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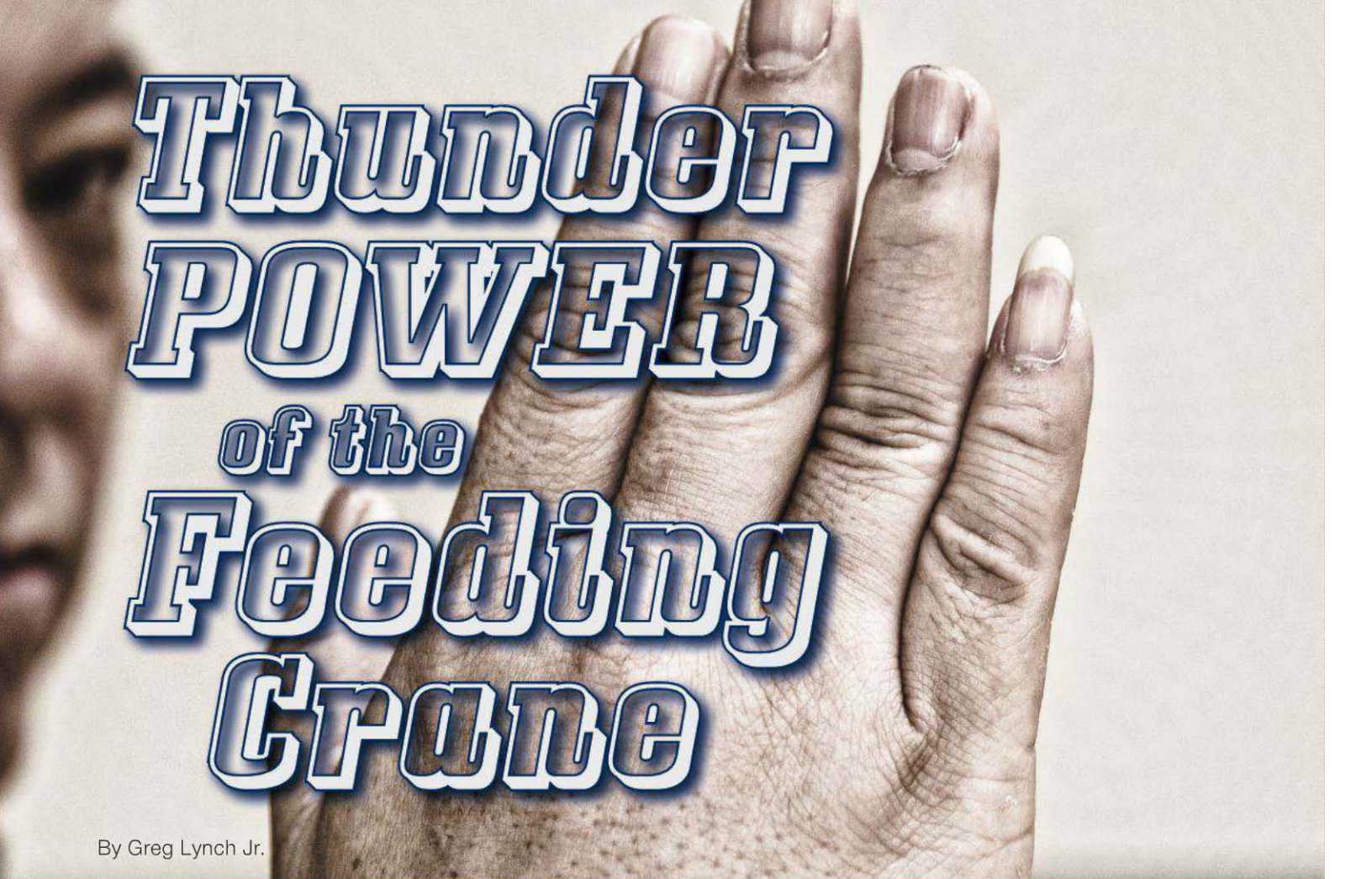
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**25 Tips for
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Thunder POWER of the Feeding Crane

By Greg Lynch Jr.

It

is an iconic moment as Daniel Larusso faces off against Johnny Lawrence in the final round of the All Valley Karate Tournament. With all his weight on one leg, Danny raises his arms in the Crane style in preparation for bad guy Johnny's attack. When Johnny rushes forward, Danny leaps skyward and kicks the stuffing out of Johnny's head. The bout ends in a second. Your first thought is, What an awesome move! Your second thought is that this is full-on Hollywood make-believe.

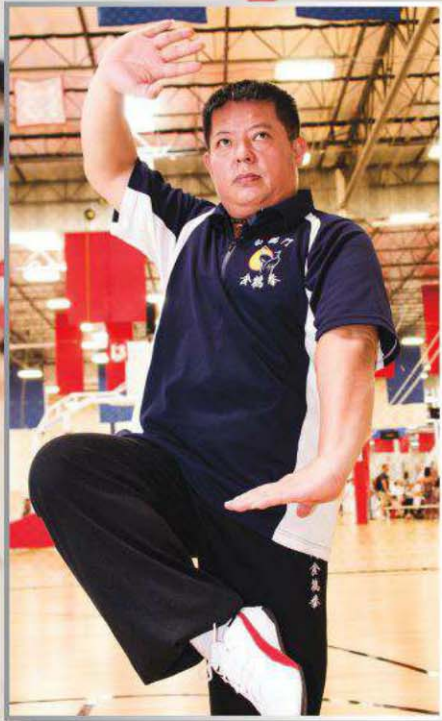
Of course, Mr. Miyagi taught the Okinawan style of White Crane, but it has its roots in China. As is usually the case, the truth makes for a much more compelling story. One of the highlights of the White Crane system is its first strike capability. The theory is not to prolong bouts but to end them.

There are four major subsets of the White Crane system and each has its own specialties. Flying Crane (飛鶴拳) deals with basics. Sleeping Crane (宿鶴拳) teaches you stances. Singing Crane (鳴鶴拳) most closely resembles Qigong in that it focuses on internal forms. Finally, there is Feeding Crane (食鶴拳), which deals with offense. Or, as Sifu Liu Chang-I (劉長益) puts it, "the one-second kill."

Sifu Liu, of Kaohsiung City, Taiwan, is the third-generation practitioner of Feeding Crane in his family. In the early 1900s Sifu Liu's grandfather, Liu Gu (劉故), hired Sifu Lin Deshun (林德順), a carpenter from Fuchow, to teach Feeding Crane style. Sifu Lin had traveled to Taiwan in search of better job opportunities. But word of his martial prowess quickly spread. Liu Gu hired him to teach the family and supported Lin for seven years in exchange for lessons.

Unfortunately for Lin, he fell afoul of the local Japanese authorities and Japanese martial arts instructors. At the time, Taiwan was still under the control of Japan. The local Japanese martial arts instructors were jealous of Lin's prowess. The masters thought it would be better if Sifu Lin were sent back to the mainland. An anonymous call was made to the police station. The caller informed the police that Lin was a spy from Mainland China. A warrant went out for Lin's arrest.

Lin hid from the police for many days but was eventually caught at the Liu household. It took 8 policemen and 40 soldiers to subdue him. Sifu Liu says the police and soldiers jumped on Lin one after another like you would see in a football pile-up. They also injected him with morphine to quiet him. The police were so afraid of Lin's prowess they weren't satisfied with just one shot and kept injecting Lin with morphine to make sure he was subdued. The drugs eventually killed Lin.



This left the Liu family with the responsibility of carrying on the tradition of Feeding Crane. It fell to Sifu Liu's grandfather, Liu Gu, to keep Sifu Lin's training alive. Liu Gu devoted his life to Feeding Crane and passed the traditions down to his son and grandson. So adept was Liu Gu at promoting the style that it is usually referred to as the Liu Family Feeding Crane in Taiwan. Sifu Liu is proud to state that the forms he teaches are identical to the forms his grandfather learned.

One-Second Kill

The major emphasis for Feeding Crane as taught by Sifu Liu is the theory of the one-second kill. The origins of the style go back 12 generations to Fang Qiniang (方七娘), daughter of Fang Waishi, a master of the Shaolin Lohan Fist. Since the style was designed by a woman, the theory goes that fights should end quickly. In many fighting styles there is a call and response aspect to the bout. One person punches. The opponent answers with a block. Attack leads to counter. The phrases of the bout go back and forth.

You also start the preliminaries by testing out your opponent. You do attacks to see how the opposition responds. The opening engagements tell you what your opponent can and cannot do. This gives you the information on how to proceed.

Granted, we are not talking about the stars of MMA who can take plenty of punishment during a fight. We are talking about average women learning self defense.

If you are a man, generally you have more mass than a woman and can absorb some of the blows while angling for the strike to defeat your opponent. In the Feeding Crane scheme of things, the smaller defender does not have the luxury to take any punishment. You have to strike quickly and permanently to end the bout as soon as possible. As Sifu Liu put it, "No thinking (of) hurt you. No injure. She must kill you. Kill you, she is safe. Injure you, she die."

Sifu Liu's bagua for Feeding Crane contains eight fundamentals, some of which are familiar and typical to all martial arts. First off, you must have power – or, in the case of Feeding Crane, you must have Thunder Power. You must be fast. You must be in good condition. There are high level and low level applications of Feeding Crane. Your reaction time must be quick. Sifu Liu has an emphasis on skin sensitivity. By touching the skin of the opponent, the practitioner should be able to sense the intentions of his opponent. A Feeding Crane user should have no fear. The eighth fundamental is true love.



As Sifu Liu says, "(Martial Arts is a) Long way job. All life. People easy to find excuse to give up." But if you have true love for Feeding Crane, that won't happen.

Besides the one second kill, another hallmark of Sifu Liu's Feeding Crane is Thunder Power or *fajin*. By training the Fire Hands or Water Hands routines of Feeding Crane, the practitioner can produce audible sounds of power. Sifu Liu demonstrated the ability and it sounded like medium pops and cracks when he punches. Sifu Liu likens it to the noise you hear added to Kung Fu movies. But rather than have a sound engineer add the effects in later, the noises are an audible example of martial power leaving the body during strikes. Sifu Liu claims that through proper practice a Feeding Crane student can be producing the Thunder Power within six months to a year.



It's All in the Pinky Nail

Another key aspect of Feeding Crane is the use of the 12 meridians that distribute qi throughout the body. In acupuncture, you would use the meridians to help heal and strengthen the body. Sifu Liu, who is also well-versed in Chinese medicine, knows how to find the blockages in the meridians to help the energy flow naturally.

But in Feeding Crane the use of the meridians is the exact opposite of its use in acupuncture. Instead of opening flows, the Feeding Crane practitioner shuts the flows down. The strikes are aimed at pressure points in the meridians to cause pain and discomfort rather than healing. All told there are about 4000 points on the body. Feeding Crane uses several hundred, seven of which can cause extreme discomfort.

How Feeding Crane would work during an assault.



(Above) In this instance you are being grabbed by an assailant. The first reaction is to sweep your arms up between the arms of your attacker. You can almost think of it as the crane arms enfolding your attacker.

This technique is why the emphasis in Feeding Crane is on open hand strikes rather than punches. You use the tips of the fingers or the edge of the hand to jam into the opponent's pressure points. Using the fist would be too blunt and wouldn't reach deep enough below the surface to cause damage to the qi flow.

You can tell that Sifu Liu believes in all this wholeheartedly by looking at the pinky finger on both of his hands. The nails on those fingers are very long and you would have to go to a lot of trouble to keep them in that condition. When asked why he kept the nails so long, Sifu Liu explained they were for cutting your attacker's eyeballs. If you keep your hand stiff on a back hand strike, you can use that extra bit of keratin as a knife to open up the sclera of your opponent's eye.

That is the kind of detail you would talk about philosophically. You would mention you could grow your fingernails to an extent where they become weapons. But to actually go about doing it shows an extra level of dedication to the craft.



(Above) Raise your right knee into your opponent's chest for the first strike. This harkens back to the traditional pose of a crane standing on one leg. It also puts your right leg in position for the next strike. The sweep of your arms between your attacker's arms also has the benefit of striking the qi meridians running down the attacker's arms. This results in the disruption of qi flow in your enemy's body.

Life-Saving Crane

Sifu Liu is committed to bringing Feeding Crane to the world. He travels extensively around the world giving seminars. For the next three months, he will be in a different city in the United States every week. He has also toured all over Europe spreading the gospel of Feeding Crane.

The reason for this is simple: Feeding Crane saved his life. And not in some spiritual way that set him on a better path; rather, by physically performing Feeding Crane he was able to defeat five attackers.

He was 29 and getting into his car when five assailants with machetes attacked him and tried to take the car from him. Using the Feeding Crane methods, he disarmed the first assailant and took that person's weapon. He then used that weapon to defeat the other four opponents. Each attacker received a single cut and they were done. Sifu Liu was unscathed in the attack. Sifu Liu felt he could have died that day. If he had, then all the knowledge of Feeding Crane would have died with him. At that point most of his relatives were dead



(Above) With two quick strikes, you drive your opponent's legs out from underneath him. Drive your raised right leg into the side of your opponent's left knee. This kick is effective for two reasons: first, you are driving it against the knee's normal range of movement; second, you



continue to disrupt qi flow through the legs. After kicking the left leg, knock the right leg out with your right leg. Basically, you knock out the supports to the body.

(Above Right) Since you still have your opponent's arms enfolded, you are the only thing holding his body up. Draw down quickly on those arms. Your opponent's body falls forward. At this point, bring your right knee up sharply into his chin. His forward momentum added to the force of



your quickly rising knee should combine to snap his neck back and cause damage to his chin. As many boxers attest, the chin is a meeting place for a large number of nerve clusters. This shock to the face can add more damage to an already overloaded meridian system.

(Below) As your opponent's head rocks back from the knee blow, release your right grip on his left arm, bend your arm at the elbow, and drive that mass of bone of your right elbow into your opponent's temple.

and he was the only person teaching Feeding Crane. Four centuries of culture and tradition would have been gone. Feeding Crane saved him, and now it is up to him to make sure Feeding Crane style never dies.

Feeding crane is not about being pretty. It is about subduing your opponent. As Sifu Liu explains, if you are smaller than your opponent and don't defeat your attacker immediately, you die. ☯

Greg Lynch Jr. is a frequent contributor to *Kung Fu Tai Chi* magazine. For more information on his work, visit ironcrotchdoc.com. For more on Master Liu Chang-I, visit his website at <http://feeding-crane.myweb.hinet.net>

While striking with your elbow, also wind up the core of your body. You now have tremendous potential in your body for one final strike. If you have done the training and followed Sifu Liu's lead in growing out your pinky nail, now is the time to use that cutting device. Hold your hand stiff with all the fingers squeezed tightly together, the nail projecting out from the edge of your hand. As you uncoil, aim the nail at your opponent's eye in a slicing motion. Even if you don't cut the eye, you might be able to cut the skin above the eyes. Blood flow from this forehead cut will also help to blind your opponent.

