

THE INFLUENCE OF BUDDHIST ON THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SHAOLIN CULTURE

Tian Chong*

PhD Scholar, Department of History and Pakistan Studies,
University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, tch8201@163.com

ABSTRACT

The localization and development of Buddhism in China owe much to the efforts and contributions of eminent Indian monks such as Bodhidharma in propagating Indian Buddhism. Within the development of Buddhism at Shaolin Temple, the complex theoretical doctrines and strict disciplines gradually faded away, giving rise to a unique Zen culture. The emphasis on physical practice and the cultivation of both internal and external aspects in Buddhism aligns well with the philosophy of Shaolin Kungfu, ultimately forming the distinctive system of Shaolin Kungfu. The integration of the medicine concept from Buddhism with traditional Chinese medicine resulted in the theoretical framework and treatment methods of Shaolin medicine. Moreover, the influence of Buddhist culture extends to the temple culture, pagoda forest culture, and stone inscription culture of Shaolin Temple. The methodological approach of this research is the qualitative research techniques with historical analytical method. The main objective of this research is to understand the influence of Buddhist on the formation and development of Shaolin culture.

Keywords: Buddhism; Shaolin culture; Chan (Zen) culture; Kungfu culture; Medical culture

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism originated in India and was introduced to China by Indian monks around the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD). According to the records in the *Book of Wei, Volume on Buddhism*, it is stated, "Originating from Tianzhu (India), the teachings of Buddhism were first heard of. In the first year of Emperor Ai of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD), the scholar-disciple Qin Jingxian received the 'Buddhist Sutras' orally from the envoy of the Great Yuezhi King, Yicun. When the emperor heard of it, he initially did not believe. Later, Emperor Xiaoming of the Eastern Han Dynasty dream of a golden figure with a shining crown flying in the palace and sought the advice of his courtiers... From this time, China adopted the practice of prostration and worship. This marked the beginning." (Wei Shou, 1959).

From this passage recorded in the *Book of Wei*, it can be inferred that Buddhism had already entered China during the reign of Emperor Ai in the Han Dynasty (25-1 BC), but it had not yet spread widely. In 64 AD, during the reign of Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty, an imperial envoy was dispatched to the Western Regions in search of Buddhist scriptures. In 67 AD, two Indian Buddhist monks, Kasyapa Matanga and Zhu Falan, returned to Luoyang city, the capital of the Han Dynasty, bringing with them Buddha statues and Buddhist scriptures, which were then translated, including the *Sutra of Forty-Two Chapters*. The establishment of the first temple in China, the White Horse Temple, was attributed to the transportation of the Buddha statues and scriptures on a white horse. From then on, Buddhism, as a foreign religion, gained recognition from the ruling class at that time and began to establish a preliminary presence in China. Shaolin Temple, as an ancient temple with a history of thousands of years in China, is renowned for Shaolin Kungfu. In the development of Shaolin culture today, Buddhism undoubtedly plays a significant role.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Buddhism and its influence have been studied thoroughly with different perspectives all over the world. Some of the peer-reviewed articles are reviewed here to understand the influence of

* Corresponding Author

Buddhist teachings and Knowledge. This essay starts by explaining how Shaolin martial arts were used by the imperial government to offer military duty before 1949 and how its practice was restricted and outlawed during Mao's rule from 1949 to 1978. It then looks at how, after 1978, the rise of tourism at the Shaolin Temple and the rehabilitation of Shaolin martial arts have been impacted by UNESCO's international heritage treaties and China's post-1978 heritage policy. The reconstruction of the traditional Shaolin martial arts and the growth of tourism are examined in connection to the interactions between various agents (Su, 2016).

The function of Shaolin and Shaolin kung fu in the formation of a Chinese national identity is discussed in this chapter. It makes note of the fact that Shaolin is associated with at least two Chinese national emblems, namely Chan Buddhism and martial arts. Both are regarded as traditional Chinese cultural national codes. Shaolin, a significant religious organization with more than 1,500 years of history, has left behind a legacy of memory that aids in the development of the Chinese people's spiritual foundation and soul. In the twenty-first century, Shaolin is increasingly garnering a global audience thanks to globalization and, in particular, representations in popular culture (Zhouxiang, 2017).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Understanding the major development and formation and the role of the Buddhists approach towards the formation of the Shaolin is essential. For this research study the appropriate methodological approach is the qualitative method along with the historical analytical method. Similarly, the development the temple is also studied in a chronological method as well.

The contributions of Indian Monks to Shaolin Temple

In the establishment and development process of Shaolin Temple, two ancient Indian monks played a significant role. The first one was Bodhidharma. Orphaned at the age of six, he and his mother made a living through textile work. Later, he converted to Buddhism but struggled for over 20 years without achieving enlightenment. With guidance from a wise master, he was told that he had a connection with China. Bodhidharma then embarked on a journey, traveling through various countries and reaching the capital city of Northern Wei, Pingcheng. There, he was received by Emperor Xiaowen of Northern Wei, and Bodhidharma taught the *Ten Stages* Buddhist scriptures to the emperor. Impressed by Bodhidharma's teachings, Emperor Xiaowen held him in high regard and designated him as an honored guest, establishing a Zen forest and carving stone niches (Yungang Grottoes). In the twentieth year of the Taihe era of Northern Wei (496 AD), Emperor Xiaowen constructed Shaolin Temple at the foot of Mount Shaoshi in Song Mountain for Bodhidharma to propagate Buddhism. Bodhidharma became the founder of Shaolin Temple and was appointed as its first abbot. Within the temple, he translated scriptures such as the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, *Vimalakirti Sutra*, and *Nirvana Sutra*, and transmitted the teachings to monks like Chou and Huiguang. Bodhidharma's experiences are documented in both the first volume of *Compilation of Historical Buddhist Literature* (Chinese Electronic Buddhist Texts, 2011) and the first volume of *Comprehensive Collection of Ancient and Modern Books: Summarized Studies of the Buddhist Canon* (Chinese Electronic Buddhist Texts, 2011).

At the inception of the temple, another renowned Indian monk named Damo (Bodhidharma) played a vital role. He resided in a natural cave within the Five Peaks of Shaolin Temple, facing a wall in intense meditation for nine years, practicing self-cultivation. Through the efforts of subsequent generations, he eventually founded a new school of Buddhism known as Chan (Zen), and Damo came to be recognized as the progenitor of Zen. Shaolin Temple is revered as the "ancestral home of Zen."

Shaolin Zen Culture

The initial introduction of Buddhism to China primarily consisted of two major sects: the "Prajna" (Transcendental Wisdom) and the Zen schools. In the 2nd century CE, both Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism and Zen teachings were successively brought to China. During the Northern Dynasties period (386-581 AD), the Chan master Bodhidharma and his disciples, such as Huiguang and Chou, came from India to various places, including Shaolin Temple, to preach and propagate Buddhist teachings, making Shaolin Temple a center for Zen study at that

time. People who admired Bodhidharma's reputation flocked to Shaolin Temple to study and seek enlightenment.

Shaolin Temple is renowned as the "ancestral home of Zen" in China. Zen thought refers to the indigenous form of Buddhist thought that emerged and developed in China, influenced by traditional Chinese culture. As a foreign religious ideology, Buddhism faced resistance from the two dominant Chinese philosophical schools of Confucianism and Daoism when it was introduced from India during the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD). In order to integrate and successfully develop in China, Buddhism had to undergo transformation and localization based on the foundation of Chinese traditional culture. During the Eastern Wu period (229-280 AD), Kang Senghui interpreted the Confucian concept of "ren" (benevolence) with Buddhist thought, skillfully linking Buddhist ideas with Confucian values of loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, righteousness, and etiquette. In the Eastern Jin period (317-420 AD), the notion of harmony between Confucianism and Buddhism was proposed. During the Southern Dynasties period (420-589 AD), the idea of "Three Religions Unit One" was formally put forward. By the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD), the concept of "Three Religions Unit One" had become well-developed and gradually perfected. In the process of localization and development of Buddhist culture in China, it actively assimilated Confucian and Daoist cultures to resolve conflicts between Buddhist culture and the local cultures. As a religious belief, Buddhism defended its transcendental nature and lofty status in the hearts of its followers. The dissemination of Buddhist thought in practice not only incorporated Confucian and Daoist cultures but also maintained its unique advantages in religious theory, achieving the concept of "Three Religions Unit One". The establishment of indigenous Buddhist sects, marking the independent development of Buddhism in China, signified a new phase. After the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), other Buddhist sects gradually declined, while Chan Buddhism continued to grow and exert greater influence in China, gradually forming a distinctive Zen culture with Chinese characteristics.

Shaolin Kungfu Culture

The earliest Shaolin Temple in history did not gain fame for its kung fu. The abbots and elders of the Shaolin Temple throughout the generations believed that the temple was the birthplace of Zen, and inheriting the Zen teachings was the fundamental characteristic of the Shaolin Temple. Shaolin martial arts were considered secondary and merely a byproduct. The current abbot, Shi Yongxin, once said, "The initial purpose of introducing martial arts to Shaolin Temple was to protect the temple. In the language of our monastic community, it was to protect the Dharma. However, in the process of development, martial arts became a powerful tool for spreading the Dharma. Hence, it is said, "The name of the temple is renowned for its boxing, and the boxing reveals the glory of the temple.'" The formation of the Kungfu culture at Shaolin Temple served two purposes: physical exercise for the monks and the promotion of the Zen atmosphere of the temple. However, with the decline of Zen in China, especially in modern and contemporary times, Jingtuo Buddhism emerged as the dominant sect, and Zen teachings have been incorporated into the teachings of Jingtuo Buddhism. As a result, the development of Shaolin Kungfu surpassed the fame of Shaolin Zen, especially in contemporary times, making Shaolin Kungfu a globally influential aspect of Chinese culture.

The origin of Shaolin kungfu has been a subject of study by many experts and scholars, resulting in various theories such as the collective creation theory, Bodhidharma's creation theory, the Sui and Tang Dynasty (581-907 AD) creation theory, the creation theory of Monk Chou, and the creation theory of the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1840 AD). However, there is still no clear conclusion. Based on the earliest historical records of monks practicing Kungfu at Shaolin Temple, Ma Aimin proposed that the practice of martial arts at Shaolin began with the second abbot, Master Chou, who taught the monks his created boxing techniques, gradually establishing the practice of martial arts among Shaolin monks. According to Zhou Weiliang, based on Ming Dynasty records and existing inscriptions in Shaolin Temple, the Kungfu practice at Shaolin Temple existed no later than the middle Ming Dynasty and had already become known for its bravery. The earliest record related to martial monks at Shaolin is found in the *Record of Traveling to Mount Song*, which states, "Shaolin monks are still

renowned for their bravery, which is far beyond what it used to be." During the early period, Shaolin Kungfu, similar to other traditional Kungfu, served the purpose of self-defense and physical exercise due to the turbulent social environment. On one hand, there was a need for martial skills due to frequent conflicts, and on the other hand, Kungfu provided physical exercise and entertainment for the monks. The monks used "Xi (play)" as a means to entertain and rejuvenate their bodies. Therefore, the characteristics and essence of Shaolin Kungfu at that time were not significantly different from other forms of martial arts.

As the reputation of Shaolin Kungfu grew, martial arts practitioners from all corners of the world flocked to the Shaolin Temple, seeking to meet and exchange martial skills. Consequently, Shaolin Kungfu became a convergence of martial arts excellence from all directions. In the early years of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127 AD), the abbot of Shaolin Temple, Fujū, invited eighteen Kungfu experts from across the country to gather at the temple and engage in martial arts exchanges. Afterwards, they absorbed the essence of various boxing techniques, such as Emperor Taizu Zhao Kuangyin's Long Fist, Han Tong's Tongbei Quan, and Ma Ji's Short Strikes.

They incorporated and summarized these techniques, eventually compiling them into the Shaolin Boxing Manual, thus theorizing Shaolin Kungfu. During the Jin and Yuan Dynasties (1115-1368 AD), the Shaolin Temple monk Jueyuan invited renowned folk martial artists, including Bai Yufeng, to join in martial arts exchanges at the temple. They expanded the original eighteen techniques of Shaolin boxing to seventy-two techniques, which further evolved into the Five Animal Styles-Dragon, Tiger, Leopard, Snake, and Crane. This advancement propelled Shaolin Kungfu to a new level. By the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD), Shaolin Kungfu began to spread among the general public and gained admiration. Xie Zhao, in his work *Wu Za Zu* (Miscellaneous Records), also mentioned, "The boxing methods of Shaolin Temple in Henan Province are unmatched. Its monks, wandering as they are, can fend off dozens of opponents." In the late Ming Dynasty, Shaolin boxing became renowned for its bravery, and Shaolin Kungfu was acclaimed as "the foremost martial art of the present age." In a short period, the fame of Shaolin Kungfu rose rapidly, leading to the continuous production of works that summarized and introduced Shaolin Kungfu. These works included Qi Jiguang's *Boxing Classic*, Yu Dayou's *Sword Classic*, Cheng Zongyou's *Elaboration on Shaolin Staff Techniques*, Mao Yuanyi's *Comprehensive Records of Military Preparedness*, Tang Shunzhi's *Military Compilation*, and Shaolin monk Hongzhuan's *Green Dream Hall Spear Techniques*. The summarization and publication of martial arts theories marked the maturity and refinement of Shaolin Kungfu.

In addition to boxing techniques, Shaolin Kungfu has also developed various weapons such as staffs, swords, whips, halberds, knives, and spears, forming a comprehensive and well-established system of martial arts. Due to its extensive system, it is often referred to as the "Eighteen Shaolin Weapons" and has been depicted as extraordinary skills in legends and modern martial arts novels, such as "Leitai" (fighting platform) and "Mechanical Wooden Man." Over the course of many years, the content of Shaolin Kungfu has continued to expand. According to the records in the boxing manuals passed down within the Shaolin Temple, it is divided into various categories including routines, partner drills, weapons, qigong, joint locks, pressure points, and unique skills. Among them, there are 708 sets of routines, 552 sets of weapons, 72 unique skills, and 156 other techniques. With its profound cultural connotations, comprehensive system, and superior techniques, Shaolin Kung Fu has gained worldwide renown due to its long history. It is one of the largest sects in traditional Chinese martial arts.

The development of Shaolin Kungfu is not attributed to a single individual, as its creation and formation were not isolated occurrences. It is the result of collective efforts by Shaolin monks and martial artists throughout the ages, gradually shaping itself within the sacred Buddhist site. Furthermore, Shaolin Kung Fu has continuously adapted to the specific environment of the Shaolin Temple, as well as its own survival and development needs. It is through these adjustments and the unique circumstances of the Zen ancestral temple, that the saying "All Kungfu under heaven originated from Shaolin" emerged.

Shaolin Medical Culture

When Buddhist medicine was introduced to China, the theoretical system of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) was already relatively complete. It had profound theories in the fields of human physiology, pathology, etiology, diagnosis, treatment principles, as well as acupuncture, health preservation, and other aspects. TCM also established theories such as "Yin-Yang and Five Elements" and "Zangxiang Theory." With the arrival of Buddhism in China, not only did it bring Buddhist teachings, but it also introduced medical theories from Buddhism. Naturally, the application of Buddhist teachings in treating diseases emerged, giving rise to "Buddhist medicine" within the Shaolin Temple.

What is "Buddhist medicine"? According to Chen Ming, "It is a non-independent medical system based on the ancient Indian Ayurvedic system, guided by Buddhist teachings, and incorporating the theoretical and clinical characteristics of Chinese traditional medicine. It can be divided into Indian Buddhist medicine and Chinese Buddhist medicine." (Chen Ming, 1999) From the perspective of the origin of medicine, both Buddhist medicine and TCM share a common spirit, which is to eliminate diseases, save lives, and promote health and longevity. Therefore, regardless of the specific definition, the aim of Buddhist medicine has always been to alleviate the suffering of human beings, both mentally and physically.

In order for the transmission of Buddhist teachings to take place, there was a need for a vehicle that could easily be accepted by people. Indian Buddhist medicine became an advantageous method for missionary monks to open the door to China. Therefore, during the Han Dynasty, missionary monks engaged in "spreading Buddhism through medicine" by introducing Indian Buddhist medicine to China. Due to the deep-rooted presence of TCM in China, it was not replaced by Indian Buddhist medicine but rather integrated and gradually Sinicized, forming the distinctive Chinese Buddhist medicine. This process of inheritance and development took place over nearly two thousand years. (Xue, 2002) However, at that time, Buddhism was not widely spread in China, and the development of Buddhist medicine encountered obstacles as well. During the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, when the spread of Buddhism in China was unstoppable, a group of monk-physicians who were well-versed in both Buddhism and medicine emerged, laying the foundation for the formation of the system of Buddhist medicine. From the Sui and Tang dynasties to the Ming and Qing dynasties, the majority of rulers were believers in Buddhism, which undoubtedly greatly promoted the development of Buddhism. Consequently, Buddhist medicine also experienced rapid development, blending with TCM, and maturing into its own system with Chinese characteristics.

In order to have a better place for cultivation, the monks of Shaolin Temple, like other Buddhist temples, generally chose remote and secluded mountains. Located at the foot of Shaoshi Mountain in Songshan, Shaolin Temple had abundant natural medicinal resources, which undoubtedly provided a convenient material foundation for the temple. However, there were disadvantages as well. Firstly, being situated in a deep mountain area meant encountering various natural disasters and the threat of wild animals. Secondly, transportation was very inconvenient, making it difficult for doctors to provide timely treatment. Therefore, from the beginning of Shaolin Temple's establishment, while the monks were studying Buddhism, they also continuously explored, learned, verified, and applied medical knowledge that followed. In addition, from the perspective of Zen practice, monks needed to engage in long periods of sitting meditation, which could lead to local stagnation of Qi and blood circulation and hinder the movement of muscles and bones. From the perspective of martial arts, understanding the body's organs, meridians, and collaterals was necessary, and the monks practicing martial arts would inevitably experience various degrees of physical injury. Whether due to external or internal factors, they all contributed to the emergence of Shaolin medicine.

Shaolin medicine is based on the concept and wisdom of "clear understanding of medical formulas" in Buddhism. It combines the wisdom of the monks with the unique medicinal resources of Mount Song and incorporates medical methods from both Buddhist medicine and traditional Chinese medicine. It has been gradually accumulated through experience. On one hand, Shaolin disciples, while continuing the practice of Zen meditation,

also study medical theories and practice self-care. At the same time, in order to master higher levels of martial arts, the martial monks of successive generations need to understand the body's organs, meridians, and blood vessels, which laid the foundation for proficiency in medical theory. On the other hand, from the late Tang Dynasty to the Five Dynasties period, there was constant warfare, and the monks of Shaolin Temple were often subjected to external attacks. Therefore, practicing martial arts for self-defense and protecting the temple became imperative, but the monks would also sustain injuries during training. As a result, the medical skills of treating illnesses, saving lives, and recuperating from injuries emerged among the monks.

Shaolin Chan medicine, which was formed through the fusion of Indian medical culture and TCM over more than a thousand years of practice, is known as Shaolin Zen Medicine by later generations. Shaolin medicine is a more localized form of Chinese Buddhist medicine that developed after the introduction of Indian Buddhist medicine to China. Its major characteristics include Qigong, health preservation, traumatology, and acupoint therapy.

Shaolin Qigong

Qigong is a method of exercising the body and treating diseases through techniques such as entering a state of stillness and regulating breathing. It originated from the ancient practice of "Tuna Guiding". Guiding refers to guiding the limbs to facilitate the circulation of Qi and blood throughout the body, combined with breathing exercises, to achieve the effects of disease prevention, health promotion, and fitness. Therefore, Qigong can be regarded as one of the unique health preservation techniques in traditional Chinese medicine.

Shaolin Qigong is one of the earliest Qigong schools and is associated with Shaolin martial arts. Shaolin Qigong has been practiced since the establishment of Shaolin Temple. For example, the renowned disciple Bodhidharma, also known as Damo, is regarded as the first famous martial monk of Shaolin. The practice of lifting heavy weights and the disciple Puxue learning Qigong under the guidance of Damo all indicate that Shaolin Qigong existed as early as the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties. The continuous development of Shaolin martial arts also led to the development of Shaolin Qigong. Shaolin martial arts and Shaolin medicine are closely connected, as practicing martial arts itself has the effect of strengthening the body and promoting health. Furthermore, applying the principles of medicine in Qigong, which are based on theories such as meridians, Qi, blood, Yin, and Yang in traditional Chinese medicine, allows Qigong to not only serve as a self-defense and health-enhancing practice but also as a therapeutic method known as Qigong therapy. Therefore, Shaolin Qigong is also one of the traditional Chinese health preservation techniques.

Shaolin Qigong has characteristics such as seeking stability in stillness and seeking movement in stillness. Its greatest feature lies in its diverse content and various training methods. Whether male or female, young or old, strong or weak, individuals can choose suitable Qigong exercises to strengthen their physical fitness, promote health, and treat diseases.

In summary, Shaolin Qigong is one of the distinctive features of Shaolin medicine. Its health-promoting functions not only benefit a wide range of people but also provide reference significance in clinical settings due to its principles of disease treatment. It can further contribute to the development of Buddhist medicine.

Shaolin Health Preservation

Health preservation, or "Yangsheng" in Chinese, refers to aligning oneself with nature, adapting to the natural environment, and making reasonable arrangements for one's lifestyle in order to improve the quality of life. The concept of health preservation involves nurturing one's essence, Qi (vital energy), and spirit, as well as achieving a harmonious balance between the body and the internal and external environments. Its purpose is to enhance physical fitness and promote overall well-being. This concept shares similarities with the principles of Zen.

One prominent feature of Shaolin medicine is Shaolin health preservation, which has emerged and developed through the long-term practice of meditation, martial arts, and daily life by the monks of Shaolin Temple. It can be divided into Zen health preservation and martial arts health preservation. Compared to general health preservation practices, Zen health preservation emphasizes the cultivation of inner self. Thus, the highest realm of Shaolin health preservation lies in the cultivation of the inner self. Martial arts health preservation, on the other

hand, is a distinctive form of Shaolin health preservation, where Shaolin martial arts not only focuses on combat skills but also incorporates health-promoting functions. As people gradually developed the concept of "cultivating internal Qi and training muscles, bones, and skin externally" during their practice of Shaolin Kung Fu, the development of martial arts reached new heights (Xu, Haipeng, 2015). In fact, Shaolin Qigong is one of the practices within Shaolin health preservation. The monks of Shaolin Temple often engage in daily meditation, which can affect the circulation of meridians, leading to stagnation and accumulation of Qi and blood. This, in turn, can affect the overall functioning of the body. As a result, they gradually realized the need to combine meditation with martial arts, giving rise to the unique art of Shaolin health preservation.

Shaolin Traumatology

Shaolin medicine belongs to traditional Chinese medicine but also has its own theoretical system. The main aspect is Shaolin traumatology, and in fact, Shaolin medicine is even more famous because of Shaolin Temple's expertise in traumatology. The majority of books on Shaolin medicine focus on the field of traumatology, such as *The Secret Book of Shaolin Bronze Man* and *Shaolin Temple's Techniques for Falling and Emergency Treatment*, which discuss theories and practices related to treating injuries.

Firstly, Shaolin traumatology emerged during the establishment of Shaolin Temple and flourished during the Ming and Qing dynasties, eventually forming the Shaolin traumatology school. Shaolin traumatology is an important branch of Buddhist traumatology, with Buddhist traumatology serving as its foundation and Shaolin traumatology developing on top of it. Whether it was injuries sustained during martial arts training, attacks by wild animals, or injuries caused by wars, the monks' experiences and needs directly or indirectly contributed to the formation of the Shaolin traumatology school. Yiyuan Zhenren, in particular, is regarded as the founding figure of the Shaolin traumatology school, and his work *Marvelous Methods for Treating Falls and Injuries* had a significant impact on the formation of this school.

The academic thought of the Shaolin traumatology school is based on the theories of Qi, blood, and meridian circulation, with acupuncture points and organs as the basis for diagnosing injuries. In terms of treatment, it employs methods such as Shaolin's unique "orthopedic techniques," "acupoint therapy," and the use of the "Thirteen Herbal Formula of Shaolin Temple." These methods, combined with specific herbal medicines, form a comprehensive system within the Shaolin traumatology school.

Shaolin Acupoint Therapy

Shaolin acupoint manipulation can both harm people and treat diseases. There is a distinction between martial arts acupoint manipulation and medical acupoint manipulation. The concept of acupoint injury was recorded in Li Daoren's *Exquisite Methods for Treating Injuries, Continuing Interruptions, and Marvelous Techniques* during the Tang Dynasty. The text states: "In the temple region, which is where the life resides, it absolutely should not be treated. The temple region is located in the temporal area, between the end of the eyebrow and the outer corner of the eye, in a depression approximately the width of one horizontal finger." In traditional Chinese medicine meridians and acupoints, the temple region is referred to as an "extraordinary point outside the meridian" and is considered an important acupoint listed as one of the "lethal points" in early martial arts manuals.

The practice of Shaolin acupoint manipulation for treating diseases requires not only a foundation of theoretical knowledge but also skillful techniques. As a distinctive therapeutic method in Shaolin medicine, Shaolin acupoint manipulation greatly enriches the theory and treatment techniques of Buddhist medicine.

Other Shaolin Culture

Temple Culture

Shaolin Temple exhibits characteristics of both traditional Indian Buddhist temples and Chinese traditional architecture, forming its unique temple culture. From the mountain gate to the Hall of One Thousand Buddhas, there are a total of seven courtyards, including the Monks' Residence, Pagoda Forest, and Patriarch's Ancestral Hall. Along the central axis of the Monks' Residence, from south to north, are the Mountain Gate, Hall of Heavenly Kings, Mahavira Hall,

Scripture Depository, Abbot's Room, Lixue Pavilion, and Hall of One Thousand Buddhas. To the west of the temple is the Pagoda Forest, with the Patriarch's Ancestral Hall, Bodhidharma Cave, and Ganlu Terrace to the north, and the Second Ancestor's Ancestral Hall to the southwest, and Guanghui Ancestral Hall to the northeast.

Pagoda Forest Culture

A pagoda is a Buddhist architectural structure that originated in India, initially used to enshrine the "relics" of the Buddha Shakyamuni. The Pagoda Forest at Shaolin Temple serves as the tomb of successive eminent monks and abbots. Within the Pagoda Forest, there are 256 surviving tomb pagodas of various types, including single-story single-eave pagodas, single-story multi-eave pagodas, Indian Stupa-style pagodas, and various Lama-style pagodas. Among them, there are 2 Tang Dynasty pagodas, 2 Song Dynasty pagodas, 10 Jin Dynasty pagodas, 46 Yuan Dynasty pagodas, 148 Ming Dynasty pagodas, and 2 modern tomb pagodas. The Pagoda Forest is the largest and most valuable ancient pagoda complex in China. What is even more valuable is that almost every pagoda has an inscription, providing precious materials for the study of Shaolin Temple's history and the Buddhist pagoda culture of different dynasties.

Stele Culture

Among the numerous cultural relics, Shaolin steles are renowned both domestically and internationally for their unique historical and cultural value. They are considered the artistic treasury of Shaolin Temple and serve as profound cultural carriers. Shaolin steles are abundant in quantity and can be found in places such as the Monks' Residence, Patriarch's Ancestral Hall, and Second Ancestor's Ancestral Hall, with a particularly concentrated collection in the Stele Forest, Stele Gallery, and Pagoda Forest. There are over 700 surviving inscriptions and tablet inscriptions at Shaolin Temple, including more than 360 steles and over 300 pagoda inscriptions. They are not only an important part of Shaolin culture but also valuable materials for studying history, culture, martial arts, religion, architecture, calligraphy, sculpture, painting, and more.

CONCLUSION

Buddhism, originating from India and introduced to China, played a crucial role in the formation of Shaolin culture. The localization and development of Buddhism in China would not have been possible without the efforts and contributions of Indian masters such as Bodhidharma. Within the development of Buddhism at Shaolin Temple, the complex and rigorous theoretical and disciplinary practices of its original culture gradually faded away, giving rise to Zen culture. The simplicity and practicality of Chan's methods allowed it to quickly adapt to Chinese society and become more secularized. Furthermore, Buddhism had a profound influence on the development of Shaolin martial arts. Buddhism emphasizes the integration of mind and body, as well as the cultivation of both internal and external aspects, which positively propelled the development of Shaolin Kungfu. Shaolin Kungfu, with its emphasis on physical practice and the cultivation of both internal and external aspects, aligns well with Buddhist principles, enabling it to better integrate into Buddhist culture and form a unique martial arts system. Moreover, Buddhism provided a solid foundation for the development of Shaolin medicine. Buddhism highlights the restoration of health through the balance of mind and body, integrating its "illness is the best medicine" concept with traditional Chinese medicine, resulting in a profound influence on the theoretical framework and treatment methods of Shaolin medicine.

In conclusion, Buddhism has had a significant impact on the formation and development of Shaolin culture. The values and spiritual principles of Buddhism have infused Shaolin Temple with a unique essence, propelling the development of Shaolin culture and facilitating its widespread recognition globally through communication and dissemination.

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