

HAO STYLE TAIJI

Posted on June 1, 2013 by Paul Brennan

武式太極拳
WU YUXIANG STYLE TAIJI BOXING
郝少如 編者
by Hao Shaoru
顧留馨 審
edited by Gu Liuxin
[published June, 1963]



郝為真 (1849—1920)
Hao Weizhen

武式太極拳簡介

INTRODUCTION TO WU YUXIANG STYLE TAIJI BOXING

河北永年人武河清，字禹襄（1812—1880），出身於小官僚地主家庭，兄弟三人在家練習武術。當楊露禪（1799—1872）自陳家溝返鄉，禹襄兄弟愛其術，從學陳氏老架太極拳，得其大概。禹襄兄澄清（1800—1884）於1852年中進士，官河南舞陽縣知縣，禹襄赴兄任所，便道過溫縣陳家溝，擬訪露禪之師陳長興（1771—1853）求益。道經趙堡鎮，知長興已老病（這年長興已82歲，越歲卒），時陳青萍在趙堡鎮教授陳氏新架太極拳，遂從青萍學新架月餘，備悉理法。澄清於舞陽鹽店得王宗岳（乾隆年間人）《太極拳譜》，禹襄得譜研究，更有發悟，以練拳心得發揮王氏舊譜之義，為《十三勢行工歌訣》作註解十條，名為《打手要言》；又衍為《十三勢行工心解》四則；並歸納鍛煉要領為《身法十要》。其著作皆根據其本身的體驗，故簡練精要，無一浮詞。

禹襄之甥李經綸，字亦畬（1832—1892），於1853年始從禹襄學拳。亦畬研究太極拳，仿禹襄實驗之法，招致鄉勇以自驗其技，一再筆錄修訂。亦畬之孫槐蔭於1935年在李廉讓堂本《太極拳譜序》中說：“此譜系先祖晚年所著，中經多次修改，方克完成。每得一勢巧妙，一著竅要，即書一紙貼於座右，比試揣摩，不斷實驗，逾數日覺有不妥應修改，即撕下，另易他條，往復撕貼必至完善而始止，久之遂集成書。”李亦畬的太極拳論文有：“五字訣”一篇、“撒放秘訣”摺引鬆放七言四句、“走架打手行工要言”一篇（闡述了走架即是打手、打手即是走架，練拳和推手相輔相成之理）。近代太極拳的傳布，以楊氏祖孫三代對教材教法不斷創新之力為多，而於拳理的鑽研總結，首推武、李，較之王宗岳《太極拳論》之抽象性的概括，原為具體切實，有繼承、有發展，乃能自成一派。

武禹襄拳式既不同於陳式老架和新架，亦不同於楊式大架和小架，學而化之，自成一派，其特點是：姿勢緊湊，動作舒緩，步法嚴格分清虛實，胸部、腹部的進退旋轉始終保持中正，完全是用內動的虛實轉換和“內氣潛轉”來支配外形；左右手各管半個身體，不相逾越，出手不過足尖。原來也有跳躍動作，到四傳的郝月如（1877—1935）才改為不縱不跳；雙擺連也改為不拍打腳面，這是為適應年老體弱者的需要而作的改革。

武式推手的步法，僅為進三步半，退三步半一種。

禹襄教讀自娛，亦畬行醫為業，均以儒生自居，在鄉授徒極少。李所傳以同鄉郝和（字為真，1849—1920）的技術最精。武式太極拳於民國初傳入北京時，有些人把它稱作李架，待為真之子月如和其孫少如於1928間去南京、上海教拳時，也有人稱它為郝架。月如遺有太極拳著作多篇。武、李後輩多不傳研太極拳，武式遂由郝氏傳習。少如不教拳亦已多年，上海市體育宮為了發掘傳統，於1961年開設了武式太極拳學習班，請郝少如教授，以廣其傳。武式太極拳從未有圖解問世，本書拳照系由郝少如照像，並寫動作說明。

（顧留馨）

Wu Heqing, called Yuxiang (1812-1880), was from Yongnian county, Hebei. He was from a family of landed gentry lower-level officials, and the three brothers in the family practiced martial arts. After Yang Luchan (1799-1872) came home from the Chen family village, Wu Yuxiang and his brothers admired his art, and they learned from him the “old frame” Chen Style Taiji Boxing, obtaining its general idea.

In 1852, Yuxiang's brother, Chengqing (1800-1884), passed in the top-level of the imperial examinations and was appointed county magistrate of Wuyang county, Henan. Yuxiang then went to work for his brother, but on the way he took a “shortcut” which passed him by the Chen family village in Wen county, intending to try to visit and seek more from Luchan's teacher, Chen Changxing (1771-1853). His route passed through the town of Zhaobao, and since he knew Chen Changxing was already old and ill (at that time 82 years old and soon to pass away), and that Chen Qingping was at that time in Zhaobao teaching “new frame” Chen Style Taiji Boxing, he spent more than a month learning Qingping's “new frame”, until he had fully absorbed its theory.

In a Wuyang salt shop, Chengqing obtained Wang Zongyue's (a man from during the reign of Emperor Qianlong, who reigned 1735-1796) “Taiji Boxing Manual”. Yuxiang then received and studied it, until finally understanding how to make use of the ideas in it when practicing the boxing. He wrote ten annotations to the “Song of Practicing the Thirteen Dynamics” called “Essentials of Playing Hands”, followed by four sections called “Understanding How to Practice the Thirteen Dynamics”. He also condensed major principles for training into “Ten Essential Body Standards”. His writings are all based on his personal experience, and are therefore succinct and refined, with no extraneous remarks.

Wu Yuxiang's nephew, Li Jinglun, called Yiyu (1832-1892), started learning the art from Wu in 1853. In his own research of Taiji Boxing, he imitated Wu's methods of experimentation, recruiting from among the local militiamen in order to experience the techniques with actual people, and repeatedly taking down notes and making revisions. In 1935, Li's grandson, Huaiyin, explained in the "Preface to the Taiji Boxing Manual" from the Lianrang Hall manuscript: "Grandfather wrote these texts in his later years, revising them many times until they were finally completed. Whenever he would catch the ingenuity of a posture, he would write down the trick of it, keeping writing paper close beside him. He would test, ponder, ceaselessly experiment. After several days we would find there were things that did not fit and should be changed, and he would tear up his paper and replace it with new paper. Over and over he tore up and replaced until he had got it just right, and then after a long time he had accumulated a compendium of writings."

Among Li Yiyu's Taiji Boxing compositions, there are the "Five-Word Formula", the "Trick to Releasing" – raise, draw in, relax, and release – in four seven-character phrases, and "Essentials in Practicing the Solo Set & Playing Hands" (elaborating on the principle that the solo practice set is the playing hands and the playing hands exercise is the solo set, that the solo set and playing hands complement each other).

Nowadays the spread of Taiji Boxing has for the most part come from the three generations of the Yang family's efforts with their unceasingly innovative teaching methods and materials, but as for the intensive and comprehensive study of the boxing theory, Wu and Li are supreme. Compared to the abstruseness and generality of Wang Zongyue's "Taiji Boxing Treatise", they are more specific and practical. What they inherited they developed, and they were then able to create a new style.

Wu Yuxiang's boxing style is not the same as the Chen Style, neither the "old frame" nor the "new frame", and it is also not the same as the Yang Style, neither the "large frame" nor the "small frame". After he learned it, he altered it and created a new branch. Its characteristics are:

- The postures are compact.
- The movements are leisurely.
- The footwork strictly distinguishes between empty and full.
- In advancing and retreating, and in the turning of chest and belly, centeredness is maintained throughout.
- It entirely uses the internal alternation between empty and full and "internal energy secretly transferring" to control the external form.
- Each hand has charge over half the body and do not cross each other, nor do they extend past the toes.

Originally there were also jumping movements until the fourth generation teacher Hao Yueru (1877-1935) removed them. The "Double-Slap Swinging Lotus" was also changed so that there is no slapping of the top of the foot. These were adaptations made for the needs of the old and infirm.

The footwork of Wu Yuxiang Style pushing hands has only one method: advancing three and a half steps and retreating three and a half steps.

Wu Yuxiang taught reading as a hobby and Li Yiyu practiced medicine as a profession. They both considered themselves to be members of the literati and in their hometown taught very few students. Li's best student was his neighbor, Hao He, called Weizhen (1849-1920). When Wu Yuxiang Style Taiji Boxing spread to Beijing in the first year of the Republic [1912], some people called it "Li style", then when Weizhen's son, Yueru, and grandson, Shaoru, went to teach in Nanjing and Shanghai in 1928, people also called it "Hao style".

Hao Yueru inherited many Taiji Boxing writings. Wu and Li's descendants generally did not pass down the study of Taiji Boxing, and so the Wu Yuxiang style was transmitted by the

Hao family. Hao Shaoru has not taught the art for many years now, so the Shanghai Physical Education Center, for the sake of unearthing the tradition, opened a Wu Yuxiang Style Taiji Boxing class in 1961 and invited Hao Shaoru to teach it, further spreading its transmission.

Wu Yuxiang Style Taiji Boxing has previously not been treated to an illustrated publication. This volume's drawings are based on photographs of Hao Shaoru and are alongside written explanations of the movements.

– (written by Gu Liuxin)

前言

FOREWORD

我生長在一個有太極拳癖好的家庭裡。故鄉是河北省永年縣。先祖父名和，字為真。先父名文桂，字月如。先祖父的太極拳是從鄰居李亦畬（註一）先生處學來的。李先生是他的舅父武禹襄（註二）先生所傳授的。先祖父從李先生學拳很久，數十年從未中斷，一直到李先生逝世的時候。因此，先祖父深得武、李一派太極拳的奧妙。在先祖父隨李先生練拳的時候，先父經常在旁，因為他是李先生蒙館中的學生。經過長期觀察揣摩，先父未成年時已能領略太極拳的理論與實踐。我自幼也因為環境關係，早就接觸到太極拳。以後在先父的教誨下，對太極拳的愛好與日俱增，到十五歲時已經養成每日練拳的習慣。

自解放以來，在黨的領導和關懷下，太極拳已成為一種生氣蓬勃的群眾性體育活動，同時也成為廣大人民保健手段之一。這使我深深地感到，我應當把我家所藏太極拳重要文獻以及我家三代教授太極拳的經驗公諸全國，並積極參加太極拳研究，從而為提高和發展這一極其寶貴的民族文化遺產盡我微薄的力量。

在這樣的動機下，我用業餘時間編寫了這本書。在編寫過程中，上海市體育宮主任顧留馨同志曾予以大力支持，不僅親自審閱了全稿，而且選擇了一些古拳譜附在書末，併為武式太極拳寫了簡介；周元龍同志代為繪圖，並在文字加工和編排上給予大力協助；另外還有不少愛好太極拳的朋友也大力參加了編寫工作。我在這裡表示衷心的感謝。

由於我的水平有限，不當之處恐難避免，尚希讀者不吝指正和批評。

郝少如 1961年國慶前夕於上海

I grew up in a Taiji Boxing family. My native place is Yongnian county, Hebei. My grandfather was named He and called Weizhen. My father was named Wengui and called Yueru. My grandfather learned Taiji Boxing from his neighbor, Li Yiyu (see note 1 below). Li learned from his uncle, Wu Yuxiang (see note 2 below). My grandfather studied for quite a long time with Li, over ten years without a break until Li passed away, and consequently he grasped the secrets of the Wu/Li branch of Taiji Boxing.

While grandfather was training with Li, father was always there, because he was a pupil in Li's private elementary school. Going through a long period of observing and pondering, he could at a young age already appreciate the theory and practice of Taiji Boxing. Due to my environment when I was young, I long ago came into contact with it, then after my father taught it to me, my fondness for Taiji Boxing increased with each day, and by the time I was fifteen years old, I had already developed a habit of daily practice.

Since liberation [1949], Taiji Boxing has under the Communist Party's leadership and care become a vitalizing sports activity for the masses and at the same time has become a widespread method of health care for the people. This makes me keenly feel that I should give my family's collection of important documents and our three generations of teaching

experience to the whole country, and by taking an active part in Taiji Boxing research to thereby enhance and expand this priceless cultural heritage to the utmost of my meager ability.

From such motivation, I wrote this book in my spare time. In the course of writing it, director of the Shanghai Physical Education Center, comrade Gu Liuxin, gave me his energetic support, not only in personally checking through the whole manuscript, but also in selecting some of the old boxing texts to include as an appendix, as well as writing an introduction. Comrade Zhou Yuanlong made the illustrations for it, and also gave his energetic assistance to cleaning up the text and arranging the layout. Furthermore, many colleagues who admire Taiji Boxing added a lot of eager help in proofreading. I here express my heartfelt gratitude.

Due to my limited proficiency, I fear mistakes are unavoidable, and I hope the reader will not hold back in correcting and criticizing.

– written by Hao Shaoru, Shanghai, Independence Day Eve [Sep 30], 1961

(註一) 李經綸，字亦奮，永年縣人，清舉人，生於道光十二年九月，卒於光緒十八年十一月（1832—1892）。

(Note 1) Li Jinglin, called Yiyu, was from Yongnian county, passed the Qing dynasty imperial examinations at the provincial level, was born in the ninth month of the twelfth year of the reign of Emperor Daoguang (i.e. 1832), and died in the eleventh month of the eighteenth year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu (i.e. 1892).

(註二) 武河清，字禹襄，永年縣人，清秀才，生於嘉慶十七年二月，卒於光緒六年十一月（1812—1880）。

(Note 2) Wu Heqing, called Yuxiang, was from Yongnian county, passed the Qing dynasty imperial examinations at the county level, was born in the second month of the seventeenth year of the reign of Emperor Jiaqing (i.e. 1812), and died in the eleventh month of the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu (i.e. 1880).

第一章 太極拳要領

CHAPTER ONE – TAIJI BOXING REQUIREMENTS

武式太極拳要點 郝月如 著

ESSENTIALS OF WU YUXIANG STYLE TAIJI BOXING (by Hao Yueru)

(一) 太極拳身法主要有：涵胸、拔背、裹襠、護臍、提頂、吊襠、鬆肩、沉肘、騰挪、閃戰、尾閭正中、氣沉丹田、虛實分清等十三條。

I. In Taiji Boxing, there are thirteen fundamental body standards: contain your chest, pluck up your back, wrap your crotch, shield your belly, lift your headtop, suspend your crotch, loosen your shoulders, sink your elbows, always be ready, get it over with in a flash, center your tailbone, sink energy to your elixir field, and distinguish between empty and full.

1. 心以上為胸。胸不可挺，要往下鬆，兩肩微向前合，謂之涵胸。能涵胸，才能以心行氣。

The chest is the area above the solar plexus. Your chest should not stick out, but should instead relax downward, your shoulders slightly closing forward. This is what is meant by containing your chest. If you can contain your chest, you will be able to use your mind to move energy.

2. 兩肩中間脊骨處，似有鼓起之意，兩肩要靈活，不可低頭，謂之拔背。

The area of your spine between your shoulders seems to have an intention of rousing. Your

shoulders should be enlivened and there must not be a lowering of your head. This is what is meant by plucking up your back.

3.兩膝著力，有內向之意，兩腿如一條腿，能分虛實，謂之裹襠。

Your knees put forth an effort with an intention of going inward. With both legs unified as if they are a single leg, you can distinguish which one is empty and which one is full. This is what is meant by wrapping your crotch.

4.兩脅微斂，取下收前合之勢，內中感覺鬆快，謂之護臍。

Both your flanks slightly contract. They have an energy of grabbing downward and closing together forward. Inside there is a feeling of being relaxed and full. This is what is meant by shielding your belly.

5.頭頸正直，不低不昂，神貫於頂，提挈全身，謂之提頂。

Your head and neck are upright, neither drooping nor hoisting. Energy passes through to your headtop, carrying your whole body. This is what is meant by lifting your headtop.

6.兩股用力，臀部前送，小腹有上翻之勢，謂之吊襠。

Your thighs apply strength and your buttocks are sent forward, so that your lower abdomen has a dynamic of tilting upward. This is what is meant by suspending your crotch.

7.以意將兩肩鬆開，氣向下沉，意中加一靜字，謂之鬆肩。

Use intention to get your shoulders to loosen, sinking energy downward. Within the intention add a thought of tranquility. This is what is meant by loosening your shoulders.

8.以意運氣，行於兩肘，手腕要能靈活，肘尖常有下垂之意，謂之沉肘。

Use intention to move energy, moving it to your elbows. Your wrists will then be able to be nimble. The tips of your elbows always have an intention of hanging down. This is what is meant by sinking your elbows.

9.有動之意而未動，即預動之勢，謂之騰挪。

When there is an intention to move but not yet movement, this is the energy of being ready to move. This is what is meant by always being ready.

10.身、手、腰、腿相順相隨，一氣呵成，向外發出，勁如放箭，迅若雷霆，一往無敵，
謂之閃戰。

Your body, hands, waist, and legs move together in a continuous flow, issuing power outward like the loosening of an arrow, fast as a thunderclap, to an unguarded area. This is what it means to get it over with in a flash.

11.兩股有力，臀部前收，脊骨根向前托起丹田（小腹），謂之尾閭正中。

There is strength in your thighs. Your buttocks gather forward. The base of your spine goes forward to prop up and lift your “elixir field” (i.e. your lower abdomen). This is what is meant by your tailbone being centered.

12.能做到尾閭正中、涵胸、護臍、鬆肩、吊襠，就能以意送氣，達於腹部，不使上浮，
謂之氣沉丹田。

If you can get your tailbone centered, contain your chest, shield your belly, loosen your shoulders, and suspend your crotch, then you will be able to use intention to send energy to your abdomen and keep it from floating up. This is what is meant by energy sinking to your elixir field.

13.兩腿虛實必須分清。虛非完全無力，著地實點要有騰挪之勢。騰挪者，即虛腳與胸有相吸相繫之意，否則便成偏沉。實非全然占煞，精神貫於實股，支柱全身，要有上提之意。如虛實不分，便成雙重。

Which leg is empty and which is full must be distinguished. “Empty does not mean you are in that area completely weak.” When touching down, the key point is that there should be an

energy of being ready to move. With a readiness to move, there is an intention of the empty foot and your chest drawing toward each other, and it is thereby easy to sink to one side. “Full does not mean you are in that area completely stuck.” Spirit concentrates in the full thigh to prop up your whole body. There should be an intention of carrying upward. If empty and full are not distinguished, you will easily end up using force against force.

(二) 手、眼、身、步、精、氣、神

II. Hand, Eye, Body, Step, Essence, Energy, and Spirit:

手法須要氣勢騰挪，有預動之勢，無散漫之意。兩肩亦須鬆開，不使絲毫之力。手勢本無一定，不管抬起垂下，伸出曲回，總要有相應之意，何時意動，何時手到。所謂“得心應手”是也。騰挪之勢，即“有意”，“運氣”，“精神貫注”是也。以意運氣，久而能精，精而愈精則神，神而愈神則靈，領悟此理，當有神明之妙。

神聚於眼，眼是心之苗，意從心中生，我意欲向何處，則眼神直射何處，周身亦直對何處，一轉眼則周身全轉，視靜猶動，視動猶靜，總須從神聚而來。

身法先求“尾閭正中”。正中者，即是“脊骨根向前”也。又須護肫，肫不護則豎尾無力，一身便無主宰矣。我意欲向何處，“脊骨根”便直對何處。轉變在兩腰眼中，左轉則左腰眼微向上抽，用右腰眼托起左腰眼；右轉則右腰眼微向上抽，用左腰眼托起右腰眼，則尾閭自然正中。總之，各條身法必須一一求對，結合起來只有一個身法，一處不合，全身都乖，所以身法是永不許錯的。雖千變萬化，總難越出此身法也。

所謂步法虛實分清，虛非全然無力，內中要有騰挪；實非全然占煞，必須精神貫注。騰挪謂之虛，虛中有實；精神謂之實，實中有虛。虛虛實實，實實虛虛，即此意也。

For the hand techniques, there must be an energy of being ready to move. There is a dynamic of being prepared to act and a determination to not be distracted. Your shoulders also must relax, not allowing the slightest effort. The hand postures are not fixed, but regardless of rising or falling, extending or withdrawing, there should always be an intention of your hands coordinating with each other.

Whenever your intention moves, at that moment your hands go where the intention directs them, as it is said: “Your hands correspond to what is in your mind.” The dynamic of being ready to move is a matter of “having intention”, of “moving energy”, and of “concentrating spirit”. Use intention to move energy. After a long period of practice, it can be done consciously, and then after a long time of doing it consciously, it can be done subconsciously, and finally after a long time of doing it subconsciously, it becomes unconscious. Once this theory is grasped, you will have a miraculous subtlety.

Spirit gathers in the eyes, for the eyes are the sprouts of the mind, and the intention is born of the mind. Wherever my intention wants to go, my gaze shoots straight there, and my whole body goes directly to it. When I turn my eyes, my whole body turns. Regard stillness as movement and movement as stillness. Always it must come from the gathering of spirit.

For the body standards, first seek to “center your tailbone”. When centered, it is the same as “the base of the spine is forward”. It is also necessary for you to be shielding your belly. If there is a failure to shield your belly, your tailbone will be vertical and you will be without strength, and your whole body will then have no control. Wherever my intention wants to go, the “base of the spine” points directly there. Turning lies between the two sides of your lower back. When turning to the left, the left side of your lower back slightly draws up and the right side props up the left side. When turning to the right, the right side of your lower back slightly draws up and the left side props up the right side. Thus the tailbone is naturally centered.

It is always necessary to seek to keep each of the body standards correct, so that when combined together there is only a single body standard. But if even one among them is off, your whole body will be compromised, therefore they can never be allowed to be wrong.

Although there are endless changes, they will all be difficult if you depart from the body standards.

As for footwork, distinguish between empty and full. “Empty does not mean you are in that area completely weak, but that energy should there be ready to move. Full does not mean you are in that area completely stuck, but that spirit should there be concentrated.” Readiness to move lies in emptiness, and within emptiness lies fullness. Essential spirit lies in fullness, and within fullness lies emptiness. Emptiness is mingled with fullness and fullness is mingled with emptiness. This is the idea.

（三）起、承、開、合

III. Begin, Develop, Express, Finish:

太極拳走架，每一架式分四個動作：第一個動作是“起”（如“左懶扎衣”第一式），第二個動作是“承”（如“左懶扎衣”第二式），第三個動作是“開”，也即是發（如“左懶扎衣”第三式），第四個動作是“合”，也即是收，收是蓄的意思（如“左懶扎衣”第四式），但不是呆板的，有開中寓開，有合之再合，所謂不丟不頂，處處恰合也。

In the Taiji Boxing solo set, every posture is divided into four movements: the first is “begin” (as in the first part in TUCK IN THE ROBE – LEFT), the second is “develop” (as in the second part in TUCK IN THE ROBE – LEFT), the third is “express”, and is the same as issuing (as in the third part in TUCK IN THE ROBE – LEFT), the fourth is “finish”, and is the same as gathering, which has a storing intention (as in the fourth part in TUCK IN THE ROBE – LEFT). However, it is not stiffly done, expanding after expanding or contracting after contracting. Thus it is advised that you neither come away nor crash in, and then everything will be appropriate.

（四）折疊轉換

IV. Folding & Alternating:

太極拳有折疊之術，有轉換之法。折疊者，是對峙的，有上即有下，有前即有後，有左即有右。如意要向上，即寓下意，意要向下，即寓上意，前後左右，皆是如此，此即謂之折疊。轉換者，步隨身換，命意源頭在腰眼之間，向左轉換，左腰眼微向上抽，用右腰眼托起左腰眼；向右轉換，右腰眼微向上抽，用左腰眼托起右腰眼。此即所謂“命意源頭在腰隙”也。

In Taiji Boxing there is the skill of folding and the method of alternating.

Folding is matter of symmetry. “For every up there is a down, for every forward there is a backward, and for every left there is a right. If your intention inclines upward, harbor also a downward intention,” or if your intention inclines downward, harbor also an upward intention. As to forward and back, left and right, the same goes for all of them, and this is what is called “folding”.

Alternating is a matter of “step according to your body’s adjustments”, the command coming from the space between the sides of your lower back. When turning to the left, the left side of your lower back is slightly drawn up, and the right side of your lower back is used to prop up the left side. When turning to the right, the right side of your lower back is slightly drawn up, and the left side of your lower back is used to prop up the right side. This is what is meant by “the command coming from your lower back”.

（五）舍己從人

V. Letting Go of Yourself and Going Along with the Opponent:

太極拳有舍己從人之術，挨何處，何處靈活。假使挨手，手腕靈活；挨肘，肘能靈活；挨胸，胸能靈活，周身處處如此。又挨手意在肘，挨肘意在肩，挨肩意在胸，挨胸

意在腰，挨腰意在股。以此推之，如沾連粘隨，不丟不頂，引進落空，借力發人，皆此意也。

In Taiji Boxing there is the art of letting go of yourself and going along with the opponent. Whatever part he is close to, that part becomes alert. If he gets near my hand, my wrist becomes alert. If he gets near my elbow, my elbow will become alert. If he gets near my chest, my chest will become alert. The same goes for every part of the body. Furthermore, if he gets near my hand, my intention goes to my elbow. If he gets near my elbow, my intention goes to my shoulder. If he gets near my shoulder, my intention goes to my chest. If he gets near my chest, my intention goes to my waist. If he gets near my waist, my intention goes to my thighs. Pushing him in this way, whether “sticking, connecting, adhering, and following”, or “neither coming away nor crashing in”, or “drawing him in to land on nothing”, or “borrowing his force to hit him with”, always it is this idea.

太極拳的走架打手 郝月如 著

TAIJI BOXING'S SOLO SET & PLAYING HANDS (by Hao Yueru)

太極拳不在樣式而在氣勢，不在外面而在內。平日行功走架，須研究揣摩空鬆圓活之道，要神氣鼓蕩，全身好似氣球，氣勢貴騰挪，身體有如懸空。兩手無論高低屈伸，一前一後，一左一右，皆能靈活自如。兩腿不論前進後退，左右旋轉，虛實變換，無不隨意所欲。日久功深，有不知手之舞之，足之蹈之之境。明白原理，練熟身法，善於用意，巧於運氣，到此地步，一舉一動，皆能合度，無所謂不對。

[Section 1]

Taiji Boxing lies not in the postures, but in the energy, not on the outside, but on the inside. When practicing the solo set, it is necessary to study and contemplate the methods of emptiness, relaxation, roundness, and liveliness. Your spirit and energy should be activated, your whole body seem like a balloon, energy should be ready to move, and your body seem suspended from above. Your hands, regardless of being high or low, withdrawn or extended, one forward while the other is back, or one to the left while the other is to the right, should always be able to move nimbly and smoothly. Your legs, regardless of advancing or retreating, turning to either side, or alternating between empty and full, should always follow your mind's wishes.

Over time your skill will deepen and there will be the condition of being unaware of the movements of your hands and feet. Understand the principles, become well-versed in the body standards, perfect the use of intention, and become skillful at moving energy – when this condition is achieved, every movement can be done to the proper degree, and there will not be a moment in which anything is incorrect.

習太極拳者必先求尾閭正中。正中者，脊骨根對臉之中間也。邁左步，左胯微向左上抽，用右胯托起左胯；邁右步，右胯微向右上抽，用左胯托起右胯，則尾閭自然正中；能正中，則能八面支撐；能八面支撐，則能旋轉自如，無不得力。次則步法虛實分清。虛非全然無力，內中要有騰挪，即預動之勢也。實非全然占煞，內中要貫注精神，即上提之意也。切記兩足在前弓後蹬時不要全然占煞，應該分清一虛一實，否則即成雙重之病。兩肩須要鬆開，不用絲毫之力，用力則不能捨己從人，引進落空。沉肘即肘尖常向下沉之意。前膊和兩股注意內中要有騰挪之勢，無騰挪則不靈活，不靈活則無圓活之趣。又須護肱，肱不護則豎尾無力，便一身無主宰矣。又須養氣，氣以直養而無害，即沉於丹田，涵養無傷之謂也。又須蓄勁，勁以曲蓄而有餘，並須蓄斂於

脊骨之內。吸為合為蓄，呼為開為發。蓋吸則自然提得起，亦拿得人起；呼則自然沉得下，亦放得人出。此是以意運氣，非以力使氣，是即太極拳呼吸之道也（此中所說“呼吸”，專職太極拳的“開、合、蓄、發”而言，與吾人平常呼吸不同，請讀者不要誤會）。

[Section 2]

In practicing Taiji Boxing, you must first seek to get your tailbone centered. When it is centered, your tailbone and the base of your spine are facing each other inwardly. When stepping with your left foot, your left hip slightly draws up to the left, and your right hip is used to prop up your left hip. When stepping with your right foot, your right hip slightly draws up to the right, and your left hip is used to prop up your right hip. In both cases your tailbone will then naturally be centered. If you can get it centered, then you can brace in every direction. If you can brace in every direction, then “you can turn smoothly and will be strong everywhere”.

Next, distinguish emptiness and fullness in your stepping. “Empty does not mean you are in that area completely weak”, for within there should be a readiness to move, a dynamic of being primed to act. “Full does not mean you are in that area completely stuck”, for within there should be a concentration of spirit, an intention of lifting upward. Always remember that when your front leg bends and your rear foot presses, they should not get completely stuck in their roles, for you should instead distinguish which leg is empty and which is full, otherwise you will fall into the error of using force against force.

Your shoulders must loosen and not use the slightest bit of effort. If they use effort, then you will not be able to let go of yourself and follow the opponent to thereby draw him into emptiness. Sink your elbows, meaning the tips of your elbows always have an intention of sinking down. Focused within your forearms and thighs should be an energy of being ready to move. If there is no readiness to move, there will be no nimbleness, and if there is no nimbleness, there will be no quality of roundness and liveliness.

It is also necessary to shield your belly. If your belly is not shielded, then your tailbone will be vertical and have no strength and it will be easy for your whole body to lose control.

It is also necessary to nurture energy. “By nurturing energy with integrity, it will not be corrupted.” This is the sinking of energy to your elixir field, conserving the energy without harming it. It is furthermore also necessary to store power. “By storing power in crooked parts, it will be in abundant supply.” Power must be collected within your spine. “Inhaling is contracting and storing. Exhaling is expanding and releasing. Since with inhaling there is a natural rising, take the opponent up. Since with exhaling there is a natural sinking, send the opponent away. This is the use of intention to move energy, not the use of exertion to force energy.”

This is Taiji Boxing’s method of breathing. (Within this kind of “breathing”, focus on Taiji Boxing’s concepts of “contract and expand, store and issue”. This is different from the ordinary way we breathe, so please do not get the wrong idea.)

太極拳之為技也，極精微巧妙，非恃力大手快也。夫力大手快者，先天自然賦有，又何須學焉。是故欲學斯技者，宜先從涵胸、拔背、裹襠、護肫、提頂、吊襠、鬆肩、沉肘、虛實分請求之。這些對了，再求斂氣，氣斂脊骨，注於腰間。然後再求騰挪。騰挪者，即精氣神也。精氣神貫注於兩腳、兩腿、兩手、兩膊前節之間。彼挨我何處，我注意何處，周身無一寸無精氣神，無一寸非太極，而後再求進退旋轉之法。旋轉樞紐在於腰隙。能旋轉自如，絲毫不亂，再求動靜之術，靜則無，無中生有，即有意也。意無定向，要八面支撐。單練之時，每一勢分四字，即起、承、開、合。一字一問能否八面支撐？不能八面支撐，即速揣摩之。如二人打手，我意在先，彼手快不如我意先，彼力大不如我氣斂，彼以巨力打來，我以意去接，微挨皮毛不讓打著，借其

力，趁其勢，四面八方何處順，即向何處打之。切記不可用力，不可尚氣，不可頂，不可丟；須要從人仍是由己，得機得勢，方能隨手而奏效。動亦是意，步動而身法不亂，手動而氣勢不散。單練之時，每一動要問能否由動中向八面轉換？不能八面轉換，即速揣摩之。如二人打手，我欲去彼，先將周身安排好，意仍在先，對定彼之重點，筆直去之；我之意方挨彼皮毛，如能應手，一呼即出；如彼之力頂來，不讓其力發出，我之意仍借彼力，不丟不頂，順其力而打之；此即借力打人，四兩撥千斤之妙也。此全是以意運氣，非以力使氣也。能以意打人，久之則意亦不用，身法無所不合。到此境界，已臻圓融精妙之境。說有即有，說無即無，一舉一動，無不從心所欲。真不知手之舞之，足之蹈之矣。

習太極拳者，須悟太極之理。欲知太極之理，於行功時先要提起全副精神，外示安逸，內固精神，氣勢騰挪，腹內鼓蕩。太極即是周身，周身即是太極。如同氣球，前進不凸，後退不凹，左轉不缺，右轉不陷，變化萬端，絕物斷續，一氣呵成，無外無內，形神皆忘，乃能進於精微矣。

在打手時，我意須要在先，彼之力挨我何處，我之意用在何處，彼之力方挨我皮毛，我之意已入彼骨裡；以己之意接彼之力，非以己之力頂撞彼之力，恰好不後不先，我之意與彼之力相合。左重則左虛，右重則右杳，仰之則彌高，俯之則彌深，進之則愈長，退之則愈促，一羽不能加，蠅蟲不能落，人不知我，我獨知人，所謂沾連粘隨，不丟不頂者是也。

[Section 3]

Taiji Boxing's techniques are profoundly skillful, not relying on great strength or fast hands. For one who has great strength and fast hands, natural attributes he has been endowed with, it is not necessary for him to learn such things. But for those of you who wish to learn this art, the first thing to do is seek to comply with the principles of containing your chest, plucking up your back, wrapping your crotch, shielding your belly, lifting your headtop, suspending your crotch, loosening your shoulders, sinking your elbows, and distinguishing between empty and full. When these are correct, then seek to collect energy, collecting it in your spine, concentrating it at your waist. Then after that, seek to achieve readiness to move. Readiness to move is a matter of essence, energy, and spirit, which are concentrated in the spaces between your feet, legs, hands, and forearms.

Wherever the opponent gets close to me, I pay attention to that place, not an inch of my body without essence, energy, and spirit, not an inch of my body that is not part of the overall taiji, and only then do I look for the ways of advancing, retreating, and turning. Turning and twisting comes from my waist. If I am able to turn smoothly, not the slightest bit in disorder, then I seek for the art of movement and stillness. Stillness is a matter of nothingness, and within nothingness is born somethingness, and that something is intention. The intention being without a definite direction, all directions will be braced.

During the solo practice, every posture separates into four parts: begin, develop, express, and finish. Within each posture, examine each of the four parts to see if you are able to brace in all directions. If at any moment you do not feel able to brace in all directions, immediately consider why.

When playing hands with a partner, my intention arrives first. His hands being fast does not compare to my intention arriving first. His strength being great does not compare to my energy being collected. When he uses great strength to attack me, I send out intention to connect to it. When he nears even the hairs on my skin, I do not allow him to make contact, but borrow his force, take advantage of his momentum, follow his movement everywhere in whatever direction he is going, and then attack him along that direction.

Always remember that you must not use exertion, you must not focus on the energy, and you must not crash into his force, nor run away from it. You must follow the opponent yet

still be acting from yourself and be in the right place at the right time, and then you will be able to act with ease and be successful. Movement also is intention. Your step moves but the body standards do not fall into disorder. Your hands move but the energy does not scatter. During the solo practice, you must examine in every movement if you are able to adjust in all directions throughout the movement. If you are not able to adjust in any direction, immediately consider why.

When playing hands with a partner, if I want to eject the opponent, I first have to get my whole body to be in good order. My intention still precedes my movement, and it is aimed firmly into his critical points to directly eject him. When my intention nears even the hairs on his skin, if I can respond with my hands, then even an exhale will send him away. If his force is coming to crash into me, I do not let his force express, for my intention is still to borrow his force, neither coming away nor crashing in, going along with his force and sending it back to him. This is borrowing the opponent's force to hit him with and the marvel of using four ounces to move a thousand pounds. This is entirely "the use of intention to move energy, not the use of exertion to force energy".

If you are able to use intention to attack the opponent, then after long experience, even intention does not need to be applied, for the body standards will always be conformed to. When you reach this state, you have attained a leisurely and refined skill. When you say something is, it will be so, and when you say something is not, it will not be. In every action, you will be able to do whatever you want, and you will not really be aware of the movement of your hands and feet.

Practitioners of Taiji Boxing must understand Taiji principles. If you want to understand Taiji principles, then when you practice you first have to rouse all your spirit. Outwardly show ease while inwardly bolstering spirit, and get the energy to be ready to move, alert within your abdomen. Taiji is your whole body, for your whole body is a taiji. Being like a balloon, do not bulge out when advancing or collapse when retreating, have no gaps when turning left, no cracks when turning right, always transforming, moving without interruption, continuously from beginning to end, no outside nor inside, no distinction between body and mind. Then you will be able to progress to perfection.

When practicing playing hands, my intention must go first. Wherever the opponent's force comes near me, my intention goes to that place. When the opponent's force nears even the hairs on my skin, my intention is already entering his bones. I use my intention to connect to his force rather than using force to crash into his force. Acting at just the right time, neither late nor early, my intention and his force join together. "If he puts pressure on my left side, my left side empties, or if he puts pressure on my right side, my right side disappears. If he tries to find me above, he has to keep reaching higher, or if he tries to find me below, he has to keep reaching lower. When he advances, he cannot get to me, but once he retreats, he cannot get away from me. A feather cannot be added and a fly cannot land. He does not know me, only I know him." As it is said: "I stick to him and go along with his movement instead of coming away or crashing in."

習太極拳者，須悟陰陽相濟之義。動之則分，靜之則合。分者，開大也。合者，縮小也。其中皆由陰陽兩氣開合轉換，互相呼應，始終不離也。開是大，非頂撞也；縮是小，非躲閃也。一動無有不動，一靜無有不靜。動者，氣轉也；靜者，有預動之勢也。所謂視靜猶動，視動猶靜。氣如車輪，腰如車軸。非兩手亂動，身體亂挪。緊要全在蓄勁，蓄勁如張弓，發勁似放箭。無蓄勁，則無發箭之力。發勁要上下相隨，勁起於腳跟，注於腰間，形於手指。由腳而腿而腰，總須完整一氣。腰如弓把，腳手如弓梢，內中要有彈性，方有發箭之力也。自己安排好，彼一挨我皮毛，我意接定彼勁，挨皮毛，即是不丟不頂，用意去接，即是順隨之勢；能順隨，則能借力；能借力，則

能打人，此所謂借力打人，四兩撥千斤是也。到此地步，手上便有分寸，能稱彼勁之大小，能權彼來之長短，毫髮無差；前進後退，左顧右盼，處處恰合，所謂“知己知彼，百戰百勝”也。平日走架打手，須要從此做去，走架即是打手，打手即是走架，此皆一理。走架每一勢要分四字，即起、承、開、合是也。一字一問對不對；少有不對，即速改換。差之毫釐，失之千里。能領悟此意，行住坐臥皆是太極，學者不可不詳辨焉。

[Section 4]

Practitioners of Taiji Boxing must understand the concept of passive and active exchanging roles. “When there is movement, they become distinct from each other. When there is stillness, they return to being indistinguishable.” They become distinct while expanding and enlarging. They return to being indistinguishable while contracting and shrinking. Within it, it is always the alternating of the two energies of passive and active, or contracting and expanding, working in concert with each other, and never separating throughout. Expansion is enlarging but not colliding. Contraction is shrinking but not running away. “If one part moves, every part moves, and if one part is still, every part is still.” In movement, the energy transfers, and in stillness, there is a dynamic of being prepared to move again. And so it is said: “Regard movement as stillness and stillness as movement.” And also: “The energy is like a wheel. The waist is like an axle.”

There is to be no random movement of your hands, nor any random shifting of your body. It is crucial to always be storing power. “Store power like drawing a bow. Issue power like loosing an arrow.” Without storing power, you will not have the power of an arrow being loosed. When issuing power, your upper body and lower have to be coordinated with each other. Power initiates from your heel, gets directed at your waist, and is expressed at your fingers. “From foot through leg through waist, it must be a fully continuous process.” Your waist is like a bow handle, and your feet and hands are like the bow tips. Within there should be a springy quality, and then you will have the power of an arrow being loosed.

If I am in good order myself, then when the opponent nears even the hairs on my skin, my intention connects firmly to his power. When he nears the hairs on my skin, I neither come away nor crash in, but use intention to reach out and connect, which is the energy of following. If you can follow an opponent, then you can borrow his power. If you can borrow his power, then you can attack him with it. This is what is meant by “borrowing his force to hit him with” and “using four ounces to move a thousand pounds”.

When you reach this state, “your hands on him will detect in finer detail, weighing the size of his power, assessing the length of his attack and not being off by the slightest bit, and you will advance and retreat (or move to either side), always at the right moment.” And so it is said: “Knowing both self and opponent, in a hundred battles you will have a hundred victories.”

In your daily practice of the solo set and playing hands, you must work from this precept: the solo set is the playing hands and the playing hands is the solo set, for they both follow the same principle. Every movement in the solo set should be separated into four parts: begin, develop, express, and finish. Check each part to make sure it is correct, and if it is even slightly wrong, immediately adjust it. “Miss by an inch, lose by a mile.” When you can grasp these concepts, then whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down – all will be Taiji. You must understand all this clearly.

平日走架行功時，必須以意將氣下沉，送於丹田（以意非以力，非努氣，非用呼吸），存養涵蓄，不使上浮，腹內鬆靜，氣勢騰然。依法練習，日久自能斂氣入骨（脊骨）。然後用意將脊骨之氣由尾間從丹田往上翻之。達此境界，就能以意運氣，遍及全身。彼挨我何處，我意即到何處，氣亦從之而出，如響斯應，疾如電掣。周身無一處

不是如此，此即所謂“行氣如九曲珠，無微不至；運勁如百煉鋼，何堅不摧”，亦即“意到氣即到”是也。又丹田之氣，須直養無害，才能如長江大海之水，用之不竭，取之不盡。迨至功夫純熟，練成周身一家，宛如氣球一樣，左重則左虛，右重則右杳，物來順應，無不恰合。凡此皆是“以意運氣”，非“以力使氣”，“在內不在外”，亦即“尚氣者無力，養氣者純剛”是也。

[Section 5]

Whenever you practice the solo set, you must use intention to get the energy to sink down, sending it to your elixir field (using intention rather than exertion, since you cannot force energy along nor use breath to make it happen). Nurture and store it there, and do not let it float up. By being relaxed and calm within your abdomen, the energy is in a state of readiness. According to the methods of practice, over time you will be able to collect energy into your bones (i.e. spine), then use intention to send your spine's energy upward from your tailbone and elixir field. Reaching this state, then you can use intention to move energy and spread it to your whole body. Wherever the opponent nears me, my intention goes to that place, energy following and releasing out, responding like an echo, fast as lightning.

When your whole body is like this in every part, this is what is meant by: “Move energy as though through a winding-path pearl, penetrating even the smallest nook. Wield power like tempered steel, so strong there is nothing tough enough to stand up against it.” And also: “Where your intention goes, energy arrives.” Furthermore, the energy in your elixir field must be nurtured with integrity so it is not corrupted, and then it can be like the water of “a long river flowing into the wide ocean”. In drawing from it, it is never exhausted, and in using of it, it is never used up.

Finally your skill will be pure and refined, and you will have made your entire body into a single unit, rather like a balloon. “If he puts pressure on my left side, my left side empties, or if he puts pressure on my right side, my right side disappears.” When things come to you, conform to them, and then everything you do will be appropriate. All of this is “the use of intention to move energy”, not “the use of exertion to force energy”. It is “inside and not outside”. And it is this: “If you obsess over the energy, there will be no power, whereas if you ignore the energy and thereby nurture it, there will be pure strength.”

註：此文所謂“打手”，即太極拳推手。此文在這次發表時作了些微的刪改。

(Note: When we talk here of “playing hands”, we are talking about Taiji Boxing's pushing hands. For this publication, the revised version of this essay has been used.)

[Hao Yueru originally published a shorter version of this essay in July of 1929 as part of the 江蘇省國術館年刊 *Jiangsu Martial Arts Institute Annual*. He apparently expanded it at some point during the following six years before his death. The original version is basically section 4 followed by section 2, therefore the added parts are sections 1, 3, and 5, and there is some minor but relevant tweaking to the two original sections. Here is the 1929 version:

太極拳義

郝月如

太極者陰陽相濟也，動之則分，靜之則合，分者開大也，合者縮小也，其中皆有陰陽之氣也，開也，大也，非頂撞也，縮也，小，也非躲閃也，一動無有不動，一靜無有不靜，動者氣轉也，靜者有預動之勢也，所謂視靜猶動，視動猶靜，氣如車輪，腰如車軸，車輪者陰陽兩氣相應也，車軸者腰隙上下旋轉也，非兩手亂動，身體亂挪也，緊要全在蓄勁，蓄勁如張弓，發勁似放箭，無蓄勁則無發箭之力，發勁要上下相隨，勁起於腳根，注於腰間，形於手指，由脚而腿而腰，總須完整一氣，腰如弓把，脚手如弓稍，內中要有彈性，方有發箭之力也，自己安排得好，彼亦挨有皮毛，我意即接定彼勁，挨皮毛即是不丟不頂，用意去接，即是順隨之勢，能順隨則能借力，能借力，則能打人，此謂借力打人，四兩撥千斤，到此地位，手上便有分寸，能秤彼勁之大小，能權彼來之長短，毫髮無差，前進後退，左顧右盼，處處恰合，所謂知己知彼，百戰百勝也，平日走架打手須要從此做去，走架即是打手，打手即是走架，此皆一理，走架每一勢要問自己，合上規矩不合，少有不合，即速改換，差之毫厘，謬以千里，能領悟此意，坐立行臥皆是太極，學者不可不詳辨焉，習斯技者，先求尾闾中正，中正者脊骨根對臉之中間也，邁左步左跨向後抽，邁右步右跨向後抽，則尾闾自然中正，能中正則能八面支撐，能八面支撐則能旋轉自如，無不得力，次須虛實分清，虛非全然無力，內中要有騰挪，即預動之勢也，實非全然站煞，內中要貫精神，即上提之意也，又須鬆肩沉肘，兩肩鬆開，不用絲毫之力，用力則不能捨己從人，引進落空，沉肘即兩膊前節內中要有騰挪之意，無騰挪則不靈活，不靈活則無回轉如意之趣，又須護腎腎不護，則一身無主宰也，更須養氣，氣以直養而無害，直養謂呼吸之氣通暢也，吸爲合，爲蓄，呼爲開爲發，蓋吸則自然提得起，亦學得人起，呼則自然沈得下，亦放得人出，又須蓄勁，勁以曲蓄而有餘，要蓄斂於脊骨之內也，總之須以意運氣，非以力使氣也。

太極拳義 郝月如

THE MEANING OF TAIJI BOXING (by Hao Yueru)

太極者陰陽相濟也，動之則分，靜之則合，分者開大也，合者縮小也，其中皆有陰陽之氣也，開也，大也，非頂撞也，縮也，小，也非躲閃也，一動無有不動，一靜無有不靜，動者氣轉也，靜者有預動之勢也，所謂視靜猶動，視動猶靜，氣如車輪，腰如車軸，車輪者陰陽兩氣相應也，車軸者腰隙上下旋轉也，非兩手亂動，身體亂挪也，緊要全在蓄勁，蓄勁如張弓，發勁似放箭，無蓄勁則無發箭之力，發勁要上下相隨，勁起於腳根，注於腰間，形於手指，由脚而腿而腰，總須完整一氣，腰如弓把，脚手如弓稍，內中要有彈性，方有發箭之力也，自己安排得好，彼亦挨有皮毛，我意即接定彼勁，挨皮毛即是不丟不頂，用意去接，即是順隨之勢，能順隨則能借力，能借力，則能打人，此謂借力打人，四兩撥千斤，到此地位，手上便有分寸，能秤彼勁之大小，能權彼來之長短，毫髮無差，前進後退，左顧右盼，處處恰合，所謂知己知彼，

百戰百勝也，平日走架打手須要從此做去，走架即是打手，打手即是走架，此皆一理，走架每一勢要問自己，合上規矩不合，少有不合，即速改換，差之毫厘，謬以千里，能領悟此意，坐立行臥皆是太極，學者不可不詳辨焉，習斯技者，先求尾閭中正，中正者脊骨根對臉之中間也，邁左步左跨向後抽，邁右步右跨向後抽，則尾閭自然中正，能中正則能八面支撐，能八面支撐則能旋轉自如，無不得力，次須虛實分清，虛非全然無力，內中要有騰挪，即預動之勢也，實非全然站煞，內中要貫精神，即上提之意也，又須鬆肩沉肘，兩肩鬆開，不用絲毫之力，用力則不能捨己從人，引進落空，沉肘即兩膊前節內中要有騰挪之意，無騰挪則不靈活，不靈活則無圓轉如意之趣，又須護臀臀不護，則一身無主宰也，更須養氣，氣以直養而無害，直養謂呼吸之氣通暢也，吸為合，為蓄，呼為開為發，蓋吸則自然提得起，亦拏得人起，呼則自然沈得下，亦放得人出，又須蓄勁，勁以曲蓄而有餘，要蓄斂於脊骨之內也，總之須以意運氣，非以力使氣也。

By “taiji” is meant passive and active exchanging roles. “When there is movement, they become distinct from each other. When there is stillness, they return to being indistinguishable.” They become distinct while expanding and enlarging. They return to being indistinguishable while contracting and shrinking. Within it, it is always the two energies of passive and active. Expansion is enlarging but not colliding. Contraction is shrinking but not running away. “If one part moves, every part moves, and if one part is still, every part is still.” In movement, the energy transfers, and in stillness, there is a dynamic of being prepared to move again. And so it is said: “Regard movement as stillness and stillness as movement.” And also: “The energy is like a wheel. The waist is like an axle.” The wheel indicates passive and active responding to each other. The axle indicates the rotation occurring above and below your waist.

There is to be no random movement of your hands, nor any random shifting of your body. It is crucial to always be storing power. “Store power like drawing a bow. Issue power like loosing an arrow.” Without storing power, you will not have the power of an arrow being loosed. When issuing power, your upper body and lower have to be coordinated with each other. Power initiates from your heel, gets directed at your waist, and is expressed at your fingers. “From foot through leg through waist, it must be a fully continuous process.” Your waist is like a bow handle, and your feet and hands are like the bow tips. Within there should be a springy quality, and then you will have the power of an arrow being loosed.

If I am in good order myself, then when the opponent nears even the hairs on my skin, my intention connects firmly to his power. When he nears the hairs on my skin, I neither come away nor crash in, but use intention to reach out and connect, which is the energy of following. If you can follow an opponent, then you can borrow his power. If you can borrow his power, then you can attack him with it. This is what is meant by “borrowing his force to hit him with” and “using four ounces to move a thousand pounds”.

When you reach this state, “your hands on him will detect in finer detail, weighing the size of his power, assessing the length of his attack and not being off by the slightest bit, and you will advance and retreat (or move to either side), always at the right moment.” And so it is said: “Knowing both self and opponent, in a hundred battles you will have a hundred victories.”

In your daily practice of the solo set and playing hands, you must work from this precept: the solo set is the playing hands and the playing hands is the solo set, for they both follow the same principle. With every movement in the solo set, check on yourself to see if you are conforming to the rules as given above, and if you are even slightly off, immediately adjust. “Miss by an inch, lose by a mile.” When you can grasp these concepts, then whether sitting, standing, walking, or lying down – all will be Taiji. You must understand all this clearly.

In practicing this art, you must first seek to get your tailbone centered. When it is centered,

your tailbone and the base of your spine are facing each other inwardly. When stepping with your left foot, your left hip shrinks back. When stepping with your right foot, your right hip shrinks back. In both cases your tailbone will then naturally be centered. If you can get it centered, then you can brace in every direction. If you can brace in every direction, then “you can turn smoothly and will be strong everywhere”.

Next you must distinguish emptiness and fullness. “Empty does not mean you are in that area completely weak”, for within there should be a readiness to move, a dynamic of being primed to act. “Full does not mean you are in that area completely stuck”, for within there should be a concentration of spirit, an intention of lifting upward.

You also must loosen your shoulders and sink your elbows. Your shoulders are to loosen and not use the slightest bit of effort. If they use effort, then you will not be able to let go of yourself and follow the opponent to thereby draw him into emptiness. By sinking your elbows, there will be within your forearms an intention of being ready to move. If there is no readiness to move, there will be no nimbleness, and if there is no nimbleness, there will be no quality of roundness and spontaneity.

It is also necessary to shield your belly. If your belly is not shielded, then your whole body will be without a commander.

It is also necessary to nurture energy. “By nurturing energy with integrity, it will not be corrupted.” To nurture energy with integrity means that you are not holding your breath. “Inhaling is contracting and storing. Exhaling is expanding and releasing. Since with inhaling there is a natural rising, take the opponent up. Since with exhaling there is a natural sinking, send the opponent away.” It is furthermore also necessary to store power. “By storing power in crooked parts, it will be in abundant supply.” Power must be collected within your spine. Always you must use intention to move energy, not use exertion to force energy.]

關於教法和練法的一些體會 郝少如

SOME THINGS I HAVE REALIZED REGARDING TEACHING AND PRACTICE (by Hao Shaoru)

我根據三十多年來練拳和教拳的經驗，認為無論是教或練，都必須首先從身法（武禹襄的八條身法）著眼，並且要由內及外。

身法是太極拳理論的主要內容之一。身法在教或練的過程中，既是最基本的，也始終是最重要的。因此，對身法必須要求嚴格。

練習太極拳，不要說達到精湛的功夫，即使是基本功夫，也不可能一蹴即得。所以在教或練的過程中，必須大致上分為兩個階段。

第一階段是練外形，就是學習拳架，注重身法。但是八條身法不是一下子就可以掌握的。要先選擇一、二條作為重點，練熟之後，再逐步增加。上下肢與身法的配合也極重要，因為配合得不好，會直接影響身法。上肢的配合還比較容易掌握，而下肢因為既要支持著身體的穩定，又要顧及分清虛實，對初學者來講，就更覺困難些。練成這八條身法之後，全身的肌肉骨骼才能靈活、協調，動作一致，才能達到隨心所欲的地步。

第二階段是練內形，亦稱內勁。先要以意識作指導，漸漸練成意、氣、拳架三者合一。由外形至內形，由氣粗到氣精。然後無外無內，無粗無精，渾然皆忘。練到這種境界，才能在不斷前進的道路上攀登太極拳藝高峰。對於淺嘗即止和憑空立異的人，是不足為訓的。

On the basis of my more than thirty years of experience in practicing and teaching this martial

art, I believe that regardless of teaching or practicing, they both first must come from a focus on the body standards (Wu Yuxiang's eight) and should happen internally to affect externally.

The body standards are a fundamental part of Taiji Boxing theory. In the course of either teaching or practicing, the body standards are the primary basics, of the highest importance from beginning to end. Therefore it is necessary to be strict about the body standards.

In practicing Taiji Boxing, you should never proclaim that you have achieved a great level of skill when what you are working on is only the basics. Nor will you be able to attain a skill after going through the motions only once. In fact the process, whether teaching or practicing, must be divide it into two phases:

The first phase is to train the external form, meaning learning the solo set, laying particular stress on the body standards. However, you cannot simply grasp the eight body standards all at once. You should first select a pair to emphasize, and after you have practiced them until they have become ingrained, then you may progressively add more. It is extremely important for your upper and lower limbs to cooperate with the body standards, because if they are not cooperating well, it will immediately affect the body standards. The cooperating of the upper limbs is comparatively easy to grasp, but the lower limbs, because they are already busy with being in charge of the body's stability, as well as having the additional task of distinguishing empty and full, are, when explained to a beginner, simply going to be felt to be more difficult. After you have practiced the eight body standards to perfection, your whole body, flesh and bone, can be nimble and coordinated, moving as one unit, and you will be able to reach the condition in which you can do as you please.

The second phase is to train the internal form, namely the internal power. First you should consciously direct movement, but gradually through practice, the intention, energy, and solo set will merge into one. Go from external form to internal form, from coarse energy to refined energy. Then there will be no outside, no inside, no coarse, no refined – all these distinctions will become completely forgotten. Practicing until you reach such a state, you will be able to unceasingly advance as you climb to the peak of the art of Taiji Boxing. As regards those who dabble in it and then quit, and those who come up with their own groundless interpretations, they are not to be taken seriously.

節序圖說明

EXPLANATION OF THE CYCLE-OF-FOUR DIAGRAMS

武式太極拳的所有動作都是按起、承、開、合的節序來編排的。以四個動作結為一個起、承、開、合的節序。如第二式“左懶扎衣”的四動，也就是節序圖中的四圖，圖1是“起”，圖2是“承”，圖3是“開”，圖4是“合”，結為一個節序。整個拳套都是一個個節序銜接編排而成的。在一個個節序之間，雖有稍頓的現象，但要保持勁斷意不斷，內部仍要綿綿不斷地銜接起來，所以在練習時不可因節序而中斷。

一個節序大都是由一個拳式構成的，如上面所舉的“左懶扎衣”有四動，成一個節序。但也有兩個，甚至四或五個拳式結成一個節序，例如拳套中的第四式“單鞭”和第五式“提手上勢”，兩式合併在一起編為四動，結為一個節序。

All the movements in Wu Yuxiang Style Taiji Boxing are arranged according to the “cycle of four” – begin, develop, express, and finish – four movements making one cycle of four. In the case of the four movements of TUCK IN THE ROBE – LEFT, which follow in the drawings below, Drawing 1 is “begin”, Drawing 2 is “develop”, Drawing 3 is “express”, and Drawing 4 is “finish”, making one cycle of four.

The whole solo set is made by linking up the cycles of four. Within each cycle of four,

although there appear to be slight pauses, the principle of the power finishing but the intention continuing should be maintained, internally connecting the movements together without a break, so that when practicing, a cycle of four must not be caused to have an interrupted flow.

For the most part, one posture makes one cycle of four, as in the case of the four movements of TUCK IN THE ROBE – LEFT, but sometimes two postures, or even four or five, make a cycle of four, as in the case of SINGLE WHIP and RAISE THE HAND, two postures which when joined together make four movements, making one cycle of four.

節序圖舉例

CYCLE-OF-FOUR ILLUSTRATED EXAMPLE:

第二式 左懶扎衣

Posture 2: TUCK IN THE ROBE – LEFT

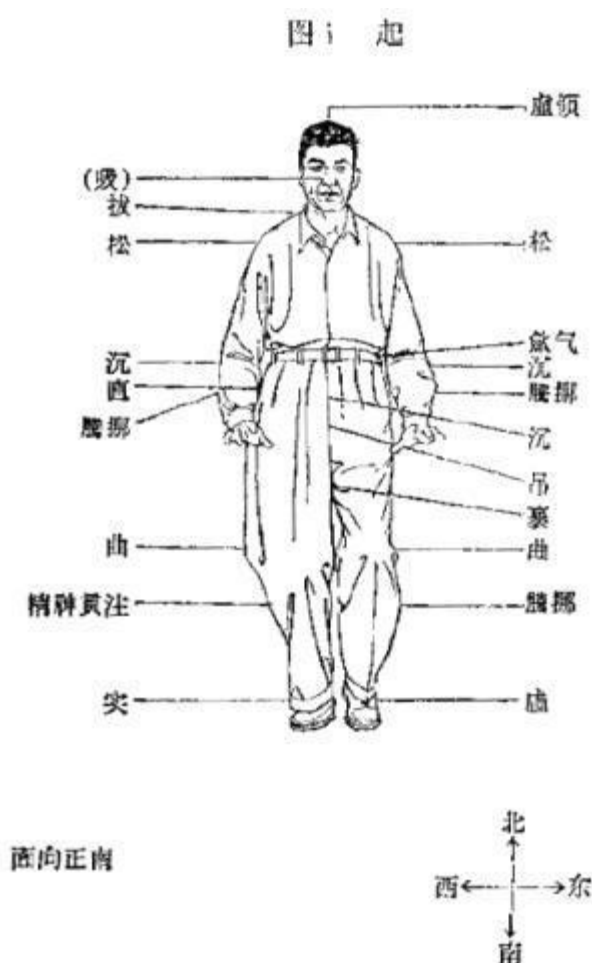


圖1 起

Diagram 1 – Begin

虛領 Forcelessly rouse [your headtop].

(吸) (inhale [through your nose])

拔 Pluck up [your back].

鬆 [Your right shoulder is] relaxed.

鬆 [Your left shoulder is] relaxed.
 斂氣 Collect energy [in your lower back].
 沉 [Your right elbow is] heavy.
 沉 [Your left elbow is] heavy.
 直 Straighten [your right hip].
 騰挪 There is readiness to move [in your right arm].
 騰挪 There is readiness to move [in your left arm].
 沉 Sink [energy to your elixir field].
 吊 Suspend [your crotch].
 裹 Wrap [your crotch].
 曲 [Your right knee is] bent.
 曲 [Your left knee is] bent.
 精神貫注 Spirit is concentrated [in the full leg].
 騰挪 There is readiness to move [in the empty leg].
 實 [Your right foot is] full.
 虛 [Your left foot is] empty.

面向正南

You are facing south. [This does not mean you must literally face south, merely that “south” is whatever direction you happen to be facing in the initial posture, and the orientations of the rest of the postures are then in accordance with the initial imaginary direction marker of “south”.]

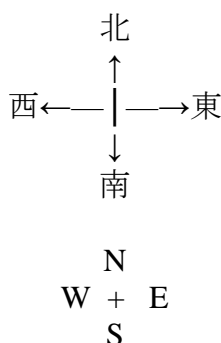


图2 承



西向東背
左髖向東南放出
左膝向回抽
要尾闕正中

圖2 承
Diagram 2 – Develop

- 虛領 Forcelessly rouse [your headtop].
- (吸) (inhale)
- 拔 Pluck up [your back].
- 鬆 [Your right shoulder is] relaxed.
- 鬆 [Your left shoulder is] relaxed.
- 意向上升 [Your left hand] inclines upward.
- 騰挪 There is readiness to move [in your right arm].
- 騰挪 There is readiness to move [in your left arm].
- 沉 [Your right elbow is] heavy.
- 沉 [Your left elbow is] heavy.
- 意向上升 [Your right hand] inclines upward.
- 斂氣 Collect energy [in your lower back].
- 直 Straighten [your right hip].
- 沉 Sink [energy to your elixir field].
- 吊 Suspend [your crotch].
- 裹 Wrap [your crotch].

曲 [Your right knee is] bent.

曲 [Your left knee is] bent.

精神貫注 Spirit is concentrated [in the full leg].

騰挪 There is readiness to move [in the empty leg].

實 [Your right foot is] full.

虛 [Your left foot is] empty.

面向東南 左腳向東南放出 左胯向回抽 要尾閭正中

Face to the southeast. Your left foot steps to the southeast. Your left hip shrinks in. Your tailbone should be centered.

图3 开



面向东南
左腿弓
右腿蹬

圖3 開

Diagram 3 – Express

虛領 Forcelessly rouse [your headtop].

(呼) (exhale [through your nose])

拔 Pluck up [your back].

鬆 [Your right shoulder is] relaxed.

鬆 [Your left shoulder is] relaxed.
意向上升 [Your left hand] inclines upward.
騰挪 There is readiness to move [in your right arm].
騰挪 There is readiness to move [in your left arm].
沉 [Your right elbow is] heavy.
沉 [Your left elbow is] heavy.
意向上升 [Your right hand] inclines upward.
斂氣 Collect energy [in your lower back].
沉 Sink [energy to your elixir field].
直 Straighten [your right hip].
裹 Wrap [your crotch].
曲 [Your right knee is] bent.
曲 [Your left knee is] bent.
騰挪 There is readiness to move [in the empty leg].
精神貫注 Spirit is concentrated [in the full leg].
虛 [Your right foot is] empty.
實 [Your left foot is] full.

面向東南 左腿弓 右腿蹬
Facing to the southeast, your left leg bends and your right leg presses.

图4 合



面向東南
 右脚提上半步
 兩手合與口齊

圖4 合
 Diagram 4 – Finish

- 虛領 Forcelessly rouse [your headtop].
- (吸) (inhale)
- 拔 Pluck up [your back].
- 鬆 [Your right shoulder is] relaxed.
- 鬆 [Your left shoulder is] relaxed.
- 意向上升 [Your hands] incline upward.
- 騰挪 There is readiness to move [in right your arm].
- 騰挪 There is readiness to move [in your left arm].
- 沉 [Your right elbow is] heavy.
- 沉 [Your left elbow is] heavy.
- 斂氣 Collect energy [in your lower back].
- 沉 Sink [energy to your elixir field].
- 直 Straighten [your right hip].
- 吊 Suspend [your crotch].
- 裹 Wrap [your crotch].
- 曲 [Your right knee is] bent.
- 曲 [Your left knee is] bent.

騰挪 There is readiness to move [in the empty leg].

精神貫注 Spirit is concentrated [in the full leg].

虛 [Your right foot is] empty.

實 [Your left foot is] full.

面向東南 右腳提上半步 兩手合與口齊

Facing southeast, your right foot lifts and goes forward a half step, your hands coming together at mouth level.

APPENDIX – CLASSIC BOXING TEXTS

太極拳論 山右王宗岳

THE TAIJI BOXING TREATISE (by Wang Zongyue of Shanxi)

太極者，無極而生，陰陽之母也。動之則分，靜之則合。無過不及，隨曲就伸。人剛我柔，謂之走；我順人背，謂之粘。動急則急應，動緩則緩隨。雖變化萬端，而理唯一貫。由著熟而漸悟懂勁，由懂勁而階及神明。然非用力之久，不能豁然貫通焉。虛領頂勁，氣沉丹田；不偏不倚，忽隱忽現；左重則左虛，右重則右杳。仰之則彌高，俯之則彌深；進之則愈長，退之則愈促。一羽不能加，蠅蟲不能落；人不知我，我獨知人。英雄所向無敵，蓋皆由此而及也。斯技旁門甚多，雖勢有區別，概不外壯欺弱，慢讓快耳；有力打無力，手慢讓手快，是皆先天自然之能，非關學力而有也。察“四兩撥千斤”之句，顯非力勝；觀耄耋禦眾之形，快何能為？立如秤準，活似車輪；偏沉則隨，雙重則滯。每見數年純功，不能運化者，率皆自為人制，雙重之病未悟耳。欲避此病，須知陰陽；粘即是走，走即是粘；陽不離陰，陰不離陽；陰陽相濟，方為懂勁。懂勁後，愈練愈精，默識揣摩，漸至從心所欲。本是舍己從人，多誤舍近求遠。所謂“差之毫厘；謬之千里”，學者不可不詳辨焉。是為論。

Taiji [“grand polarity”] is born of wuji [“nonpolarity”], and is the mother of yin and yang [the passive and active aspects]. When there is movement, they [passive and active] become distinct from each other. When there is stillness, they return to being indistinguishable.

Neither going too far nor not far enough, comply and bend then engage and extend. He is hard while I am soft – this is yielding. My energy is smooth while his energy is coarse – this is sticking. If he moves fast, I quickly respond, and if his movement is slow, I leisurely follow. Although there is an endless variety of possible scenarios, there is only this single principle [of yielding and sticking] throughout.

Once you have ingrained these techniques, you will gradually come to identify energies, and then from there you will work your way toward something miraculous. But unless you practice a lot over a long time, you will never have a breakthrough.

With your headtop pressing up naturally and energy sinking down to your elixir field, there will be no leaning in any direction. Suddenly vanish then suddenly manifest. If he puts pressure on my left side, my left side empties, or if he puts pressure on my right side, my right side disappears. If he tries to find me above, he has to keep reaching higher, or if he tries to find me below, he has to keep reaching lower. When he advances, he cannot get to me, but once he retreats, he cannot get away from me. A feather cannot be added and a fly cannot land. He does not know me, only I know him. A hero is one who encounters no opposition, and it is through this kind of method that such a condition is achieved.

There are many other schools of martial arts besides this one. Although the postures are different between them, they generally do not go beyond the strong bullying the weak and the slow yielding to the fast. The strong beating the weak and the slow submitting to the fast are both a matter of inherent natural ability and bear no relation to skill that is learned. Examine the phrase “four ounces moves a thousand pounds”, which is clearly not a victory obtained through strength. Or consider the sight of an old man repelling a group, which could not come from an aggressive speed.

Standing like a scale, move like a wheel. If you drop one side, you can move, but if you have equal pressure on both sides, you will be stuck. We often see one who has practiced hard for many years yet is unable to perform any neutralizations and is generally under the opponent’s control, and the issue here is that this error of double pressure has not yet been understood.

If you want to avoid this error, you must understand passive and active. In sticking there is yielding and in yielding there is sticking. The active does not depart from the passive and the passive does not depart from the active, for the passive and active exchange roles. Once you have this understanding, you will be identifying energies. Once you are identifying energies, then the more you practice, the more efficient your skill will be, and by absorbing through experience and by constantly contemplating, gradually you will reach the point that you can do whatever you want.

The basic of basics is to forget about your plans and simply respond to the opponent. We often make the mistake of ignoring what is right in front of us in favor of something that has nothing to do with our immediate circumstances. For such situations it is said: “Miss by an inch, lose by a mile.” You must understand all this clearly. That is why it has been written down for you.

十三勢（一名長拳，一名十三勢） 山右王宗岳

THE THIRTEEN DYNAMICS – KNOWN AS LONG BOXING, ALSO KNOW THE THIRTEEN DYNAMICS (by Wang Zongyue of Shanxi)

長拳者：如長江大海，滔滔不絕也。

十三勢者：棚捋擠按採捌肘靠進退顧盼定也。棚捋擠按，即坎離震兌四正方也。採捌肘靠，即乾坤艮巽四斜角也。此八卦也。進步、退步、左顧、右盼、中定，即金木水火土也。此五行也。合而言之，曰十三勢。

Long Boxing: it is like a long river flowing into the wide ocean, on and on ceaselessly...

The thirteen dynamics are: warding off, rolling back, pressing, pushing, plucking, rending, elbowing, bumping, advancing, retreating, stepping to the left, stepping to the right, and staying in the center.

Warding off, rolling back, pressing, pushing, plucking, rending, elbowing, and bumping relate to the eight trigrams:



Warding off, rolling back, pressing, and pushing correspond to ☰, ☷, ☲, and ☵ in the four principle compass directions [meaning simply that these are the primary techniques].

Plucking, rending, elbowing, and bumping correspond to ☳, ☱, ☴, and ☶ in the four corner directions [i.e. are the secondary techniques].

Advancing, retreating, stepping to the left, stepping to the right, and staying in the center

relate to metal, wood, water, fire, and earth – the five elements.

These combined [8+5] are called the Thirteen Dynamics.

十三勢行工歌訣 (作者待考)

SONG OF PRACTICING THE THIRTEEN DYNAMICS (authorship awaiting verification)

十三總勢莫輕識，命意源頭在腰隙，
變轉虛實須留意，氣遍身軀不稍癡。
靜中觸動動猶靜，因敵變化是神奇，
勢勢存心揆用意，得來不覺費工夫。
刻刻留心在腰間，腹內鬆靜氣騰然，
尾閭正中神貫頂，滿身輕利頂頭懸。
仔細留心向推求，屈伸開合聽自由，
入門引路須口授，工用無息法自休。
若言體用何為準，意氣君來骨肉臣；
詳推用意終何在？益壽延年不老春。
歌兮歌兮百四十，字字真切義無疑，
若不向此推求去，枉費工夫遺歎惜！

Do not neglect any of the thirteen dynamics,
their command coming from your lower back.

You must pay attention to the alternation of empty and full,
then energy will flow through your whole body without getting stuck anywhere.

In stillness, movement stirs, and then in moving, seem yet to be in stillness,
for the magic lies in making adjustments based on being receptive to the opponent.
In every movement, very deliberately control it by the use of intention,
for once you achieve that, it will all be effortless.

At every moment, pay attention to your waist,
for if there is relaxation and stillness within your belly, energy is primed.
Your tailbone is centered and spirit penetrates to your headtop,
thus your whole body will be nimble and your headtop will be pulled up as if suspended.

Pay careful attention in your practice that you are letting bending and extending,
contracting and expanding, happen as the situation requires.
Beginning the training requires personal instruction,
but mastering the art depends on your own unceasing effort.

Whether we are discussing in terms of theory or function, what is the constant?
It is that mind is sovereign and body is subject.
If you think about it, what is emphasizing the use of intention going to lead you to?
To a longer life and a longer youth.

Repeatedly recite the words above,
all of which speak clearly and hence their ideas come through without confusion.
If you pay no heed to those ideas, you will go astray in your training,
and you will find you have wasted your time and be left with only sighs of regret.

打手歌 王宗岳修訂

PLAYING HANDS SONG (revised by Wang Zongyue)

棚捋擠按須認真，上下相隨人難進。
任他巨力來打我，牽動四兩撥千斤。

引進落空合即出，沾連粘隨不丟頂。

Ward-off, rollback, press, and push must be taken seriously.

With coordination between above and below, the opponent will hardly find a way in.

I will let him attack me with as much power as he likes,

for I will tug with four ounces of force to move his of a thousand pounds.

Guiding him in to land on nothing, I then close on him and send him away.

I stick to him and go along with his movement instead of coming away or crashing in.

身法 武禹襄

BODY STANDARDS (by Wu Yuxiang)

涵胸、拔背、裹襠、護肫、提頂、吊襠、騰挪、閃戰。

– Contain your chest.

– Pluck up your back.

– Wrap your crotch.

– Shield your belly.

– Lift your headtop.

– Suspend your crotch.

– Always be ready.

– Get it over with in a flash.

打手要言 武禹襄

ESSENTIALS OF PLAYING HANDS (by Wu Yuxiang)

解曰：以心行氣，務沉著，乃能收斂入骨，所謂“命意源頭在腰隙”也。

意氣須換得靈，乃有圓活之趣，所謂“變轉**虛實須留意**”也。立身中正安舒，支撐八面

；行氣如九曲珠，無微不至，所謂“氣遍身軀不稍癡”也。

發勁須沉著鬆靜，專注一方，所謂“靜中觸動動猶靜”也。往復須有摺疊，進退須有轉換，所謂“因敵變化是神奇”也。曲中求直，蓄而後發，所謂“勢勢存心揆用意，刻刻留心在腰間”也。精神提得起，則無遲重之虞，所謂“腹內鬆靜氣騰然”也。**虛領頂勁，氣沉丹田，不偏不倚**，所謂“尾閭正中神貫頂，滿身輕利頂頭懸”也。以氣運身，務順遂，乃能便利從心，所謂“屈伸開合聽自由”也。心為令，氣為旗，神為主帥，身為驅使，所謂“意氣君來骨肉臣”也。

To clarify [the exercise of playing hands]:

Use your mind to move energy. You must get the energy to sink. It is then able to gather into your spine. The Song says: “The command coming from your lower back.”

Your mind must perform alternations nimbly, and then you will have the qualities of roundness and liveliness. The Song says: “You must pay attention to the alternation of empty and full.”

Your posture must be straight and comfortable, so as to brace in all directions. Move energy as though through a winding-path pearl, penetrating even the smallest nook. The Song says: “Energy will flow through your whole body without getting stuck anywhere.”

When issuing power, you must be calm, relaxed, and still, so as to concentrate it in one direction. The Song says: “In stillness, movement stirs, and then in moving, seem yet to be in stillness.”

In the back and forth [of the arms], there must be folding. In the advance and retreat [of the feet], there must be variation. The Song says [itself quoting Sunzi]: “The magic lies in making adjustments based on being receptive to the opponent.”

Within curving, seek to be straightening. Store and then issue. The Song says: “In every

movement, very deliberately control it by the use of intention.” And also: “At every moment, pay attention to your waist.”

If you raise your spirit, then you will be free from worry of being slow or weighed down. The Song says: “If there is relaxation and stillness within your belly, energy is primed.”

With your headtop pressing up naturally and energy sinking down to your elixir field, there will be no leaning in any direction. The Song says: “Your tailbone is centered and spirit penetrates to your headtop, thus your whole body will be nimble and your headtop will be pulled up as if suspended.”

Use energy to move your body. You must get the energy to be smooth. Your body can then easily obey your mind. The Song says: “Let bending and extending, contracting and expanding, happen as the situation requires.”

Your mind makes the command and the energy is its signal flag. Your spirit is the general and your body is the army. The Song says: “Mind is sovereign and body is subject.”

解曰：身雖動，心貴靜，氣須斂，神宜舒。心為令，氣為旗，神為主帥，身為驅使，刻刻留意，方有所得。先在心，後在身。在身則不知手之舞之，足之蹈之。所謂一氣呵成，舍己從人，引進落空，四兩撥千斤也。須知一動無有不動，一靜無有不靜，視動猶靜，視靜猶動，內固精神，外示安逸。須要從人，不要由己；從人則活，由己則滯。尚氣者無力，養氣者純剛。彼不動，己不動；彼微動，己先動。以己依人，務要知己，乃能隨轉隨接；以己粘人，必須知人，乃能不後不先。精神能提得起，則無遲重之虞；粘依能跟得靈，方見落空之妙。往復須分陰陽，進退須有轉合。機由己發，力從人借。發勁須上下相隨，乃一往無敵；立身須中正不偏，能八面支撐。靜如山岳，動若江河。邁步如臨淵，運勁如抽絲，蓄勁如張弓，發勁如放箭。行氣如九曲珠，無微不至；運勁如百煉鋼，何堅不摧。形如搏兔之鵠，神如捕鼠之貓。曲中求直，蓄而後發。收即是放，連而不斷。極柔軟，然後能極堅剛；能粘依，然後能靈活。氣以直養而無害，勁以曲蓄而有餘。漸至物來順應，是亦知止能得矣。

To further clarify:

Although your body moves, your mind should be still, energy must gather, and spirit should be at ease. Your mind makes the command and the energy is its signal flag. Your spirit is the general and your body is the army.

If you pay attention at every moment, there is always an advantage to be had.

First in your mind, then in your body. Once in your body, you will not be aware of the movements of your hands and feet.

It is said: “In an uninterrupted flow from beginning to end, let go of your plans and just respond to the opponent, draw him in to land on nothing, and with four ounces of force move his of a thousand pounds.”

You must keep in mind: if one part moves, every part moves, and if one part is still, every part is still. Regard movement as stillness and stillness as movement.

Inwardly bolster spirit. Outwardly show ease.

You must act according to your opponent, not try to do things from yourself, for if you go along with your opponent, you can act spontaneously, but if you act from yourself, you will get bogged down.

If you obsess over the energy, there will be no power, whereas if you ignore the energy and thereby nurture it, there will be pure strength.

If he takes no action, I take no action, but once he takes even the slightest action, I have already acted.

For you to follow him, you have to know yourself, and then you can adapt and connect to him. For you to stick to him, you have to know him, and then you will be neither too late nor too early.

If you can raise your spirit, then you will not have to worry about double pressure. If in

sticking to the opponent you can follow him alertly, then you will find the ability to unbalance him.

In the back and forth [of the arms], there must be distinguishing between passive and active. In the advance and retreat [of the feet], there must be both variation and coherence.

If an opportunity comes from yourself, go ahead and shoot, but when force comes from your opponent, borrow it.

When you issue power, there must be coordination between above and below, and then directed at an undefended area. Your posture must be straight and not leaning in any direction, so as to be able to brace in all directions.

In stillness, be like a mountain. In movement, be like a river.

Step as if near a cliff edge. Move energy as if drawing silk.

Store power like drawing a bow. Issue power like loosing an arrow.

Move energy as though through a winding-path pearl, penetrating even the smallest nook. Wield power like tempered steel, so strong there is nothing tough enough to stand up against it.

The shape is like a falcon capturing a rabbit. The spirit is like a cat pouncing on a mouse.

Within curving, seek to be straightening. Store and then issue. To gather is to release, for there is no discontinuity between the two moments.

If you can be extremely soft, then you can be extremely hard. If you can stick and follow, then you can be nimble.

By nurturing energy with integrity, it will not be corrupted. By storing power in crooked parts, it will be in abundant supply.

Gradually you will reach a point in which everything you do is a response [rather than an initiation of attempt], and thus you will achieve the condition of dispensing with greed and thereby getting what you want.

又曰：先在心，後在身，腹鬆，氣斂入骨，神舒體靜，刻刻存心。切記一動無有不動，一靜無有不靜。視靜猶動，視動猶靜。動牽往來氣貼背，斂入脊骨，要靜。內固精神，外示安逸。邁步如貓行，運勁如抽絲。全身意在蓄神，不在氣，在氣則滯。有氣者無力，無氣者純剛。氣如車輪，腰如車軸。

In addition:

First in your mind, then in your body. With your abdomen relaxed, energy collects into your bones. Spirit comfortable, body calm – at every moment be mindful of this.

Always remember: if one part moves, every part moves, and if one part is still, every part is still. Regard stillness as movement and movement as stillness.

As the movement leads back and forth, energy sticks to your back, gathers in your spine, and there should be stillness.

Inwardly bolster spirit. Outwardly show ease.

Step like a cat. Move energy as if drawing silk.

Throughout your body, your mind should be on the spirit rather than on the energy, for if you are fixated on the energy, your movement will become sluggish. Whenever your mind is on the energy, there will be no power, whereas if you ignore the energy and let it take care of itself, there will be pure strength.

The energy is like a wheel. The waist is like an axle.

又曰：彼不動，己不動；彼微動，己先動。似鬆非鬆，將展未展。勁斷意不斷。

In addition:

If he takes no action, I take no action, but once he takes even the slightest action, I have already acted. It seems relaxed but not relaxed, about to express but not yet expressing.

Although the power finishes, the intent of it continues.

又曰：每一動，惟手先著力，隨即鬆開。猶須貫串，不外起承轉合。始而意動，既而

勁動，轉接要一線串成。氣宜鼓蕩，神宜內斂。無使有缺陷處，無使有凹凸處，無使有斷續處。其根在腳，發於腿，主宰於腰，形於手指。由腳而腿而腰，總須完整一氣。向前退後，乃得機得勢，有不得機勢處，身便散亂，必至偏倚，其病必於腰腿求之，上下前後左右皆然。凡此皆是意，不是外面，有上即有下，有前即有後，有左即有右，如意要向上，即寓下意，若物將掀起，而加以挫之之力，斯其根自斷，乃壞之速而無疑。虛實宜分清楚，一處自有一處虛實，處處總此一虛實；周身節節貫串，勿令絲毫間斷。

In addition:

Every movement is a technique of first putting forth strength and then immediately relaxing, yet always there must be continuity from one to other, and there is never to be a departure from the four stages of “begin, develop, transmit, and finish”. First the intention moves, then the power is moved, and the transition from one to the other should connect them together into a single action. Energy should be roused and spirit should be collected within. Do not allow there to be cracks or gaps anywhere, pits or protrusions anywhere, breaks in the flow anywhere.

Starting from your foot, issue through your leg, directing it at your waist, and expressing it at your fingers. From foot through leg through waist, it must be a fully continuous process, and whether advancing or retreating, you will then gain the opportunity and the position. If you do not gain the opportunity and the position, your body will be in disorder, inevitably causing you to lean all over the place. The problem must be in your waist and legs, so look for it there, for whatever the direction of the movement – up, down, front, back, left, right – that is where the problem lies.

All of these things are matters of intention, and are not external. With an upward comes a downward, with a forward comes a backward, and with a left comes a right. If your intention wants to go upward, then harbor a downward intention, like when you reach down to lift up an object. You thereby add a setback to the opponent’s own intention, thus he cuts his own root and is defeated quickly and certainly.

Empty and full must be distinguished clearly. In each part there is a part that is empty and a part that is full. Everywhere it is always like this, an emptiness and a fullness. Throughout your body, as the movement goes from one section to another there has to be connection. Do not allow the slightest break in the connection.

打手撒放

PLAYING HANDS RELEASINGS

棚上平 業入聲 噫上聲 咳入聲 呼上聲 吭 呵 哈
“Peng!” “Ye!” “Yi!” “Hai!” “Hu!” “Keng!” “He!” “Ha!”

五字訣 李亦畬

THE FIVE-WORD FORMULA (by Li Yiyu)

一曰心靜

1. The mind is CALM.

心不靜則不專，一舉手前後左右全無定向，故要心靜。起初舉動未能由己，要息心體認，隨人所動，隨屈就伸，不丟不頂，勿自伸縮。彼有力我亦有力，我力在先；彼無力我亦無力，我意仍在先。要刻刻留心，挨何處心要用在何處，須向不丟不頂中討消息。從此做去，一年半載便能施於身。此全是用意，不是用勁，久之則人為我制，我不為人制矣。

If your mind is not calm, it will not be focused, and each movement of your hands, be it

forward or back, left or right, will not be in any definite direction. Therefore your mind should be calm. At first your movement will not yet be able to come from yourself, and so you should clear your mind and let your body intuit, going along with the opponent's movements. Bend and then extend, neither coming away nor crashing in, and do not expand and contract on your own. When the opponent has power, I also have power, but my power beats him to the punch. When he has no power, I also have no power, for it is my intention that beats him to the decision. You should constantly pay attention. Wherever the opponent nears you, your mind should go there. You must neither come away nor crash in, and then you will be able to analyze what is going on. After doing this for about a year or so, it will become a natural part of you. This is entirely a matter of using intention and is not a matter of using strength. Over time, you will reach the point in which you can say "he is under my control and I am not under his".

二曰身靈

2. The body is LIVELY.

身滯則進退不能自如，故要身靈。舉手不可有呆像，彼之力方礙我皮毛，我之意已入彼骨裡。兩手支撐，一氣貫穿。左重則左虛，而右已去；右重則右虛，而左已去。氣如車輪，周身俱要相隨，有不相隨處，身便散亂，便不得力，其病於腰腿求之。先以心使身，從人不從己。後身能從心，由己仍是從人。由己則滯，從人則活。能從人手上便有分寸。秤彼勁之大小，分厘不錯；權彼來之長短，毫髮無差。前進後退，處處恰合，工彌久而技彌精矣。

When your body is sluggish, advancing and retreating cannot be done smoothly. Therefore your body should be lively. When moving your hands, there must be nothing resembling hesitation. When the opponent's force hinders even the hairs on my skin, my intention instantly enters his bones and my hands are bracing him, all as one event. If he puts pressure on my left side, I empty my left side and my right side goes forth, or if he puts pressure on my right side, I empty my right side and my left side goes forth, the energy like a wheel. Your whole body should be coordinated. If there is a lack of coordination anywhere, your body will then be disorganized, and you will then have no power. Seek for the problem in your hips. First use your mind to command your body, and follow the opponent rather than yourself. Later your body will be able to follow your mind, yet this moving from yourself will still depend on following the opponent. If you act from yourself, you will be sluggish. If you follow the opponent, you will be lively. If you can follow the opponent, your hands on him will detect in finer detail, weighing the size of his power and being accurate to the smallest measure, assessing the length of his attack and not being off by the slightest bit, and you will advance and retreat always at the right moment. The more you work at it, the more perfected your skill will be.

三曰氣斂

3. The energy is COLLECTED.

氣勢散漫，便無含蓄，身易散亂，務使氣斂入脊骨。呼吸通靈，周身罔間。吸為合為蓄，呼為開為發，蓋吸則自然提得起，亦拏得人起，呼則自然沉得下，亦放得人出。此是以意運氣，非以力使氣也。

If your energy is scattered, then it will not be stored, and your body will easily fall into disorder. You must cause the energy to collect into your spine. Inhaling and exhaling penetrates and enlivens, influencing every part of your body. Inhaling is contracting and storing. Exhaling is expanding and releasing. Since with inhaling there is a natural rising, take the opponent up. Since with exhaling there is a natural sinking, send the opponent away. This is the use of intention to move energy, not the use of exertion to force energy.

四曰勁整

4. The power is COMPLETE.

一身之勁，練成一家。分清虛實，發勁要有根源，勁起腳根，主於腰間，形於手指，發於脊背，又要提起全付精神，於彼勁將出未發之際，我勁已接入彼勁，恰好不後不先，如皮燃火，如泉湧出。前進後退，無絲毫散亂，曲中求直，蓄而後發，方能隨手奏效。此謂“借力打人，四兩撥千斤”也。

The power of your whole body is trained to become a single unit, distinguishing clearly between empty and full. To issue power, there should be a source of it. Power starts from your heel, it is directed at your waist, and expresses at your fingers, issuing from your spine. With it there should also be a rousing of all your spirit. When the opponent's power is about to come out but has not yet issued, my power connects with and invades his instantly, neither late nor early, as if my skin is a burning fire or as if a spring is gushing forth. I advance and retreat without the slightest disorder, and seeking the straight within the curved, I store and then issue. Thus I am able to be effortlessly successful. This is called “borrowing his force to hit him with” or “using four ounces to move a thousand pounds”.

五曰神聚

5. The spirit is GATHERED.

上四者俱備，總歸神聚，神聚則一氣鼓鑄，煉氣歸神，氣勢騰挪。精神貫注，開合有致，虛實清楚。左虛則右實，右虛則左實。虛非全然無力，氣勢要有騰挪；實非全然占煞，精神要貴貫注。緊要全在胸中腰間運化，不在外面。力從人借，氣由脊發。胡能氣由脊發？氣向下沉，由兩肩收於脊骨，注於腰間，此氣之由上而下也，謂之合。由腰形於脊骨，布於兩膊，施於手指，此氣之由下而上也，謂之開。合便是收，開即是放。能懂得開合，便知陰陽。到此地位，工用一日，技精一日，漸至從心所欲，罔不如意矣。

With the four above prepared, finally spirit gathers. Once spirit is gathered, then energy is tempered, and this smelted energy then reinforces spirit. Energy is ready to move and spirit is concentrated. Expand and contract are decisive. Empty and full are distinct. When left is empty, right is full. When right is empty, left is full. Empty does not mean you are in that area completely weak, but that energy should there be ready to move. Full does not mean you are in that area completely stuck, but that spirit should there be concentrated. It is crucial that changes are within your chest and waist and are not external. Force is borrowed from the opponent. Energy is issued from your spine. How can energy issue from your spine? It sinks downward, going from your shoulders, gathering in your spine, and concentrates in your waist. This energy going from above to below is called “contracting”. Then it goes from your waist to your spine, spreading to your arms to be applied at your fingers. This energy going from below to above is called “expanding”. Contracting is gathering. Expanding is releasing. When you can understand expanding and contracting, then you will understand passive and active. When you reach this state, then daily work will yield daily refinement, and gradually you will reach the point that you can do whatever you want and everything will happen as you imagine.

撒放密訣 李亦畬

THE TRICK TO RELEASING (by Li Yiyu)

擎 引 鬆 放

Raise, draw in, relax, and release.

擎起彼身借彼力。中有靈字

引到身前勁始蓄。中有斂字

鬆開我勁勿使屈。中有靜字

放時腰腳認端的。中有整字

I get the opponent's body to rise up and I borrow his force. (This has to do with "lively".)
Once I have drawn him in front of me, my power begins to store. (This has to do with "collected".)

I relax my power, but I do not allow it to collapse. (This has to do with "calm".)

When I release, it comes from my waist and legs. (This has to do with "complete".)

走架打手行工要言 李亦畬

ESSENTIALS IN PRACTICING THE SOLO SET & PLAYING HANDS (by Li Yiyu)

昔人云“能引進落空，能四兩撥千斤；不能引進落空，不能四兩撥千斤”。語甚該括，初學未由領悟，余加數語以解之，俾有志斯技者，得所從入，庶日進有功矣。欲要引進落空，四兩撥千斤，先要知己知彼。欲要知己知彼，先要舍己從人。欲要舍己從人，先要得機得勢。欲要得機得勢，先要周身一家。欲要周身一家，先要周身無有缺陷。欲要周身無有缺陷，先要神氣鼓蕩。欲要神氣鼓蕩，先要提起精神，神不能外散。欲要神不外散，先要神氣收斂入骨。欲要神氣收斂入骨，先要兩股前節有力。兩肩鬆開，氣向下沉，勁起於腳根，變換在腿，含蓄在胸，運動在兩肩，主宰在腰。上於兩膊相繫，下於兩腿相隨。勁由內換，收便是合，放即是開，靜則俱靜，靜是合，合中寓開；動則俱動，動是開，開中寓合。觸之則旋轉自如，無不得力。才能引進落空，四兩撥千斤。平日走架，是知己工夫，一動勢先問自己周身合上數項不合，少有不合，即速改換，走架所以要慢不要快。打手是知人工夫，動靜固是知人，仍是問己，自己安排得好，人一挨我，我不動彼絲毫，趁勢而入，接定彼勁，彼自跌出。如自己有不得力處，便是雙重未化，要於陰陽開合中求之。所謂“知己知彼，百戰百勝”也。

Someone long ago said: “If you can draw the opponent in to land on nothing, you can then use four ounces of force to move his of a thousand pounds. If you cannot draw the opponent in to land on nothing, you cannot use four ounces to move a thousand pounds.” These words are probably too vague for a beginner to understand. I will explain further so that those who want this skill are in a position to begin and then after much regular training get to possess it:

– If you want to [10] draw the opponent into emptiness and use four ounces to move a thousand pounds, you must first [9] know both yourself and the opponent.

– If you want to know both yourself and the opponent, you must first [8] let go of your plans and just respond to the opponent.

– If you want to let go of your plans and just respond to the opponent, you must first [7] be in the right place at the right time.

– If you want to be in the right place at the right time, you must first [6] get your whole body to behave as one unit.

– If you want to get your whole body to behave as one unit, you must first [5] get your whole body to be without cracks or gaps.

– If you want to get your whole body to be without cracks or gaps, you must first [4] get your spirit and energy to be ready.

– If you want your spirit and energy to be ready, you must first [3] rouse your spirit rather than letting it be distracted.

– If you want to keep your spirit from being distracted, you must first [2] get your spirit and energy to gather and collect in your spine.

– If you want to get your spirit and energy to gather and collect in your spine, you must first [1] get the front of your thighs to have strength, get your shoulders to loosen, and get your energy to sink downward.

Power starts from your heel, is transferred through your leg, stored in your chest, moved at your shoulders, and controlled at your waist. In your upper body, your arms are connected

with each other. In your lower body, your legs are coordinated with each other. Power is transferred from within. Gathering is contracting. Releasing is expanding. When becoming still, everything becomes still. Stillness refers to contracting. When contraction finishes, there will be expansion. When there is movement, everything moves. Movement refers to expanding. When expansion finishes, there will be contraction. Then when there is contact, you can turn smoothly and will be strong everywhere. You will then be able to draw the opponent in to land on nothing and use four ounces of force to move his of a thousand pounds.

Whenever you practice the solo set, it is the practice of knowing yourself. Before moving through the postures, make sure your whole body is in accord with the principles as stated above. When the slightest part is off, immediately adjust it. To facilitate this, the set should be done slowly rather than quickly.

Playing hands is then the practice of knowing the opponent. His movement and stillness must be firmly comprehended. Still examine yourself as well. If I am in good order myself, then when the opponent comes near me, I do not need to act upon him at all, but take advantage of his momentum to find a way in. Connecting firmly to his power, I let him cause himself to fall out. If you do not have a strong position, this is simply a case of double pressure rather than neutralization, and you should seek within passive and active, or contracting and expanding, to fix it. It is said: "Knowing both yourself and your opponent, in a hundred battles you will have a hundred victories."

註：以上古典拳論，根據李亦畬於1881年抄贈郝為真的定本《太極拳譜》擇要錄出，文字未經後人更改。

(Note: The boxing texts above are selected from Li Yiyu's definitive Taiji Boxing Manual, handwritten and presented to Hao Weizhen in 1881, the contents of which have gone uncorrupted by later generations.)

四字秘訣 （作者待考）

THE FOUR-WORD SECRET FORMULA (authorship awaiting verification)

敷：敷者，運氣於己身，敷布彼勁之上，使不得動也。

SPREAD: Spreading means moving energy in your own body to spread over the opponent's power, making him unable to move.

蓋：蓋者，以氣蓋彼來處也。

COVER: Covering means using energy to cover the area the opponent attacks.

對：對者，以氣對彼來處，認定準頭而去也。

MATCH: Matching means using energy to match the opponent's attack, knowing for certain where his target is and sending him away from it.

吞：吞者，以氣全吞而入於化也。

ENGULF: Engulfing means using energy to completely absorb the opponent's attack and neutralize it.

此四字無形無聲，非懂勁後，煉到極精境地者不能知，全是以氣言。能直養其氣而無害，始能施於四體，四體不言而喻矣。

These four words are about something invisible and silent, and if you are not yet identifying energies and have practiced to a point of extreme refinement, you will not be able to understand them. They are entirely about energy. If you can nurture energy with integrity, it will not be corrupted, and you will begin to be able to send it into your limbs, and then your limbs will instinctively know what to do.

考釋：李亦畬孫李福蔭於1935年編有廉讓堂本太極拳譜，以《四字秘訣》為武禹襄作品，乃據武禹襄孫武萊緒所撰《先王父廉泉府君行略》。萊緒謂其祖“復本心得，闡出四字訣”，福蔭遂以《四字秘訣》為禹襄所作。考此訣拳理高妙，境界在亦畬《撒放秘訣》之上。李亦畬於1881年寫給郝和的《太極拳譜》，備載禹襄拳論，禹襄卒於1880年，武、李誼屬師生，同居一鄉，此訣若為禹襄所作，決無不收之理；故此訣當非禹襄作品，或係武、李子弟所作。亦畬卒於1892年，亦有寫作此訣之可能。特為抉出，以待續考。

（顧留馨附註）

Considering the Four-Word's authenticity:

In 1935, Li Yiyu's grandson, Li Fuyin, compiled the *Lianrang Hall Taiji Boxing Manual*, which takes the Four-Word Secret Formula to be the work of Wu Yuxiang. Wu Yuxiang's grandson Wu Laixu wrote "A Brief Sketch of Grandfather Lianquan's [Yuxiang's] Deeds", in which he said his grandfather "then grasped the true idea and expressed it in the Four-Word Formula", and so Li Fuyin then took it to be the work of Wu Yuxiang. On inspection, this formula of boxing theory is more ingenious than the likes of Li Yiyu's "Trick to Releasing". Li in 1881 transcribed his Taiji Boxing Manual and gave it to Hao Weizhen, so as to preserve a record of Wu's boxing texts, Wu having passed away the year before. Wu and Li had had a teacher-student friendship and were from the same hometown. If the Formula was written by Wu, it is surely a summation of principles, but if it was not written by Wu, perhaps it was written by some student of Wu or Li. Li Yiyu died in 1892, and it is possible that it was he who wrote it. Determining this issue will await further study.