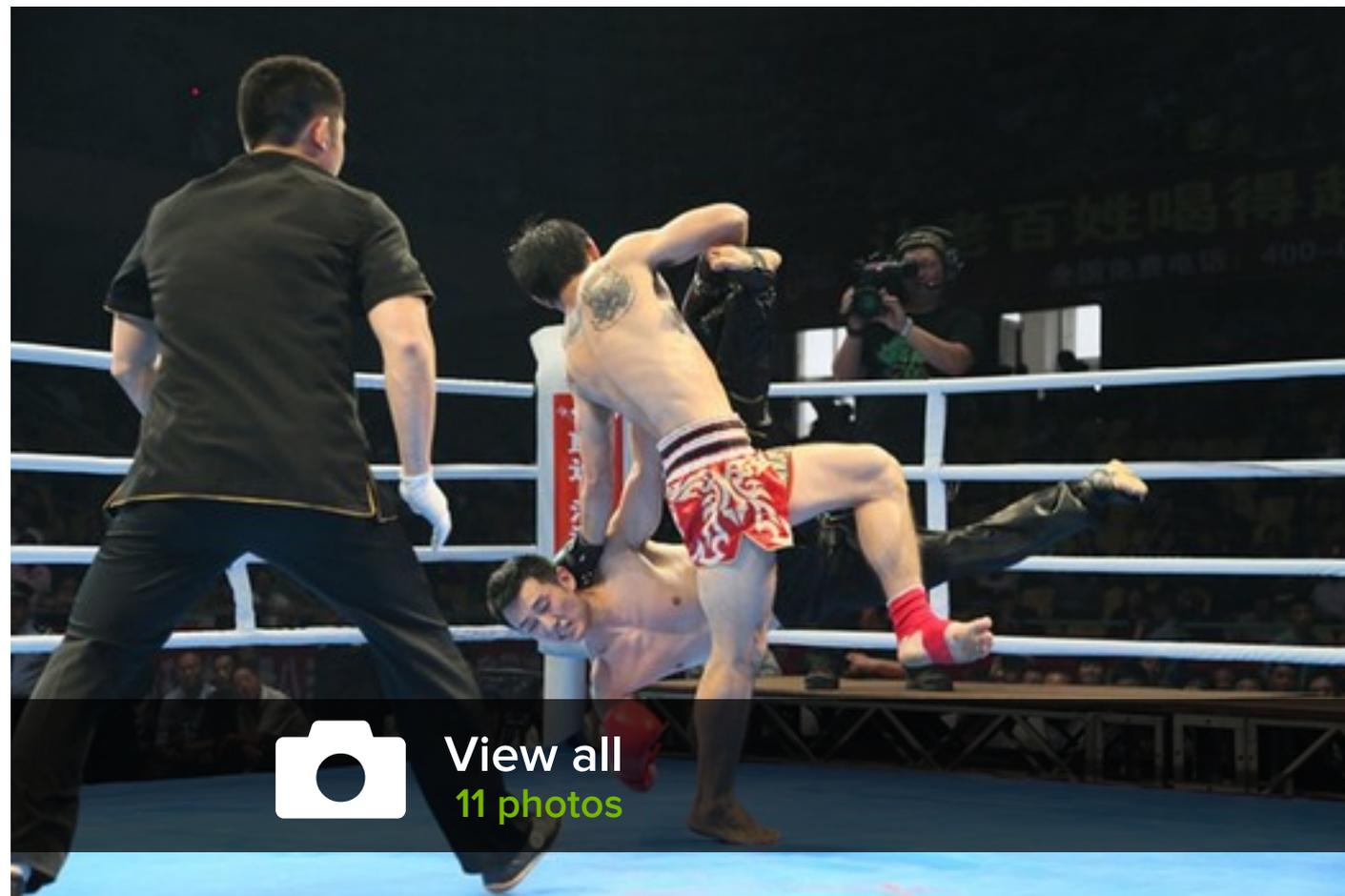


Tai Chi versus Thai Boxing

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Highlights of the tournament between Tai Chi and Muay Thai (Tai Chi contestants in red gloves and Muay Thai contestants in black gloves)

Tai Chi Net

Muay Thai is a full-contact combat sport of Thailand that uses stand-up striking along with various clinching techniques. It is known as "the art of eight limbs" because of its utilization of fists, elbows, knees, shins, and feet. **Muay Thai** Boxing first became popular in the sixteenth century. Today there are millions of practitioners around the world.



Tai Chi Net

Tai Chi (Taiji) was an ancient Chinese martial art as well as healing art. General Chen Wangting (1600 – 1680) first created the modern Tai Chi style approximately 400 years ago. Chen Tai Chi is an extended style. Its movements appear very soft.

On Sept 28, 2013, five Muay Thai champions from Thailand were invited to Jiao Zuo (the closest city to Tai Chi birth place Chen Village), Henan, China to compete with five Chen style Tai Chi competitors. According to **Master Chen Ziqiang**, the Chief Instructor of **Chenjiagou Taiji Academy** and organizer of this tournament, explained that the tournament followed the international boxing standard and had five weight divisions: 75 kilograms (165 pounds), 70 (154 pounds), 65 kilograms (143 pounds), 60 kilograms (132 pounds), and 56 kilograms (123 pounds). It was a friendship tournament and consisted of five matches or one match for each weight division.

In the 75-kilo division, Tai Chi contestant Chen Jian-Qiang is an experienced champion. He started competing in Tai Chi Push Hands since 2008 and won multiple national titles in China. His Thai opponent started competing since 2011 and won 63 matches out of 79 at the national and international levels in Thailand.

In the 70-kilo division, Tai Chi contestant Ren Gao-Cheng started competing in Push Hands in 2012 and won a couple of national gold medals. His Thai opponent started competing in 2010 and won 78 matches out of 95 at the national levels in Thailand.

In the 65-kilo division, Tai Chi contestant Zhang Yan-Fei is an experienced fighter and started his competition career since 2007 and won a few national titles. His Thai opponent won 40 matches out of

57 at various national and international tournaments.

In the 60-kilo division, Tai Chi contestant Wang Yan is also an experienced champion. He started competing in Tai Chi Push Hands since 2008 and won multiple national titles in China. His Thai opponent is a professional boxer and won 48 matches out of 58 with an additional honor of a gold belt.

In the 56-kilo division, Tai Chi contestant Wang Jin-Hu is young and just started competing nationally in China in 2012. Wang won a gold medal and silver medal. On the contrary, his Thai opponent is a skillful fighter who has been competing since 2009 and won championship not only at Thai national tournaments but also international MMA tournaments hosted in China. More impressively, this Thai professional boxer won 114 matches out of 125 and two gold belts.

Master Chen Ziqiang, who is a 20th generation descendent of Chen Family and 12th generation lineage holder, is famous for his superb combat skills and has proven to be a formidable fighter. He stated that all five Tai Chi contestants are his students. He has trained them since they were kids. They are all talented, hard-working Tai Chi practitioners.

Since Tai Chi and Muay Thai Boxing are very different in fighting styles, to make it safe or more compatible, the recent tournament adopted the rules similar to Sanda (or Shanshou), and it was closer to Muay Thai Boxing in essence. Fighters wore gloves but no protective helmets. Without exposing fingers, many Tai Chi techniques (i.e. Lu, Cai) cannot be applied. Additionally, Tai Chi's highly effective technique Chin Na and bending joints backwards were prohibited during the tournament. One of the exciting features during Tai Chi Push Hands or Shanshou is shoulder bumping, but it was not permitted either. With all these restrictions, Grandmaster Ren Guangyi commented that this tournament might be less engrossing for some Tai Chi enthusiasts as a Tai Chi Push Hands competition. However, he applauded the concept and effort of bringing different styles of [martial arts](#) together to compete.

The tournament results were Chen Jian-Qiang (75-kilogram), Zhang Yan-Fei (65-kilogram), and Wang Yan (60-kilogram) won while Thai fighters won 70-kilogram and 56-kilogram's divisions. Even though Chen Tai Chi won 3 divisions versus Muay Thai won two, Master Chen Ziqiang stated it does not mean that Chen Tai Chi is better than Muay Thai. But he proudly claimed that it did prove that Chen Tai Chi a true martial art and can be powerful in real fighting. He admitted that all five Tai Chi contenders had an intensive training for one month so they learned how to fight with gloves and to follow the rigid competition rules. But Tai Chi is a good regimen that helps these Tai Chi practitioners developing self-defense skills, strong body, and tough mind.

There were over 1,000 people watching the matches. In general, the reaction was very positive. Master Chen said that he was encouraged by the responses. He is planning for something bigger and better for next year and may include other martial arts as well in addition to Tai Chi and Muay Thai Boxing.

You can use the below links to see the five matches. The Tai Chi contestants wore red gloves while the

Thai competitors wore black.

- The 75-kilo division that the Chen Tai Chi contestant won. <http://www.cntjq.net/article-14400-1.html>
- The 70-kilogram's division that the Thai contestant won. http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNjE1MTYzNzgw.html
- The 65-kilo division that the Chen Tai Chi contestant won. http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNjE1MTM5ODAw.html
- The 60-kilo division that the Chen Tai Chi contestant won. http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNjE1MTQ2NTY0.html
- The 56-kilo division that the Thai contestant won. http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNjE1MTlyODg0.html

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SUGGESTED LINKS

- **The fearless Tai Chi master Chen Ziqiang**
- **Must watch: Urban Dragons**
- **Chen Wangting and Hsieh Tong-liang**
- **EMBA and Tai Chi (Photos)**
- **Bai Si Fang**



Violet Li

Tai Chi Examiner

