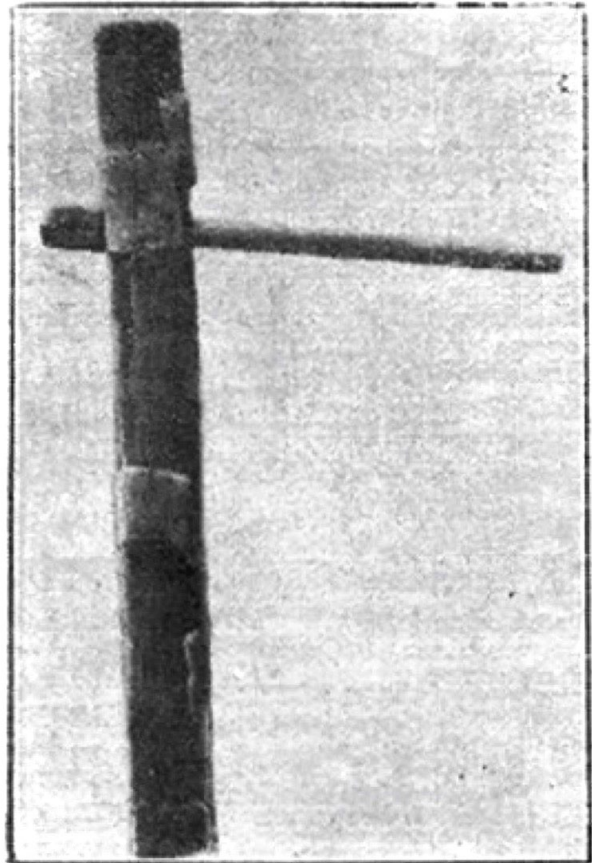


TRAINING METHODS FOR MARTIAL ARTS

木人

WOODEN MAN

NASSER BUTT



The most well known *'Wooden Man'* - 木人 - in martial arts is, of course, that belonging to the art of Wing Chun. However, unbeknown to many, there are other martial arts which also utilize the *'Wooden Man'* as a part of their training programme.

Both, Taiji and Baguazhang have their own version of this excellent training tool.

The main purpose of the *'Wooden Man,'* is of course, to allow a student to train when they don't have access to a training partner. However, the *'Wooden Man'* can also be used to test power and angle of strikes, as well as develop conditioning in the limbs and hands.

Here, we will be providing simple instructions on how to build your own *'Wooden Man'* with minimal fuss and cost.

The basic instructions are taken from the *'Hunan Martial Arts Training Institute's "Small Collection of Martial Arts Books" – The Taiji Manual of Wan Laisheng,'* published in 1932, with a simple modification to further secure the base!

That Taijiquan should deploy such a tool in its training should not come as a surprise... after all Taiji is a martial art steeped in the traditions of antiquity, just like all other Chinese martial arts!

What the existence of this training tool clearly denotes is that there were associated with Taijiquan, physical training methods through which one developed one's skills. The date of this manual is important - 1932, the year after the publication of *'Methods of Applying Taiji Boxing,'* by **Yang Chengfu** and **Dong Yingjie!** In other words, this type of training existed and was practiced within the lifetime of Yang Cheng-fu, himself and no doubt went much further back in Taiji's history!

Wan, himself, tells us in the introduction that:

"There are many practitioners of the Taiji boxing art nowadays, but few who are practicing an authentic version. They are not aware that their knowledge is shallow and their skills sparse, and they so end up coming to hasty conclusions about it."

Over the years, as the practice of Taijiquan has shifted its focus more towards the health aspects, students are understanding the martial art less and less - and that includes the teachers themselves!

Here, we are simply providing the instructions on how to build the 'Wooden Man,' as already stated above, however, future issues will feature some of the training methods themselves!

How To Construct and Use The Wooden Man:

1. Use a pole half a foot thick and eight feet long, three feet of which are buried in the ground. Concrete can be poured around the base to secure it further.
2. A foot below the topmost point, make a hole an inch and three quarters wide.
3. Put a smaller piece of wood through it, two and a half feet long and an inch and a half wide, though the far end should be slightly thicker to keep it from slipping out as you practice pulling and striking.
4. You may use inserting strikes, weaving kicks, and various other attacks, everything being permissible.
5. The upper section of the dummy represents the whole torso area, the lower section the legs.
6. Wrap both sections in cotton cloth and practice with gentle enough strikes that you are not causing yourself pain. (This practice trains the hands to have power in the skill of rending and pulling.)



*Wan Laisheng demonstrating on Taiji's
Wooden Man*