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It's all in the breathing

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It's all in the breathing

SATURDAY
SPOTLIGHT

South-east Asia Games silat champion Sheik Alauddin has sought the help of a Singaporean qigong master to help him defend his throne this October in Jakarta. ERNEST LUIS find out more about this unique union.

HANDS and legs cocked on a fourth storey ledge, one was a *silat* champ and the other, a qigong master.

For a while, onlookers thought it was "Showdown at Club HDB" in Bukit Merah.

The third party though, was not a referee but our photographer instead.

"Wasted...no fight," they sighed.

Sheik Alauddin is Singapore's reigning SEA Games *silat* champion.

A two-time world champion in 1990 and 1994, he lost the chance to defend his title at the Kuala Lumpur World Championships in April.

Beaten on points in the early rounds, a bronchial infection had also weakened him and phlegm was a problem.

Doctors feared Sheik could get asthmatic if his problem worsened.

With the coming Jakarta SEA Games in October, Sheik felt he needed help or he might lose his SEA Games throne too.

That's when he met qigong master Anthony Wee last month.

MASTER

'Sifu' (Mandarin for master) Wee is a Singaporean who migrated to Perth, Australia in 1987.

He has set up "Qi Dynamics" schools both here and in Perth.

Explained Wee: "Qi is the art of breathing to stabilise and strengthen the body."

Under Wee's guidance for three weeks, Sheik's infection started disappearing.

Said Sheik: "I always thought qigong was too slow-motion for me.

"Because I like to punch, kick and whack!

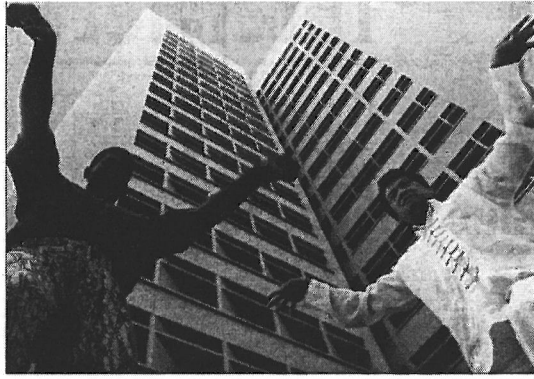
"But I need to improve my breathing and mental focus under pressure. So Wee comes in here," said Sheik....

I always thought qigong was too slow-motion for me. Because I like to punch, kick and whack! But I need to improve my breathing and mental focus under pressure. So Wee comes in here.

— Sheik Alauddin

FACTFILE

- Name: Sheik Alauddin
- Age: 29
- Date of birth: Aug 22, 1967
- Height: 1.86m
- Weight: 90kg
- Titles: World Champion (1990, '94) Heavyweight SEA Games Champion ('91, '93, '95)



Student and Master, Sheik Alauddin (left) and Anthony Wee go through some breathing routines

Picture/ KENNETH KOH