose and possibly endanger the new link, risking the interruption of thousands of years of precious knowledge. The dragon would have to be hidden.



Master Du considering to train someone as young and not immediately obvious as Wu Baolin, was predicated on the changeability of a new social structure. Wu Baolin was going to be raised to adapt to both worlds, Old China and New China, to become their treasure chest. However explained by Master Du, it was none-the-less misconstrued by the Daoist council. Master Du never intended it as an insult to other candidates and their teachers though now he was being accused of basing his decisions purely on emotion because some years earlier he lost a true successor in Yanzi Li San, another master of Zhang Sanfeng Taijiquan. This heavily criticized historical figure whose erroneous judgments and conduct unbecoming of a monk, caused a massive scandal and loss of face for Master Du and the White Cloud Temple. There is a Chinese saying, “The teacher is only as good as the student they produce.” For Master Du, it was the one blemish on an otherwise impeccable career and Wu Baolin was the student who could rectify this past humiliation. Master Du’s leverage

was his possession of the “Soul of Zhang Sanfeng,” a sequence of thirty-seven secret movements in addition to the base form of Zhang Sanfeng Taijiquan, known only to him and his teacher. Never having taught the former meant the future was undecided.

A mandatory collective effort under the direct supervision of Master Du would be vital to the success of Wu Baolin’s training, including the participation of seventeen Lama Buddhist monks from both the Temple of Eternal Harmony (Yonghe gong), Beijing, and also in Tibet. This decades long undertaking most adult men struggle to complete so there were no assurances that it would lead to readiness. The onus for achieving Wu Baolin’s transformation was clearly falling on the shoulders of the entire village. Master Du could have chosen to focus on several other well qualified monks to become a 17th-generation master of the Dragongate lineage, but instead set his eyes on Wu Baolin. It was also the fact that Master Du saw himself in the boy, a reflection on his own boyhood, and the atypical path and identical age on to which he had entered the Daoist life. He had good reason to believe they were of the same ilk, but he was still waiting on a sign before confirming his choice.

Raised by a Tiger

To possess Dao is to become an infant again.
 No wild beast will attack,
 No predators from the sky will snatch,
 And no insect dare alight and sting.
 —Laozi

When undergoing a program of Daoist esoteric study and exercise, it is not uncommon to extricate the phenomena of cellular memory from the soul. This is known as returning to pure yang and retracing the steps to a primordial or original level of being. Newly developed cell as well as genetic memory becomes equally accessible, either time-released or on demand. The process of the soul’s passage through time stores these encounters at least subconsciously, in the brain and heart databases, although not exclusively, and embosses them on the soul. The highly specialized Daoist exercises can return to the practitioner full awareness of these memories, people, places and things long forgotten by the average person roaming the world. Master Du had achieved the highest level of perfection in Daoist *qi*-cultivation, earning him the title of Dao Master of Purple Yang. Not only could he access his own memory and lifetimes, past and future, but he could do it also for others by utilizing the *Yijing*, a skill set that allowed him to access information over and beyond 1500 years into the future and 1500 years into the past. His predictions were uncanny as well as his offered guidance, ideally determined by the subjects own destiny and *qi* reflections.

The mighty current of the mysterious Dao guided Wu Baolin to the White Cloud Temple several years after liberation in 1949. In the mid-1800s, Master Du had mysteriously found his own way to the front gates of the Purple Cloud Temple, a Ming-dynasty mountain enclave nestled high in the Wudang mountains, and the focal temple in the south. Between living with immediate family and his matriculation into Daoist study, a precipitous shift in weather abruptly ended Master Du's family relations, causing him to live for three summers among the best fighters and hunters of the forest. The physical and mental involvement of this invaluable course in survival and attrition was so deeply engraved that it set him apart from all comers for his lifetime. As he recalled significant cultural and personal events with the help of his teacher, he broadened the scope of his memories. This enabled them to ascertain the series of actions that parted him from his native place, placing him outside ordinary society. Here is his story.

The sky was in falling and a great flood swept through the hometown of the infant Master Du. In its wake there was out-and-out decimation, large patches of the human ecosphere disappearing without warning, his village buried in a watery grave. In an attempt to save their infant's life, Master Du's parents frenetically swathed and secured him onto a small rough-and-ready raft preparing to send him downstream—all alone. Letting go, they used their remaining breaths to say farewell and pray for their precious bundle to survive, themselves getting swallowed by the rising surge. Beyond his immediate survival of the turbulent waters, their greatest concern was that most strangers would never adopt a child that had been abandoned or lost for fear of attaching themselves to bad luck. Misfortune was thought to be contagious in the way that cold and flu viruses are seen today, and only a cursed child could have such tragic misfortune to be severed from his family by the destruction of wind and rain. In the seconds that remained of their lives, his parents wished their son to find his path, confident that, "heaven does not let children go hungry." Master Du recalled this moment clearly as it was so remarkable and pivotal that the experience took a deep hold in the cell's memory.

The forceful currents swept the child for many miles into wild territories until the waters became shallow and marshy. In the aftermath trees and vegetation lay strewn from days of heavy flooding, piling up where the waters slowed. His makeshift raft followed the current, pulling him to the shore near long tall green grasses where predators would normally crouch next to established animal runs, patiently waiting for their next meal. Laying on the raft and comfortably rocked by the constant current that slightly crashed onto the outer edges of the floodwaters, Master Du was out of sight from any passerby, a position that could only be given away by "a baby's loud cry, the only true sound of heaven." Master Du remembers massive pupils and eyeballs, non-human, coming into view through the shadows between the blades. These large eyes belonged to a mountain tiger, the vertical black stripes blending with the tall blades of grass shadowing the breadth of its shoulders. When the tiger fully

appeared out of the greenery it stared down with affection and a mothering tendency toward what society might view as a hapless child, but, a tiger walking down off the mountain onto the valley floor is believed to be a hungry tiger according to Daoist astrology.

A special vibration emanated from the big cat, the inimitable sound falling somewhere between a purr and a roar, oddly, was contributing to lowering the stress of the infant. This special effect which emanates from the abdomen, thorax and throat of tigers' was used for healing patients at the White Cloud Temple, since tiger's yang force and body heat are an antithesis to disease when they come in contact with the patient. The tigress began to lick Master Du's face, her viscid aqueous fluid cleansing the orifices of any small debris and defense secretions, which had accumulated from the journey via rapids. She then gently freed him from his bindings, lifted him out of the raft and into her jaws, cradling him firmly with the thirty razor sharp teeth that tigers are known to have, the upper and lower canines enfolding his soft body so he would not slip away. The tigress moved cautiously up a mountain trail, her plans for the infant unclear.

Inside the mountain den was a welcome party of tiger cubs, anxiously awaiting their mother's return. They had not yet been weaned so the infant was not appealing as a meal, their instincts and curiosity instead leading them to play with the child. The tiger litter was small so there was always a teat free for Master Du to be suckled along with the others. Since most tiger cubs begin to eat solid foods roughly after six weeks, The human child eventually inherited the entire batch of tiger's milk for himself. As a result of living off of tiger's milk for the duration, his bone density was extraordinary, and the teeth, tendons and ligaments grew remarkably strong for a child his age. These healthy acquisitions were the very same sought after medicinal properties and attributes that kept poachers of the forest king in business. This, along with the intensity of fiery tiger *qi* clearly accelerated his growth cycles. Through this yang *qi* enthused environment Master Du developed keener instincts. He was expected to be on constant alert around his tiger siblings who were continuously training for the hunt; spontaneously pouncing on the feral child in poised displays of recklessness. He learned to skillfully maneuver like them and fight impetuously.

Learning by osmosis, Master Du now had the facial expressions relating to tiger emotions and communications down pat. He lashed out in playful disagreement and his snarl was uncivilized and genuine. His eyes became big and round since tiger's milk contains special nourishment for the rods and cones of the eyes, contributing to their shape and acute night vision, six times that of humans. The pineal gland (heavenly eye) in the brain of tigers, is thought to be wide open in these creatures. The Chinese written character for "king" (*wang* 王) naturally shows between the eyes of some tigers, a symbol of leadership and intuition. This feral way of life was the foundation for Master Du's martial arts training and prowess born out of unrestrained fighting with the fiercest wild

animals in China. In due time, he would be relocated back into the human world.

