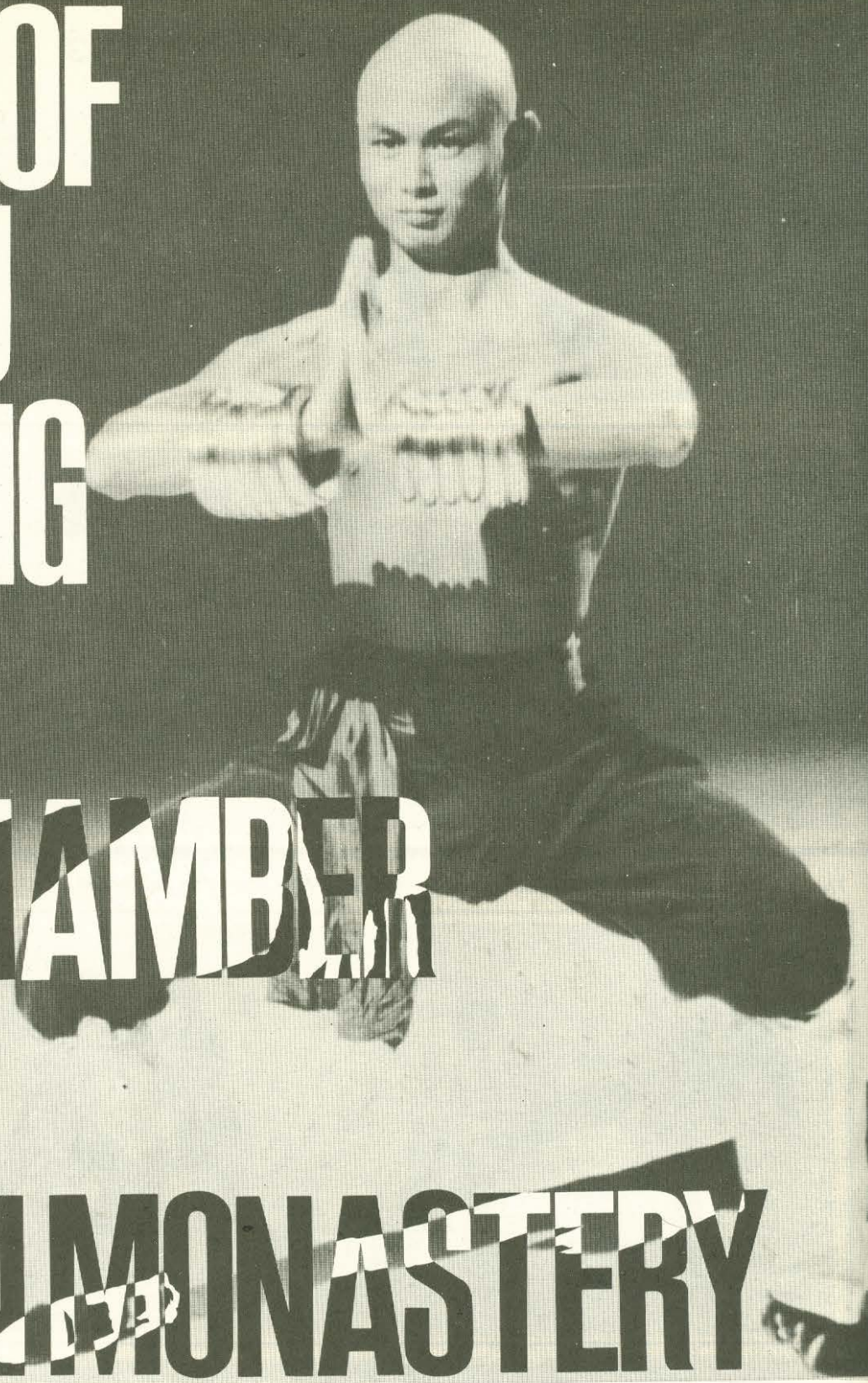


SECRET OF KUNG FU TRAINING IN THE 36TH CHAMBER OF THE SHAOLIN MONASTERY



少林寺三十六房練功秘密

BY ALI BABA

WHAT ARE THE 36 CHAMBERS OF THE SHAOLIN MONASTERY? THESE ARE PLACES WHERE THE SHAOLIN MONASTERY TRAINED ITS DISCIPLES. THE 36 CHAMBERS REPRESENT 36 DIFFERENT LEVELS OR 36

SUBJECTS OF MARTIAL ARTS. TO LEAVE THE SHAOLIN MONASTERY WITH THE DIGNITY OF A GRADUATE, A SHAOLIN DISCIPLE MUST FIRST COMPLETE THESE 36 SUBJECTS. IF YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW

DID THE SHAOLIN MONASTERY TRAIN ITS DISCIPLES ON THESE 36 SUBJECTS, THEN YOU MUST SEE THE MOVIE "THE SHAOLIN 36TH CHAMBER" PRODUCED BY SHAW BROS. CO. OF HONGKONG.

500 Actors Play a Single Scene

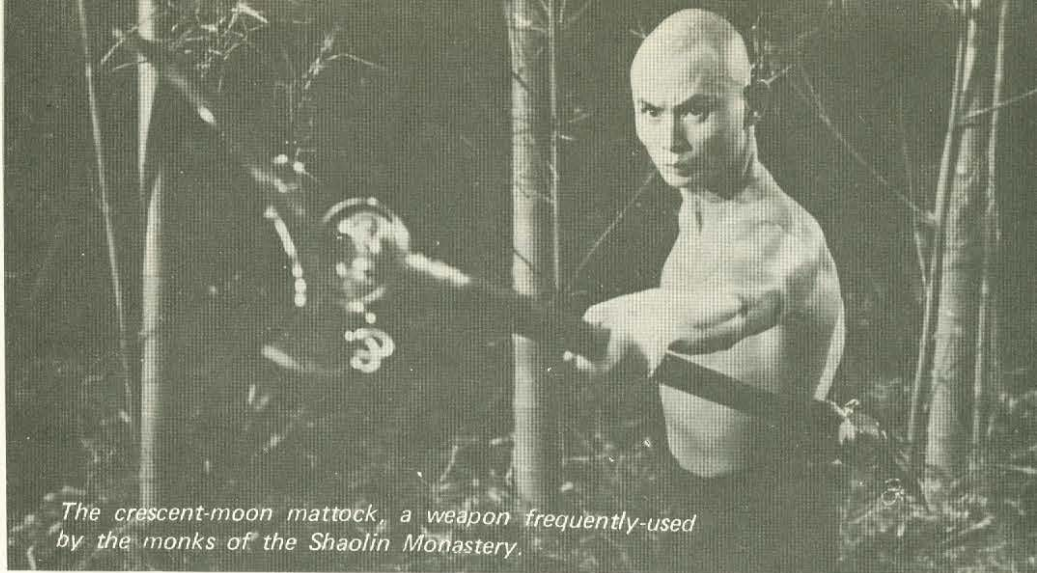
Director Liu Chia-liang (劉家良) put to action 500 extras at the second studio of the Shaw Brothers' movie town to shoot the scene "rounding up of Shaolin disciples" in the film "The Shaolin 36th Chamber".

The second studio is made up of several ancient Chinese streets.

There are rice-shops, taverns and groceries, as well as honorific arches, wells and large squares of empty land in these streets.

Wearing full Manchu costumes, Lo Lieh a famous kung fu movie star, was pitted against a martial artist.

Lo Lieh, holding a pair of broadswords



The crescent-moon mattock, a weapon frequently-used by the monks of the Shaolin Monastery.

in hands, and the martial artist, armed with a steel pitch-fork, were locked in a stalemate.

They were surrounded by tens of policemen of the Ch'ing Government deployed

in a circle.

Outside the circle were 500 Ch'ing soldiers. The broadswords and halberds appeared to be as many as there are trees in a forest, and their flags were so



Director Liu Chia-liang (right) is directing Liu Chia-hui in a performance of the staff-technique of the Shaolin Monastery.

Liu Chia-liang had barely finished his words when he suddenly stood up and walked into the circle of Manchu policemen.

He took the pair of broadswords from Lo Lih's hands and directed the latter how to engage the martial artist.

He first pushed the opponent's pitchfork to the left with his two broadswords, did the same action on the right, then he turned round and crossed the broadswords above his back so that they exactly blocked the tail-end of the fork which the opponent was sweeping toward him, after that, he jabbed the edge of the broadsword in his right hand upward toward the opponent's private part, then he turned round and pared his opponent's privates with the edge of the broadsword in his left hand, now he leapt and joined his hands in a circle so that the two broadswords intersected in a cross to block the fork the opponent is piercing at him.

Having made the demonstration, he gave the pair of broadswords back to Lo Lih



Above and below: Shaolin monks are stepping on floating logs in the training of the light-body kung fu.





Wearing iron-rings at the wrists, a monk is exercising the Shaolin Staff-technique under a heavy rain.

'Now, by the way, how are the arms trained to improve their power?' asked the reporter.

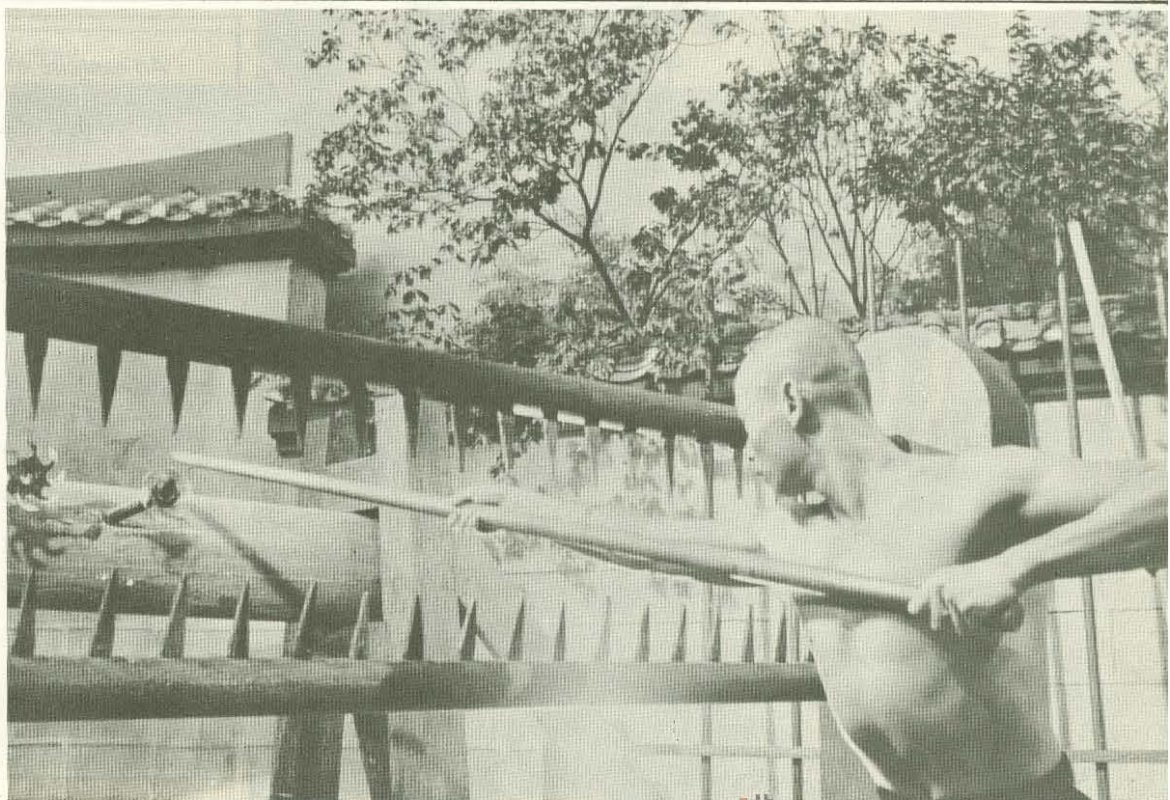
'You carry a bucket of water in each hand and walk all the way from the foot of the hill to the peak. And you must

keep your two arms straight, which is ensured by binding sharp knives to your sides.'

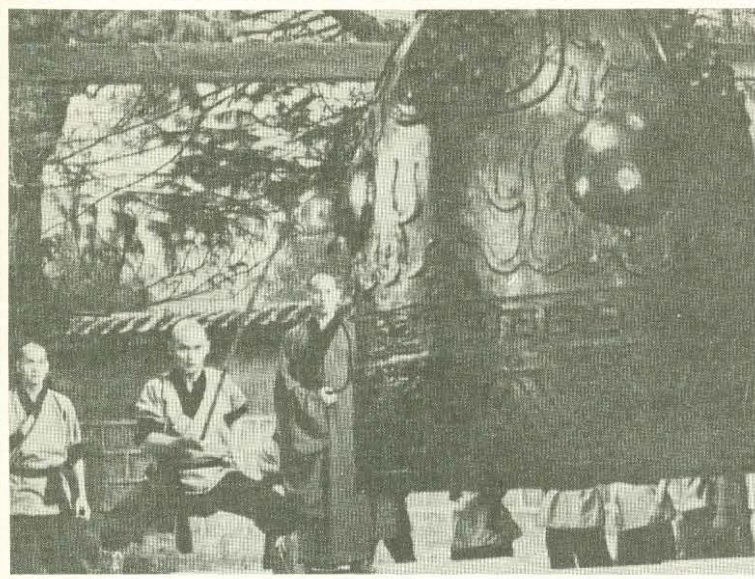
'Why is it necessary to be so strict about keeping the arms straight as to have to bind two knives to the waist?' asked the

reporter.

'If you do not keep your arms straight, then it would be your shoulders, not your arms, that are trained,' explained Liu Chia-liang.



An exercise of staff-techniques on the sharp tooth-edged staff-dummy. A slight negligence could lead to an injury of the hands.



An exercise of striking a huge bell with a long bamboo-pole, which is designed to develop the wrist-strength.

'What is its use?'
'It strengthens the forearms.' He stretched his arms and muscles bulged in them.

It Is Highly Difficult to Perform Consecutive Actions

Lo Lieh did the fighting actions with the martial artist for seven or eight times in the way Liu Chia-liang had demonstrated.

He is a highly-intelligent actor who performs vividly once he is directed.

Nevertheless, this scene is very difficult to perform with many actions having to be done at a stretch.

The sun hung high in the skies and sweat dripped like rain.

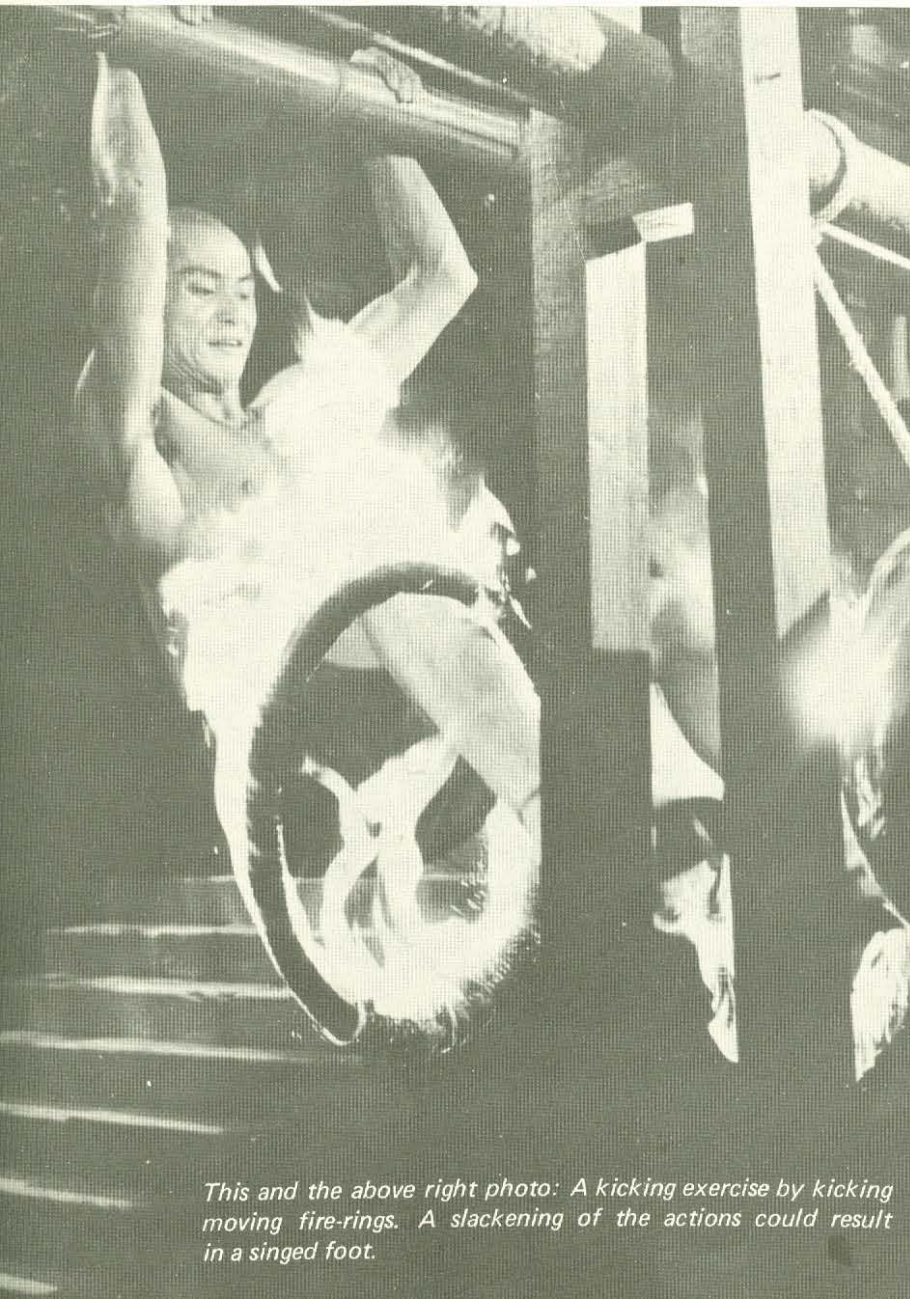
Lo Lieh is an actor of remarkable virtue. He rehearsed again and again despite the rain-like sweat.

After rehearsing for many times, Lo Lieh nodded to Liu Chia-liang to signal that he was ready for the shooting.

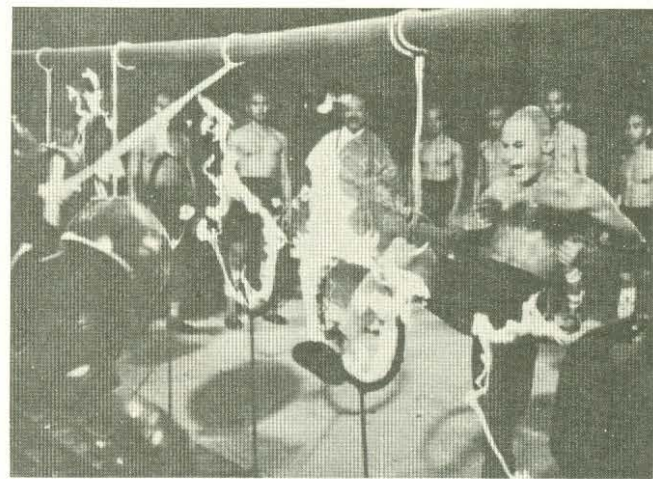
'Camera!' cried Liu Chia-liang.

Drill the Wrists As a Preliminary to the Training of the Seizing Techniques

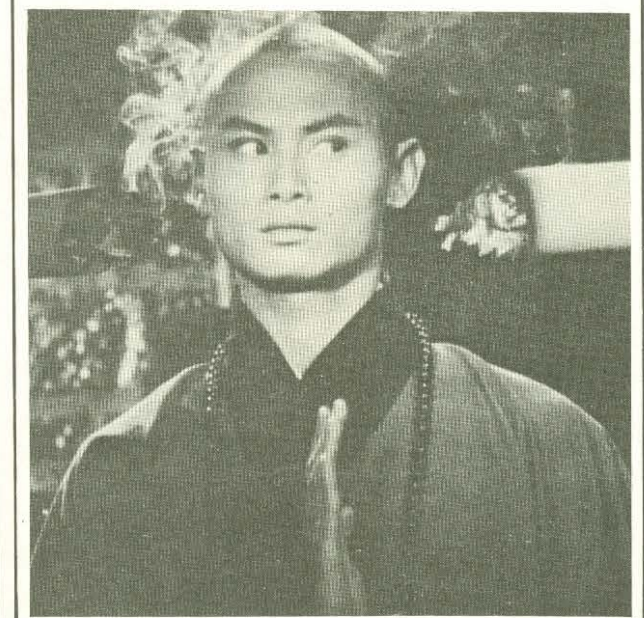
'How are the wrists trained?' asked the reporter, while looking at the shooting.



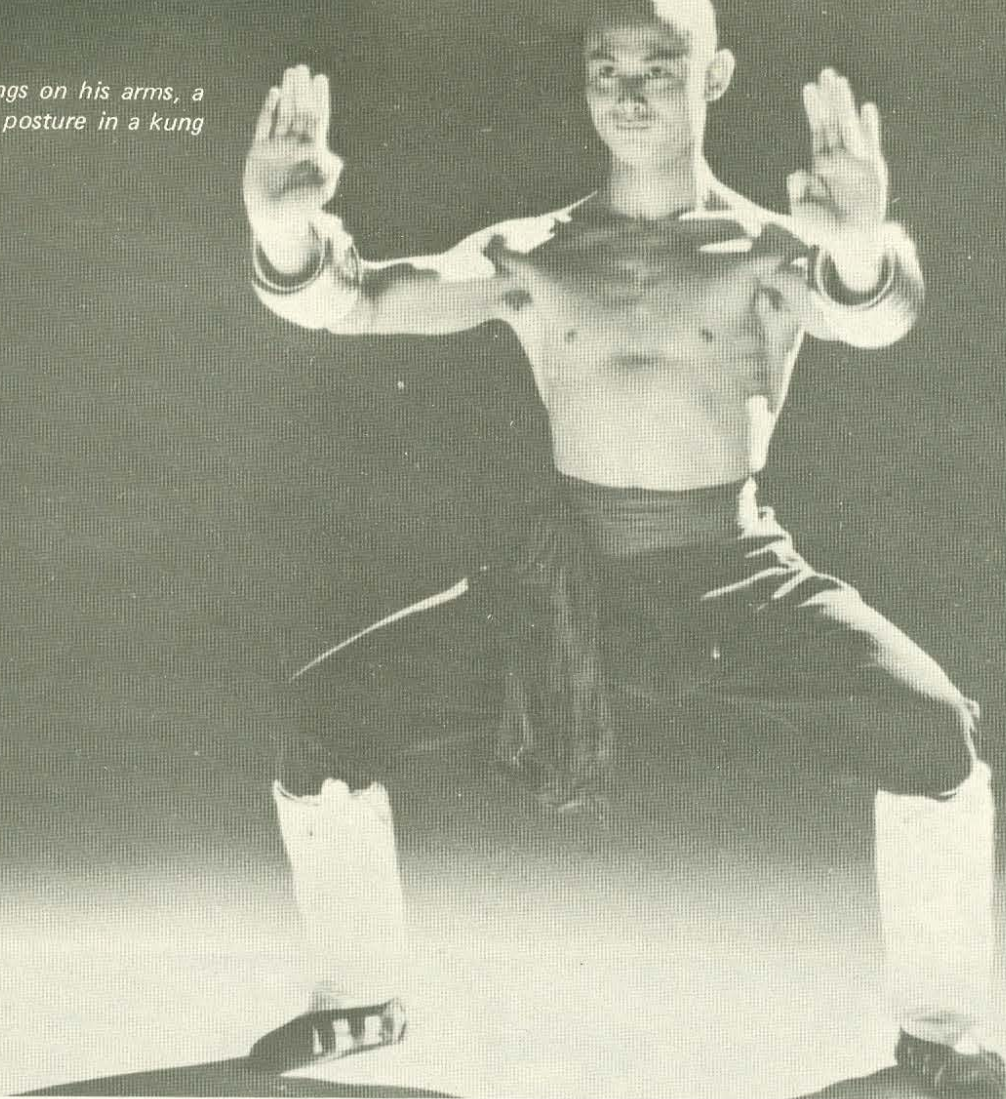
This and the above right photo: A kicking exercise by kicking moving fire-rings. A slackening of the actions could result in a singed foot.



An exercise of the eyes. Being smoked with a fire, the trainee moves only his eye-balls. No motion of his head is permitted.



With ten iron-rings on his arms, a trainee is taking posture in a kung fu exercise.



'You train your wrists by striking a bell with a 10-foot-long stick. Two pieces of wood are bound to your arms so that you can only use your wrist-power, not your arm-power,' answered Liu Chia-liang.

'What a difficult exercise it should be!

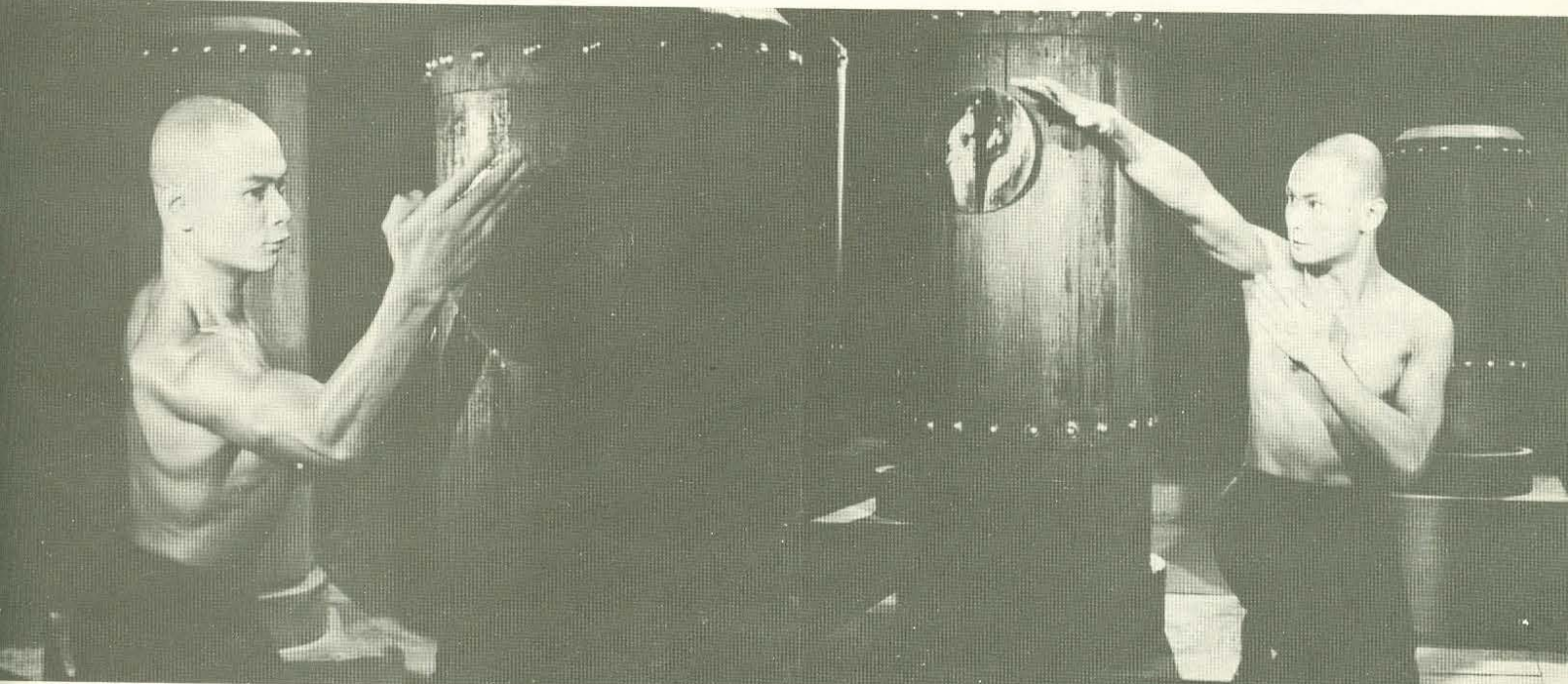
But what is the use of wrist-power?

'If you have strong wrists, you can practise seizing techniques. You can also deal a back-handed strike or stick your hand to the enemy. It is very useful.' His eyes suddenly looked fixedly, as if he were absorbed in some thought.

He Is Very Strict in the Shooting to Strive for Perfection

Lo Lieh crossed the broadswords above his back and exactly blocked the tail-end of the pitch-fork with which his

An exercise at a huge wooden-man dummy.



opponent was sweeping at him, then he jabbed the edge of the broadsword in his right hand upward toward the opponent's privates, . . .

'NG!' cried Liu Chia-liang to show his disapproval of the actions. NG is abbreviation for "no good" as a jargon of the Hongkong cinema circle.

Lo Lieh went through the actions again, accompanied by the sound of the cine-camera.

He pushed the pitch-fork to the left with his two broadswords, did the same on the right, he leapt and joined his hands in a circle. When the martial artist jabbed with the pitch-fork, his broadswords intersected in a perfect cross to block the fork.

'He made it!' No one could help yelling

in enthusiasm.

But Liu Chia-liang only said 'Leave it there' rather than 'O.K.'

'Leave it there' means that it was to be reserved. Basically, it had to be shot over again.

It is really exacting work to film under Liu Chia-liang.

It Is Hard Work to Complete One Scene

'How long it takes for a Shaolin disciple to complete his training in all the 36 chambers?' asked the reporter.

'Usually it takes eight years,' answered Liu Chia-liang, 'but the leading part in the film takes only four years.'

'Why does he need only four years?'

'Because he is in a hurry to take vengeance.'

'From whom does he want to take the vengeance?'

'From him!' pointed Liu Chia-liang.

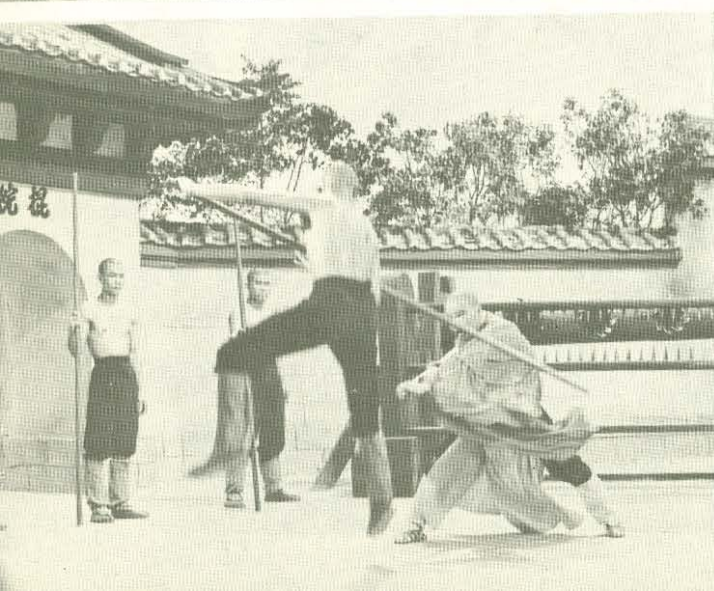
In the direction of his finger was Lo Lieh. The man in the official Manchu costumes, who is a superior martial artist. The man dripping sweat like rains in utter exhaustion.

'Okay?' I asked, when the scene was ultimately completed.

'Okay!' Liu Chia-liang replied, in satisfaction.



These four photos show Shaolin monks exercising the art of fighting with apparatus.



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