

In old Shanghai

From Martin Bödicker



Michael Busch and Ma Yueliang

After a morning's training four of us were sitting in the living room of the family Ma in Shanghai. After a cup of tea, Ma Yueliang started to tell an anecdote from old Shanghai, from when he was around 30 years old:

"When I was walking through the little lanes of the town, I saw a strong foreign soldier blocking the lane. He was standing with one shoulder against the lefthand wall of the lane and leaning with his right hand on the opposite wall. Any Chinese who wanted to pass had to duck under the arm. I couldn't stand this and went up to the marine. He saw me and indicated with his left hand that I should pass under his right arm. I looked into his eyes and pointed to my chin."

At these moment Ma Yueliang could not sit still anymore in his chair. He stood up and asked Micheal Busch to stand opposite him and to play the soldier. Michael looked very surprised, but he made a fist with his right hand and punched Ma Yueliang with his full strength. Although Ma Yueliang was more than 90 years old, he moved faster than you could see, swept the punch aside with a *lǚ*, borrowed Michael's strength and threw him with a loud 'thump' on the floor. Then he smiled and said: "Yes, yes, Taijiquan is really a practical thing."