

Brennan Translation

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## THE CORRECT PATH OF YIQUN

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### THE CORRECT PATH OF YIQUN

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[1929]

[translation by Paul Brennan, Aug, 2016]

原序

#### PREFACE

技擊一道，甚矣哉之難言也。詩言拳勇，禮言角力，皆技術之起源。降至漢代，華陀氏作五禽之戲，亦技擊本質，良以當時習者甚少，以致湮沒無聞。迨至梁天監中，達摩東來，以講經授徒之餘，兼及鍛練筋骨之術，採禽獸性靈之特長，參以洗髓易筋之法，而創意拳，又曰心意拳。徒眾精是技者甚多，少林之名，亦因之而噪起。岳武穆王復集各家精華，編為五技連拳散手撩手諸法，稱為形意拳。逮及後古，國家宴安，重文輕武之風日盛，又精拳技者，復多以好勇鬥狠賈禍，於是士大夫相率走避，致將此含有深奧學理之拳術，不能見重於歷世。相沿既久，無可更易，即後古之有道懷瑾握瑜者，率多埋沒於鄉邨閭里間，不敢以技術著稱，此固使後學之深資悼惜者也。清代晉之太原郡，戴氏昆仲，精於是技，而獨詳傳於直隸深縣李洛能，先生授徒甚眾，獲復李老先師之絕技者，厥同縣之郭雲深先生。郭先生之教人習形意也，首以站樁為入學初步。從學者多矣，能克承其教者，迨不多邁，郭先生亦有非其人不能學，非其人不能傳之歎。吾與郭先生同里，有戚誼為長幼行，愛吾聰敏而教之，且於易簣之時，猶以絕藝示之，諄諄以重視相囑。晚近古風不古，學者多好奇異，殊不知真法大道，只在日用平常之間，世人每以其近而忽之道不遠人，人之為道而遠說益微。鄉不願以此而求聞達，無如晚近世俗，趨於卑下，不求實際，徒驚虛名，於是牟利之徒，不自學問，抄襲腐敗之陳文，強作謀生之利器，滿紙荒唐，故入玄虛，忽而海市蜃樓，跡近想像；忽而高山遠水，各不相干。使學者手不釋卷，如入五里霧中，難識半點真偽。一般無知之士，猶以聖人之道，不可鑽仰。嗚呼，利人當途，大道何昌。午夜深思，曷勝浩歎。鄉雖賦性不敏，而於技擊一道，竊焉心喜，既獲得親炙真法大道之指導，每日承其教誨之語言，多具有紀載之價值者，連綴成冊，本利己利人之訓，不敢自私，以期同嗜均沾斯益，非徒以此問世也，是序。

中華民國拾八年菊月 深縣王宇僧

The way of martial arts is really very hard to describe. The *Book of Poetry* says [poem 198]: “They are without fists, without courage.” The *Book of Rites* [chapter 6] mentions the training of wrestling [alongside archery and charioteering]. Such references are the source of our martial arts. During the Han Dynasty, Hua Tuo made his Five Animal Frolics, which also had a martial quality, but because there were too few practitioners at the time, that aspect disappeared.

Then in the Tianjian era of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty [502–519], Damo traveled east. In addition to teaching the Buddhist sutras, he also taught skills of training the body. Drawing from the special attributes of animals, he produced the methods of Marrow Washing and Sinew Changing, and created Yiquan [“Intention Boxing”], also called Xinyiquan [“Mental Intention Boxing”]. There were many skilled experts of it. It was called “Shaolin” because that is where the practice began. Yue Fei then collected the essences of various systems and compiled them into the methods of “five techniques continuous boxing”, “miscellaneous hands”, and “throwing hands”, his art becoming known as Xingyiquan [“Form & Intention Boxing”].

When the nation was later at peace, the attitude steadily grew that literary pursuits were important and martial pursuits were irrelevant. Moreover, martial arts experts were often too in love with fighting and caused trouble, resulting in the literati shunning martial arts more and more. Even though some of these boxing arts had profound theories, scholars were unable to see their historical importance. Systems were passed down for a long time without any modifications being made, and when later generations came up with methods that also had excellent qualities, they were usually hidden away in their native villages and they did not dare to spread their arts. This indeed fills us modern students with deep grief.

During the Qing Dynasty, in Taiyuan, Shanxi, the Dai brothers excelled in martial arts, but they taught their whole art only to Li Luoneng of Shen County, Hebei. Li taught many students, the finest being Guo Yunshen, also of Shen County. Guo’s teacher taught him Xingyi, emphasizing stance work as the first stage of fundamental training. Students have too often been allowed to skip that part of the teaching, and now it is hardly seen anymore. Guo was already worried, not that people would not be able to learn it, but that people would not be able to teach it. Guo and I were from the same town, and our bond was that between an old man and a young man. He taught me in the first place because he considered me to be intelligent, and then when he was on his deathbed, still showing the height of skill, he tirelessly encouraged me to maintain serious training.

In recent years, people no longer behave as they did in the previous era. Students usually prefer weird new things, and they have no comprehension for true arts and great ways. Every day, people keep forgetting this wisdom [from the *Zhong Yong*]: “The Way is not far from people. It is their expectation of the Way that distances them from it.” They are no longer willing to use such wisdom to seek what is truly great, and it has unfortunately become customary in recent years to incline toward what is inferior. Instead of striving for real life, they pursue empty fads. They pursue personal gain rather than self-knowledge. In imitation of corrupt literature, they seek power in order to get ahead, pages full of nonsense tricking them with illusions.

They ignore that what they seek is a mirage and chase their fantasies. They ignore the sheer scale of the real world and treat it as irrelevant. To push students to be studious is therefore like sending them into miles of fog. They can barely tell at all what is real and what is fake. Ordinary ignorant people seem to use the Way of the sages, but they cannot be bothered to go into it [to “drill into it or look up at it”, paraphrasing *Lun Yu*, 9.11: “The more I look up at his teaching, the higher it goes. The more I drill into his teaching, the harder it gets.”] Alas. Good men set out on the path, but where does the great Way flourish? They contemplate it in the middle of the night, but how do they keep themselves from sighing in despair?

I am not endowed with great intelligence, but I do have a heartfelt delight for martial arts. I was given personal guidance in the genuine art, and every day I carry on my teacher’s words. I have made a record of his precious ideas and compiled them into a book. Setting the example of benefiting both self and others, I not dare to keep it to myself. Hoping to share the benefits with fellow enthusiasts, the least I can do is publish this document.

– written by Wang Yuseng [Xiangzhai] of Shen County, during the “chrysanthemum month” [Oct], 1929

## 樁法換勁

### [1] STANDING METHODS FOR TRANSFORMING STRENGTH

欲求技擊妙用，須以站樁換勁為根始。所謂使其弱者轉為強，拙者化為靈也。若禪學者，始於戒律，而後精於定慧，証於心源，了悟虛空，窮於極處，然後方可學道，禪功如此，技擊猶然。蓋初學時，樁法頗繁，如降龍樁、伏虎樁、子午樁、三才樁等，茲去繁就簡，採取各樁之長，合而為一，名曰渾元樁，利於生勁，便於實搏，精打顧、通氣學，學者鍛鍊旬日，自有效果，亦非筆墨所能表達其神妙也。夫樁法之學，最忌身心用力，用力則氣滯，氣滯則意停，意停則神斷，神斷則受愚。尤忌揚頭折腰，肘膝過於曲直，總以似直非直，似曲非曲為宜，筋絡伸展為是，頭宜上頂，閭骨宜直，氣宜下沉，心宜靜思，手足指尖稍微用力，牙齒似閉非閉，舌捲似頂非頂，渾身毛孔似鬆非鬆，如是則內力外發，弱者換為強，自不難得其要領也。

If you seek a marvelous fighting ability, you have to use stance work and the transformation of strength as the place to start. By such means, weakness will be transformed into strength and clumsiness will be transformed into nimbleness. Students of Zen begin with disciplined behavior, then become experts in established wisdom, realize the origin of “mind”, awaken to the reality of emptiness, and then at last are able to discover the Way. Meditation is like this, and so are martial arts.

In the beginning of the training, there are numerous standing methods, such as Descending Dragon Stance, Crouching Tiger Stance, Sundial Stance, Three-Realms Stance, and so on. Then complexity gives way to simplicity as you take the strong points of each stance and merge them into one, called Primordial Stance. It is helpful for generating power and useful for actual fighting. It is training for mastery of both attack and defense, and for energy circulation. After just ten days of training, it will naturally produce results so marvelous that words cannot describe them.

When learning standing methods, the most important thing to avoid is that your body or mind put forth any exertion. If you use exertion, energy will stagnate. If energy stagnates, intention will stop. If intention stops, spirit will be cut off. If spirit is cut off, you will become prey to your opponent's tricks. You should especially avoid tilting your head back, bending at the waist, or overly bending or straightening your elbows and knees. Always use the measure of “straight but not straight, bent but not bent” and the mindset of opening up the sinews and vessels.

Your head should press up, your lower spine should straighten, energy should sink downward, and your mind should quiet its thoughts. Your fingers and toes exert only the slightest strength. Your teeth seem almost closed together but not quite. Your tongue is curled up to almost touch your upper palate but not quite. Your pores all over your body seem to be open but not quite open. In this way, internal power will outwardly express, weakness will be transformed into strength, and then it will not be difficult to obtain the essentials.

## 鍛鍊筋骨

### [2] TRAINING THE SINEWS & BONES

力生於骨，而達於筋，筋長力大，骨重筋靈，筋伸骨要縮，骨靈則勁實，伸筋腕項〔手足四腕與脖項〕，則渾身之筋絡皆開展，頭頂齒扣，足根含蓄〔含有若彈簧之崩力〕，六心相印〔手足本頂心也〕，胸背宜圓〔闊背筋大雄筋異常有力〕，則氣自然開展，兩肱橫撐要平，用挽抱開合伸縮勁，兩腿用提挾扒縮蹠崩擰裏勁，肩撐胯墜，尾閭中正神貫頂，脊背三關透丸宮，骨節如弓背，筋伸似弓絃，運勁如絃滿，發手似放箭，用力如抽絲，兩手如撕綿，四腕挺勁力自實，沉氣扣齒骨自堅，像其形，龍踞虎坐，鷹目猿神，貓行馬奔雞腿蛇身，查其勁，挺腰沉氣，坐胯提膝，撐截裏墜，粘定化隨，若能得此要素，如遇敵時，自能隨機而動，變化無窮，任敵巨力雄偉漢，運動一指撥千斤，所謂身有平準，腰似車輪，氣如火藥拳如彈，靈機微動鳥難騰，更以心小膽大，面善心惡，靜似書生，動若龍虎，總以虛實無定，變化無蹤為準則，自能得其神妙之變化，故郭雲深大法師常云：有形有意都是假，技到無心始

見奇，蓋即指此也。

Strength is born in the bones and fulfilled in the sinews. When the sinews are lengthened, your strength is great. When your bones are heavy, your sinews are lively. When your sinews extend, your bones should withdraw. When your bones are lively, the power is full.

Extending the sinews of your wrists and neck (meaning the wrists, ankles, and neck), the muscles of your whole body are thus opened up.

With your headtop pressing up and your teeth closed together, your heels store (as though storing a springy force).

The six centers (the palms, the soles of the feet, the solar plexus, the crown of the head) match each other.

Your chest and back should be rounded (meaning that by spreading the back muscles, the chest muscles will have unusual power), then energy will naturally spread.

Your forearms bracing across should be level, using the energies of lifting and embracing, opening and closing, extending and withdrawing.

Your legs use the energies of lifting and squeezing, raking and withdrawing, digging and collapsing, twisting and wrapping. Your shoulders brace and your hips drop.

[From Taiji's Thirteen Dynamics Song:] "Your tailbone is centered and spirit penetrates to your headtop." Energy courses through the three sections of your spine to the crown of your head.

Your joints arc like the curve of a bow. Your sinews stretch like bowstrings. Wielding energy is like the tautness of the bowstrings. Send your hand out as though loosing an arrow.

Apply strength like drawing silk, your hands as though tearing cloth. With your wrists and ankles expressing powerfully, your strength will naturally be full. With energy sinking and your teeth closed together, your bones will naturally be strong.

Imitate these qualities: dragon squatting, tiger sitting, eagle eye, ape spirit, cat walking, horse running, chicken leg, snake body. Examine these dynamics: straighten your lower back and sink energy; settle your hips and lift your knees; brace and intercept, wrap and sink; stick and settle, neutralize and follow.

If you can grasp these essentials, then when you face an opponent, you will naturally be able to respond according to the situation, adapting without limit. [Paraphrasing Taiji's Playing Hands Song:] "Let him attack with heroic force, then act with one finger deflecting a thousand pounds."

It is said: "The body is like scale, the waist like a wheel, the energy like gunpowder, the fists like bullets. The spirit acts with such subtlety, a bird could not escape." Furthermore, let your thoughts shrink and your courage enlarge. Have a benevolent countenance but a ruthless mentality. Be in stillness like a scholar, in motion like a dragon or tiger.

Always the standards should be:

- Let emptiness and fullness be unfixed.
- Adapt, but without complying.

Then naturally you will be able to obtain the art's ingenuity of transformation. Grandmaster Guo Yunshen often said: "To have a 'shape' or 'intention' is in either case a contrivance. Once your skill attains the level of unconscious action ['no mind'], then you will notice wonders." His words indicate these standards.

用勁

[3] APPLYING POWER

拳術之妙，貴乎有勁，用勁之法，不外剛柔方圓，剛者直豎，柔者靈活，直豎長伸有攻守力，柔者縮短有驚彈力，剛勁形似方，如圖，

Effectiveness in martial arts depends on having power. Methods of applying power do not go beyond hardness and softness, squareness and roundness. Hardness is straightness. Softness is lively. Straightness is extended long, having a force of attack and defense. Softness has a shorter range, having a force that is sudden and elastic. Hard power seems to have a squareness:



柔勁外方而內圓，如圖，

Soft power is externally square but internally round:

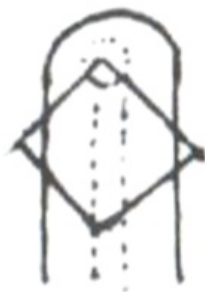


伸縮抑揚，長短互用，剛柔相濟，有左剛而右柔，有左柔而右剛，有稍節剛而中節柔，亦有時剛時柔虛實變化之妙，半柔半剛運使之精，更有柔退而剛進，剛退而柔進，遇虛則柔而剛隨其後，臨實則剛而柔在其先，無論千差萬異，總以中線重心不失，週身光線不斷為樞紐，橫撐開放，光線茫茫謂之方，提抱含蓄，中藏生氣謂之圓，所以筋出力而骨生稜。凡出手時，用提頓撐抱挽墜躡裏，順力逆行，以方作圓。

Extend and withdraw, press down and raise up. Long and short make use of each other. Hardness and softness complement each other. When your left side hardens, your right side softens. When your left side softens, your right side hardens. When your end joints use hardness, your middle joints use softness. Sometimes hard, sometimes soft, the ingenuity lies in the transformations of emptiness and fullness. To have half hardness and half softness in your movements is best. Furthermore, when you make a soft retreat, make a hard advance, and when you make a hard retreat, make a soft advance. When you encounter emptiness, soften, but let hardness follow. When you face fullness, harden, but let softness precede.

Regardless of countless differences, the crucial factors are always that you keep your balance from slipping off-center and that you keep whole-bodied lines of force from being interrupted. Crossing and bracing, opening and releasing – the boundless reach of these radiating lines is called “squareness”. Lifting and wrapping, containing and storing – the center where energy is generated is called “roundness”. Thereby the muscles express strength [through the curved quality of movement] and the bones produce edges [through the angular quality of shape].

Whenever you send your hand out, use lifting and pressing, bracing and holding, raising and dropping, drilling and wrapping, going along with his force to go against his movement, using squareness to make roundness:



落手時，用含蓄纏綿，滔滔不斷，以圓作方。

When your hand lands, use storing and continuous flowing, using roundness to make squareness:



蓋圓勁能抽提，方勁能轉頓。開合若連環，若萬縷柔絲百折千迴，令人不可捉摸。

Because round power can withdraw and lift, and square power can turn and press, opening and closing will seem interlinked, like countless silk strands wound round and round, causing the opponent to be incapable of understanding what is going on:



其玲瓏開朗，如駿駒躍澗，偏面矯嘶，神采麗麗，壯氣森森，精神內固，如臨大敵，雖劍戟如林，刀斧如山，亦若無人之境，身如強弓硬弩，手如弓滿即發之箭，出手恍同蛇吸食，打人猶如震地雷。夫用勁之道，不宜過剛，過剛易折。亦不宜過柔，過柔不進。須以堅勁而側入。橫勁吞吐而旋繞，此種用勁之法，非心領神悟不易得也，若能操之純熟，則勁自圓，體自方，氣自恬，而神自能一，學者其勿惰。

求勁之法，慢優於快，緩勝於急，而尤以不用拙力為最妙，蓋運動之時，須使全體之關節，任其自然，不稍有淤滯之處，骨須靈活，筋須伸展，肉須舒放，血須川流，如井之泉脈然，如是方能有一身之法，一貫之力，而本力亦不外溢。若急急於拳套是舞，徒用暴力以求其迅速之美觀，如是則全身之氣孔閉塞，而於血液之流通，亦大有阻礙，觀諸用急暴力者，無不努目顰眉，頓足有聲，先閉其氣，而後用其力，既畢則又長吁一聲，嘆氣一口，殊不知已大傷其元氣也。往往有數十年之純功，而終為門外漢者，目睹皆然，豈非用拙力之所致也。亦有用功百日而奏奇效

者，可知謬途誤人之甚，學者於此求力之法，當細斟之，自能有天籟之機，然亦非庸夫所能得之道也。

Your shining presence is like a fast horse leaping a stream and giving a proud neigh, with a majestic bearing and full of courage. Your spirit is inwardly solid. If you are facing a powerful opponent, then even if it feels as though you are confronted by a forest of swords and halberds, or by a mountain of sabers and axes, remain in a mentality of having no opponents at all. Your body is like a loaded crossbow, your hand like the bolt about to be released. Your hand goes out suddenly, just like a snake biting prey. When you strike someone, it will seem like the shock of a landmine.

Methods of applying power should not be overly hard, for hardness is too brittle, nor should it be overly soft, for softness cannot advance. It is necessary to use vertical power to get in from the side, and to use the receiving and expelling of horizontal power to coil around. However, this kind of method of applying power is not easy to obtain without an intuitive understanding. If you are able to practice to the point of skill, then your power will naturally have roundness, your body will naturally have squareness, your energy will be naturally calm, and your spirit will be naturally focused. Do not be lazy in your training.

In methods of seeking power, slowness is superior to speed, leisure overcomes urgency, and it is most important of all to put forth no awkward effort. When moving, you must get the joints of your whole body to be natural, without the slightest stagnation. Your bones have to be lively. Your sinews have to be extended. Your muscles have to be comfortable. Your blood has to flow like the underground channels of a well.

In this way, you will then be able to have a whole-bodied technique, a concentrated force without the main part of your force getting dissipated. If you rush through a boxing set like a dance, using aggressive force to speed it up and look pretty, then you will hold your breath, and your blood circulation will be greatly hindered. Whenever we see people violently hurrying through the movements, they always have angry eyes and knit brows, noisily stomping, first holding their breath, then exerting their strength. Once they are finished, they are then gasping and panting, little realizing the great harm they are doing to their vitality. We often see those who have put in decades of hard work and still end up as laymen, and this is why. Using no awkward effort would not lead to such an outcome. But since there are also those who “work hard for a mere three months and achieve extraordinary effects”, we can understand the extent to which exaggeration may mislead people.

Students who work from these methods of seeking strength will get meticulous results and will naturally be able to possess the keys to a magical skill. However, this material is not something those at a mediocre level will be able to grasp.

練氣

#### [4] TRAINING THE ENERGY

夫子養性練氣以致治，軒轅練神化氣以樂道，達摩參禪，東來傳道，始傳洗髓易筋之法，而創意拳及龍虎樁，故為技擊開山之宗，自古名賢大儒，聖人豪傑，金剛佛體，未有不養性練氣及習技擊者。莊子云：技也而進乎道矣。然技雖小道，殊不知學理無窮。凡習此技者，非風神瀟灑，而無輕浮狂燥塵偽之氣，堪與聖賢名儒雅士相稱者，不足學此技也。

夫練氣之學，以運使為效，以鼻息長呼短吸為功，以川流不息為主旨，以聽氣淨虛為極致，前為食氣出入之道，後為腎氣升降之途，以後天補先天之術，即週天之轉輪，蓋週天之學，初練時以鼻孔引入清氣，直入氣海，由氣海透過尾間，旋於腰間，蓋兩腎之本位在於腰，實為先天之第一，諸臟之根源，於是則腎水足矣。然後上升督脈而至丸宮，仍歸鼻間，以舌接引腎氣而下，則下腹充實，漸漸結丹入田，此即週天之要義，命名週天秘訣，學者勿輕視之。

Confucius used self-discipline to cultivate his temperament and train his energy. The Yellow Emperor used delight for the Way to train his spirit and transform his energy. When Zen master Damo traveled east to transmit the Way, he began teaching the methods of Marrow Washing and Tendon Changing, and he created Yiquan and dragon & tiger stance training. Therefore he was the ancestor who paved the way for martial arts.

Since ancient times, among wise men and scholars, sages and heroes, arhats and buddhas, there has never been a practitioner of martial arts who did not cultivate his temperament and train his energy. It says in *Zhuangzi* [chapter 3]: “By way of skill, we get closer to the Way.” But although a skill seems a lesser Way, it turns out that its principles are limitless.

To practice this skill, do not approach it casually, with an attitude of frivolous delight in the material world. Sages, scholars, and refined gentlemen are in agreement that you would not then be able to learn it. When learning how to train the energy, results come from an idea of a cycle of energy. The practice is to breathe through the nose with a short inhale and a long exhale, the substance of the exercise is that it is like a river flowing unceasingly, and the achievement is to have such an awareness of energy that you enter a state of pure void.

First there are the paths of food and breath coming in and going out, then there is the course of kidney energy ascending. It is the art of using the acquired to assist the innate, of the revolving of energy through the energy circuit. In the beginning of training the energy circuit, draw in fresh air through your nose and send it directly to your “sea of energy”. From there it courses through to your tailbone, then curls toward your lower back, where your kidneys are positioned. This place is indeed the origin of the innate condition, the source for all the organs, and thereby the kidney water is sufficient. It then ascends along the Du meridian to the acupoints on the head, returning to the nose. The tongue attracts the kidney energy and from there it descends, filling the lower abdomen, gradually entering the elixir field. These are the essentials, the secret, of the energy circuit. Do not treat it lightly.

養氣

## [5] CULTIVATING ENERGY

養氣練氣雖出一氣之源，然性命動靜之學，有形無形之術，各有不同，蓋養氣之學不離乎性，練氣之學不離乎命，神即是性，氣即是命，故養氣之術，須由性題參入。夫性命之道，非言語筆墨所能述其詳也。況道本無言，能言者即非道，故孟子云難言也。今以難言而強言之，惟道本無也，無者天地之源，萬物之根，人有生死，物有損壞，道乃永存，其大無外，其小無內，視之無形，聽之無聲，而能包羅萬有天地，彌滿六合，塞充乾坤，混合宇宙，性命之學，亦即天地之陰陽也。然欲養氣修命，須使心意不動，心為君火，動為像火，君火不動，像火不生，像火不生，氣念自平，無念神自清，清而後心意定，故云一念動時皆是火，萬緣寂淨方生真，常使氣通關節敏，自然精滿谷神存，若有動之動出於不動，有為之為出於無為，無為則神歸，神歸則萬物寂，物寂則氣眼，氣眼則萬物無生，耳目心意俱忘，即諸妙之圖也。如對鏡忘鏡，不忱於六賊之魔，居塵超塵，不落於萬緣之化，誠能內觀其心，心無其心，外觀其形，形無其形，達觀其物，物無其物，三昧俱悟，即是虛空，空無所空，所空欲空，無無亦無，大抵人神好清而心擾之，人心好靜而欲亂之，故言神者不離性，氣者不離命，若影隨形，不爽毫釐。

Although cultivating energy and training the energy derive from the same source, the study of instinct / discipline and movement / stillness, and the art of shape / shapelessness each have their differences. The study of cultivating energy is always a matter of instinct, and the study of training the energy is always a matter of discipline. Spirit has to do with instinct and energy has to do with discipline, therefore the art of cultivating energy has to start with instinct.

As for the way of instinct and discipline, there are not really words that can describe it. Furthermore, the Way is



beyond language, and if it can be described, then it is not the Way. As Mengzi described it [energy] [*Mengzi*, chapter 2.1]: “It is that which is difficult to describe.” We may struggle with words and force explanations, but the Way is based in nothingness. Nothingness is the source of the universe, the origin of all things. People live and die, things diminish and rot away, but the Way is eternal.

[From *Zhuangzi*, chapter 33:] “It is so big, there is nothing outside it, and so small, there is nothing inside it.” [From chapter 22:] “Look at it, it has no shape. Listen to it, it makes no sound.” And yet it can embrace all things, reaching to all of the six directions, filling the universe, infused into the whole cosmos. The study of instinct and discipline is thus also the study of Nature’s passive and active aspects.

However, if you wish to cultivate energy and develop discipline, you must keep the intention to do so from getting involved. Mind is the fire of the ego. Movement is the fire of the body. If the ego fire does nothing, then the body fire will not be generated. And when the body is doing nothing, then energy and thought will both become calm. Without thoughts, the spirit will naturally be clear. Once you have a clear spirit, your mental intention will then be stable. Thus it is said [from 修道真言 “True Words on Cultivating the Way”]: “Whenever there is a thought of movement, there is fire. But when all ideas are calm, then there is true life... Constantly cause energy to course through the energy channels. Then naturally essence will be full and the ‘valley spirit’ will be maintained.”

Thus you will have the ability of [from the 赤文洞古經 “Classic of Sincere Words Penetrating to what is Ancient”]: “moving by not moving, doing by not doing. Not doing, spirit returns. Spirit returning, all things are quiet. Things quieting, energy dissipates. Energy dissipating, all things lie dormant.”

Ears, eyes, mind, and intention are all forgotten. This is the realm of the wondrous. [From the 大通經 “Classic of Great Understanding”]: “Regard the world, but forget it is there. (i.e. Do not succumb to the demons of the senses.) Transcend this world instead of falling into more traps of karma.”

[From the 清靜經 “Classic of Clarity and Stillness”]: “Indeed one who is able to do so [transcend] looks inward at mind and finds that mind is without mind. He looks outward at shapes and finds that shape is without shape. He looks far away at things and finds that things are things of nothing. Awaken to all of these kinds of nothing [no mind, no shape, no thingness] and discover emptiness. [But seeing ‘emptiness’ is also an empty thing,] because there is nothing there, and since ‘emptiness’ is empty, ‘nothingness’ also amounts to nothing. [And with even ‘nothingness’ amounting to nothing, there is calm.]... Typically, when the spirit prefers clarity, the mind gets distracted, and when the mind prefers quietude, desires become restless.”

Let spirit never be separate from instinct, and energy never be separate from discipline. You will then be as accurate in your training as a shadow following a shape.

## 五行合一

### [6] THE FIVE ELEMENTS UNITED INTO A ONENESS

五行者，生剋制化之母，亦即萬物發源之本也。如世俗之論五行者，則曰：金生水，水生木，木生火，火生土，土生金，謂之相生。金剋木，木剋土，土剋水，水剋火，火剋金，謂之相剋。此朽腐之論，難近拳理，而亦不知拳術為何物。又曰：某拳生某拳，某拳剋某拳，此論似亦有理，若以拳理研究之，當兩手相接對擊時，豈能有暇而及此也。若以目之所見，心再思之，然後出手制之，余實不敢信，況敵之來勢，逐迭更變，安有以生剋之說，能致勝之理，此生剋之學，欺人誤人謬談之甚也。苟能不期然而然，莫知擊而手足已至，尚不敢說能制人，如以腦力所度，心意所思，出手論著，操技論套，是門外漢也，不足與談拳。蓋拳術中之所謂五行者，換言之，曰金力，木力，水力，火力，土力是也。即渾身之筋骨，堅硬如鐵石，其性屬金，故曰金力。所謂皮肉如棉，筋骨如鋼之意也。四體百骸，無處不有若樹木之曲直形，其性屬木，故曰木力。身體之行動，如神龍遊空，矯蛇遊水，猶水之流，行蹤無

定，活潑隨轉，其性屬水，故曰水力。發手如炸彈之爆裂，忽動如火之燒身，猛烈異常，其性屬火，故曰火力。週身圓滿，敦厚沉實，意若山嶽之重，無處不生鋒芒，其性屬土，故曰土力。凡一舉一動，皆有如是之五種力，此方謂五行合一也。總之，不動時週身乃一貫之力，動時大小關節，無處不有上下前後左右百股之二爭力。如是方能得週身之混元力也。

The five elements are the basis for the transformations of mutual generating and overcoming, the process of which is the source of all things. The common description of the five elements theory runs thus: Metal generates water, water generates wood, wood generates fire, fire generates earth, and earth generates metal – this is the way they generate each other. Metal overcomes wood, wood overcomes earth, earth overcomes water, water overcomes fire, and fire overcomes metal – this is the way they overcome each other.

This old-fashioned concept is difficult to align with the boxing theory, for it really seems to have little to do with boxing arts. It is also said that certain techniques generate certain techniques, and certain techniques overcome certain techniques. This idea seems more reasonable. In considering boxing principles, how could there be a fixation for the five elements when hands connect during fighting?

What your eyes notice, your mind then thinks about, and then you send out your hands to deal with it. The rest of the theory we really should not presume to believe. Furthermore, the opponent's incoming attacks keep varying, so how could we use the concept of generating and overcoming to be able to win? This theory of generating and overcoming simply misleads people with absurd gibberish.

It can happen spontaneously that you do not know in what way the opponent is attacking and yet your hands and feet arrive in the right place to respond to it. Nevertheless, you should not dare to say that you therefore have an ability for overcoming opponents. If you then start talking about what your brain measured or what your mind considered, the techniques that your hands performed or the practice sets that have developed your skills, you would be behaving at the level of the layman, which is insufficient for discussing boxing arts.

What we mean in boxing arts when we talk of the five elements is actually a “strength” of metal, of wood, of water, of fire, of earth:

The sinews and bones throughout your body are as hard as iron or stone. This is the nature of metal, and is therefore called the “strength of metal”. (A similar idea goes: “The skin and muscles are like cotton. The sinews and bones are like steel.”)

The four limbs and hundreds of bones have everywhere the same quality of bending and extending as a tree. This is the nature of wood, and is therefore called the “strength of wood”.

The movement of the body is like a spirit dragon swimming through sky, or a mighty serpent wading through water. Like the flow of water, there is no set path, just the liveliness of following the course of circumstance. This is the nature of water, and is therefore called the “strength of water”.

When you shoot out your hand, it is like an artillery shell exploding, a sudden action that is like a fire burning the opponent's body, so alarmingly fierce. This is the nature of fire, and is therefore called the “strength of fire” [or “firepower”].

Your whole body is filled with a sincere sense of weight, as though as heavy as a mountain, and every part being like a pointed peak. This is the nature of earth, and is therefore called the “strength of earth”.

With every action, always have these five kinds of strength. This is the method of the “five elements merging into one”. Whenever you are not moving, your whole body has a consistent strength, but whenever you are moving, there is everywhere, large and small joints alike, a duality of contending strength above and below, forward and back, left and right. In this way, you can gain the combined strength of your whole body.

## 六合

[7] THE SIX UNIONS

六合有內外之分。曰心與意合，意與氣合，氣與力合，為內三合。手與足合，肘與膝合，肩與胯合，為外三合。又曰筋與骨合，皮與肉合，肺與腎合，為內三合。頭與手合，手與身合，身與足合，為外三合。總之，神合勁合光線合，全身之法相合謂之合。非形勢相對謂之合。甚矣哉、六合之誤人也，學者慎之慎之。

The six unions are divided into internal and external.

It is said: “Mind is united with the intention, the intention united with the energy, and the energy united with the power. These are the three internal unions. The hand is united with the foot, the elbow united with the knee, and the shoulder united with the hip. These are the three external unions.”

It is also said: “The sinews are united with the bones, the skin united with the muscles, and the lungs are united with the kidneys. These are the three internal unions. The head is united with the hand, the hand united with the torso, and the torso united with the foot. These are the three external unions.”

In short, there is union that has to do with spirit, power, and lines of force. It is methods of using the whole body that makes “union”. It is not merely a matter of some postural alignments. There are indeed people who are misguided in their interpretation of the six unions. Do not become one of them.

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## 歌訣

[8] POETIC INSTRUCTIONS

歌訣者，拳術中之精粹也，若能參透其意，窮盡其理，自能得道矣。

(The poetic instructions supply the essence of a boxing art. If you are able to fully understand these concepts and principles, you will naturally be able to obtain the method.)

## 心愈專

*Further concentrate your mind.*

## 意味三

*Triply hide your intention.*

## 精愈堅

*Further fortify your essence.*

## 氣愈安

*Further stabilize your energy.*

## 神愈鮮

*Further brighten your spirit.*

〔此學技五大要素也〕。

(These are the five most important essentials to learn.)

## 渾噩身一貫

*Let sincerity course through your whole body.*

## 形具切忌散

*Keep your structure from crumbling anywhere.*

〔週身用力，無處不圓滿，取內圓外方之意，始終不懈〕。

(Using the power of the whole body, there is no part that is incomplete. Seek for a constant intention of internal “roundness” and external “squareness” from beginning to end.)

拳出如流星

*Punches go out like meteors.*

變手似閃電

*Switch techniques like lightning.*

〔變化迅速，神捷果斷〕。

(i.e. Adapt rapidly, your spirit quick and decisive.)

舌捲齒更扣

*Your tongue is curled upward and your teeth are closed together.*

〔舌為肉之稍，肉為氣之囊，舌捲氣降，注於氣海，又能接引腎氣，結丹入田。齒為骨梢，扣則骨堅〕，

(The tongue forms the “end” of the muscles. The muscles are the bag for your energy. When your tongue is curled, energy descends and pours into your “sea of energy”, and is also able to guide energy from your kidneys into your elixir field. The teeth form the “end” of the bones. When they are closed together, your bones are firmed.)

頭頂如懸磬

*The headtop is like a hanging chime.*

〔頭為六陽之首，五關百骸，莫不本此，頭頂若懸，三關九竅易通，自能白雲朝頂，一點靈光頂頭懸，亦禪學之要素也〕。

(The head is the source of the six channels of active energy. The five sense organs [eyes, ears, nose, tongue, lips] and the whole skeleton are based in this place. When the headtop seems suspended, the three sections of the spine and the nine orifices of the body will have a smooth energy flow, and so you will naturally be able to have “white clouds facing the headtop”, or a halo hanging over your head. This is also a key principle of Zen teachings.)

兩目神光耀

*The spirit in your eyes shines brightly.*

〔精光收縮而尖銳〕，

(This means that your vision comes into sharp focus.)

鼻息耳凝斂

*Your breath and your hearing become concentrated.*

心目宜內斂

*Your mind's eye should watch inward.*

〔以鼻作長呼短吸之功，耳目心作收視反聽之用〕。

(This has to do with the practice of breathing through your nose with a long exhalation and short inhalation, and the function of your ears, eyes, and mind watching instead of listening.)

腰轉如滑車

*Your waist turning like a pulley wheel,*

進足如鋼鑽

*your hands and feet go out like drill heads.*

〔靈敏活潑，進躡奪位〕。

(Nimble and lively, they dash forward to seize a position.)

提蹠裏扒縮

*Lifting, wading, wrapping, raking, shrinking.*

滾鏗挽撐擰

*Rolling, scraping, lifting, bracing, twisting.*

〔動靜須有此力〕。

(Whether in motion or stillness, you must have these qualities.)

手足指抓力

*Your fingers and toes grab with strength.*

毛孔如生電

*Your pores seem to generate electricity.*

〔指為筋梢，扣則力自充，週身毛髮為血稍，血為氣之膽，毛孔不睜，毛髮不豎，則血不充，血不充，則氣不振，氣不振，則力不實，不實則必失戰鬥力矣〕。

(The fingers and toes form the “end” of the sinews. When they are hooking in, there is naturally ample strength. Body hair forms the “end” of the blood. The blood is the boldness of energy. When the pores are not open and the hairs do not stand, blood is not abundant. When blood is not abundant, energy is not roused. When energy is not roused, then strength is not full. And without fullness, the fight will be lost.)

交手徑法

[9] SPARRING TIPS

[Much of this text draws from the “Yue Fei manual” that features in Li Jianqiu’s 1920 book.]

人之本性，各有不同。有聰明者，有智慧者，有毅力恒心者，有沉著精敏者，更有奸滑陰毒者。其性不同，其作為亦因之而異。如技術之擊法亦然。有具形而出，無形而落，敗勢而往，發聲而來，千變萬化，不能盡述。須以功力純篤，膽氣放縱，處處有法，舉動藏神，不期然而然，莫之至而至，身動快似馬，手動速如風。平時練習，三尺以外七尺以內，如臨大敵之像。交手時，有人若無人之境。頸要豎起，腰要挺起，下腹要充實，兩肱撐起，兩腿夾起，自頭至足，一氣相貫。膽怯心虛，不能取勝。不能察顏而觀色者，亦不能取勝。總之敵不動，我沉靜，敵微動，我先發。所謂打顧之要，亦其擊先者也。不動如書生，動之如龍虎。發動似迅雷，迅雷不及掩耳。然所以能勝敵者，皆在動靜之間。動靜已發而未發之間，謂之真動靜也。手要靈，足要輕，進退旋轉若貓形，身要正，目斂精，手足齊到定要贏。手到步不到，打人不為妙。手到步亦到，打人如拔草。上打咽喉下打陰，左右兩肋在中心。拳打丈外不為遠，近者只在一寸中。手出如巨炮響，足落似樹栽根。眼要毒，手要奸，步踏中門，躡入重心奪敵位，即是神仙亦難防。用拳須透爪，用掌要有氣。上下意相連，出入以心為主宰，眼手足隨之。兩足重量，前四後六，用時顛倒互換。夫有定位者步也，無定位者亦步也。如前足進後足隨，前後自有定位，以前步作後步，以後步作前步，更以前步作後之前步，以後步作前之後步，前後自無定位矣。左右反背如虎搜山，乘勢勇猛不可擋。斬拳迎門取中堂，搶上搶下勢如虎，鶻落龍潛下雞場，翻江倒海不須忙，丹鳳朝陽勢為強，雲遮天地日月交，武藝相爭見短長。三星對照，四稍會齊，五行俱發，六合彌結，勇往前進。縱橫高低，進退反側。縱則放其力，勇往而不返。橫則裹其，開合而莫擋。高則揚其身，而身若有增長之意。低則縮其身，而身若有躡捉之形。當進則進摧其身，當退則退領其氣。至於返身顧後，亦不覺其為後，後即前也。側顧左右亦不覺為左右矣。進頭進手須進身，身手齊到法為真。內要提，外要隨，打要遠，氣要摧，拳似砲，龍折身，發中要絕隨意用，解開其意妙如神。鷗子入林燕抄水。虎捉綿羊抖威風。取勝四稍均要齊，不勝必有懷疑心。聲東擊西，指南打北。上虛下實，靈機自揣摩。左拳出右拳至，單手出雙手來。拳由心窩去，發向鼻尖前。鼻為中央之土，萬物產生之源，衝開中央全體皆麼。兩手結合迎面出，自然把定五道關。身如弩弓拳如彈。弦響鳥落見奇鮮。遇敵猶如身著火，打破硬進無遮攔。何為打，何為顧。顧即是打，打即是顧。發手即是處。計謀精變化，動轉用精神。心毒為上策，手狠方勝人。何為閃，

何為進。進即是閃，閃即是進。不必遠求尚美觀，只在眼前一寸間。靜如處女，動若雷電。肩窩吐勁，氣貫掌心。意達指尖處，氣發自丹田。按實用力，吐氣開聲。遇敵來勢兩相交，風雲雷雨一齊到。

Everyone has a different personality. Some are clever. Some are wise. Some are determined and persevering. Some are calm and alert. Some are sneaky and sinister. Because our personalities are different, our actions will be different. This is also the case in martial arts techniques.

Attack with a noticeable posture, but land without one. Go forth appearing to fail, then strike with a victorious shout.

As there are countless transformations, they are impossible to fully describe.

You have to engage in devoted training for courage to come through, so that whatever the technique, the movements will be filled with spirit. But this result will happen in its own time. One moment you're not there yet, then suddenly you are.

Your body moves as fast as a horse. Your hands move as fast as the wind.

During ordinary practice, the zone for confronting an opponent is between three and seven feet away.

When sparring with someone, act as if there is no one there.

Your neck should be upright. Your waist should be erect. Your lower abdomen should be full. Your arms should brace. Your legs should carry. Then from head to foot, there will be a single energy coursing through.

With timidity or lack of will, you will not be able to win. If you cannot observe his behavior and read his expression, you will again not be able to win.

Always, if the opponent makes no action, I remain calm, but if he acts at all, I issue before he does. It is said: "The key to attacking and defending is to beat him to the punch."

In stillness, be like a scholar. In movement, be like a dragon or tiger.

Strike the opponent like thunder clapping. When thunder claps, there is no chance to cover your ears. However, the means to defeat an opponent lies between movement and stillness. True "movement / stillness" lies in the instant between having issued and not yet issuing.

Your hands should be dexterous. Your feet should be nimble. In advancing, retreating, and turning, move like a cat. Your body should be upright. Your eyes should be filled with spirit.

When your hands and feet act in unison, you are sure to win. If your hand arrives but your step does not arrive, your attack will be unimpressive. If when your hand arrives, your step also arrives, you will strike the opponent as easily as spreading aside grass.

When attacking above, go for the throat. When below, go for the groin. When to the side, go for the ribs. When to the middle, go for the solar plexus.

When punching, the range can be more than ten feet. When close in, it all happens within an inch.

When your hand goes out, it is like the booming of a huge cannon. When your foot comes down, it is like a tree planting roots.

Your eyes should be venomous. Your hands should be treacherous.

Step right through his center, letting your mass take away his space. You will thus seem too mystical for him to defend against.

When using a fist, it has to be like a piercing claw. When using a palm, it has to express energy.

Your upper body and lower are coordinated with each other. Your attacks are driven by your mind, with your eyes, hands, and feet going along with the movement.

The weight is forty percent on your front foot, sixty percent on your rear foot. Then once you are applying a technique, the ratio switches.

Stepping divides into "fixed" and "unfixed". When the front foot advances and the rear foot follows, they are "fixed" [i.e. front foot remaining forward, rear foot remaining in the rear]. When the front foot becomes the rear

foot or the rear foot becomes the front foot, whether it be because of the front foot becoming the rear foot by way of the rear foot stepping forward, or because of the rear foot becoming the front foot by way of the front foot stepping back, they are “unfixed” [i.e. front foot and rear foot switching roles].”

When going to the left or right, or turning around to face behind you, it is like a tiger searching a hillside. Take advantage of opportunity with bold fierceness, and the opponent will not be able to withstand you. Swipe aside his fists and go directly forward, and you will seize his center. Striking above or below, move like a tiger. Seem like a falcon descending on chickens in a coop.

Once you have “diverted the river and turned back the sea” [signifying a stupendous achievement, in this case going through the hard work of learning a martial art], there is no need for you to perform your techniques in a hurry. Once the “the phoenix has landed on the sunny slope” [signifying the arrival of talent, in this case a level of mastery], your skill has become powerful. When clouds cover the world, light from sun or moon makes no difference, but when martial artists clash, inferior and superior will become apparent.

With the three “stars” in alignment [nose, toes, fingertips], the four limbs acting in unison, the five elements issuing together, and the six unions strongly bound as one, boldly advance.

Move vertically and horizontally, high and low. Advance and retreat, and turn to the sides. When the situation is vertical, release power, advancing bravely instead of backing off and cowering. When the situation is horizontal, wrap with power, opening and closing without colliding. When the situation is high, raise your body up, giving your body an appearance of growing. When the situation is low, shrink your body away, giving your body a shape of crouching to capture something. When it is time to advance, advance to destroy his body. When it is time to retreat, retreat to guide his energy. When you turn around to face to the rear, do not think of it as the rear, for it is now in front of you. When you look to the left or right, do not think of them as left and right [but as forward and forward]. If your head and hand advance, your body must also advance. The correct method is for body and hand to act in unison.

Internally you should be alert. Outwardly you should follow along. Your attacks should reach through to a great distance. Your energy should destroy. Your punch is like a cannon firing. Your body bends like a dragon.

When issuing, be ruthless, and thereby do as you please. Melting away his plans, your actions will be like magic, as when you perform the techniques of HAWK GOES THROUGH THE FOREST or SWALLOW TAKES UP WATER. But when the TIGER CAPTURES THE SHEEP, it overwhelms the prey with a powerful presence.

To win, all four limbs have to work in unison. To lose, all it takes is doubt.

Shout to the east, but strike to the west. Point to the south, but attack to the north. Empty above, but fill below. Inspirations will arise from such contemplations.

Your left fist goes out, then your right fist arrives. One hand goes out, then both hands arrive.

Your fist goes out from your solar plexus and strikes in alignment with your nose. The nose is related to the center, the source of sustenance for all parts [seeing as air is the most basic fuel we take in].

When you thrust out from the center, your whole body bound together, your hands working in an integrated manner, then naturally your technique will be assured in every way.

Body like a crossbow, fist like a bullet. Like the sound of a plucked string or the precision landing of a bird, you will exhibit marvels. When you encounter an opponent, it is like his body is touching fire. If you smash through with a hard advance, you will not be blocked.

What are attacking and defending? Defending is an attack. Attacking is a defense. All it depends on is where you send your hand. Your schemes should be skillfully adaptive. Your movements should make use of spirit. A vicious mentality is the best strategy. Ruthless techniques are the ones that will defeat opponents.

What are evading and advancing? Advancing is an evasion. Evading is an advance. You do not have to look far for a pretty sight. A square-inch site right in front of you gives you all you need to work with.

In stillness, be like a shy maiden. In movement, be like thunder and lightning. Power shoots out from the hollow of your shoulder, energy courses through to your palms, and intention reaches to your fingertips. Energy issuing from your elixir field, push out powerfully and breathe out audibly. When you encounter your opponent's incoming power, release a storm of wind, cloud, thunder, rain – all arriving in unison.

## 龍法

### [10] DRAGON TECHNIQUES

龍法有六，曰滄海龍吟，雲龍五現，青龍探海，烏龍翻江，神龍遊空，神龍縮骨。其為物也，能伸能縮，能剛能柔，能昇能降，能隱能現。不動如山嶽，動之如風雲。無窮如天地，充實如太倉。浩氣如四海，玄曜如三光。度來勢之機會，揣敵人之短長。靜以待動，動中處靜。以進為退，以退為進。直出而側入，斜進而豎擊。柔去而驚抖，剛來而纏繞。縮骨而出，放勁而落。縮即發也，放亦即縮。甲欲透骨而入髓，發勁意在數尺間。

There are six dragon techniques: BLUE DRAGON CALLS FROM THE BLUE SEA, CLOUD DRAGON APPEARS FIVE TIMES, GREEN DRAGON SEARCHES THE SEA, BLACK DRAGON DIVERTS THE RIVER, SPIRIT DRAGON WANDERS THE SKY, SPIRIT DRAGON SHRINKS ITS BONES.

The things it can do: it can stretch or shrink, can be hard or soft, can ascend and descend, can disappear and appear. In stillness, it is like a mountain. When moving, it is like the wind. It is as limitless as the universe, as full as the “grand storehouse”. Its energy is as vast as the ocean. It shines as profoundly as the sun, moon, and stars.

Anticipate the opponent's opportunities to attack. Estimate his strengths and weaknesses. Await movement with stillness, and maintain stillness while moving. Use advance as retreat, retreat as advance.

If the opponent goes out directly, go in indirectly. If he advances diagonally, strike vertically. If he sends out with softness, suddenly shake. If he sends in with hardness, coil around.

Shrink your bones and then emerge. Release power and then land. Withdrawing is releasing. Releasing is also withdrawing.

Most of all, seek to penetrate his bones all the way to the marrow. When issuing, the intention is focused within the space of a few inches.

## 虎法

### [11] TIGER TECHNIQUES

虎法亦有六，曰猛虎出林，怒虎驚嘯，猛虎搜山，餓虎剖食，猛虎搖頭，猛虎跳澗。揣其性靈，強而精壯。橫衝豎撞，兩爪排山。猛進猛退，長撲短用。如剖食若搖頭，猶狸貓之捉鼠。頭頂爪抓，鼓盪週身。起手如鋼錐，用斬抗橫攔順。落手似勾杆，用劈撻搬撒撐。沉打分擰，伸縮抑揚。頭要撞人，手要打人，身要催人，步要過人，足要踏人，神要迫人，氣要襲人。借法容易上法難，還是上法最為先，較技者不可思悟，思悟者寸步難行。寧教一思進，莫教一思退。有意莫帶形，帶形必不贏。猶如生龍活虎，吟嘯叱咤，谷應山搖，其壯哉如龍虎之氣，臨敵毫不虛，安有不勝之理哉。總之，龍虎二法，操無定勢。勢猶虎奔三千，氣若龍飛萬里。勁斷意不斷，意斷神連。非口傳心授，莫能得也。聊寫其大意，未克詳述。

There are also six tiger techniques: FIERCE TIGER LEAVES THE FOREST, ANGRY TIGER GIVES A STARTLING ROAR, FIERCE TIGER SEARCHES THE MOUNTAIN, HUNGRY TIGER RIPS OPEN ITS PREY, FIERCE TIGER SHAKES ITS HEAD, FIERCE TIGER JUMPS OVER THE STREAM.

Adopt its nature and strive for its strength. Horizontally cross, vertically strike, climbing the mountain with



both claws. Fiercely advance and fiercely retreat. Do lunging pounces and then short-range techniques. As though tearing prey, seem to shake your head, like a cat catching a mouse. Press up your headtop and seize with your claws, rousing your whole body.

Lift your hand like a steel file, using slashing, crashing, crossing, lifting, sliding. Drop your hand like a hook on a pole, using chopping, dragging, parrying, scattering, bracing. Sink and strike, spread and twist, extend and withdraw, press down and hold up.

Your head should butt the opponent. Your hand should strike him. Your body should crowd him. Your step should pass him. Your foot should stomp him. Your mind should compel him. Your energy should surprise him. Other methods are easy, whereas the ones listed here are difficult, and yet these are the most primary.

Fighters must not be thinking, for thinkers cannot fight. Better to teach the thought of advance than the thought of retreat. Have intention rather than a concern for shape. If you are concerned with shape, you will surely not win. Be just like an angry dragon or a lively tiger, singing out shouts until the valley is echoing and the mountain is trembling. Your strength is like the energy of the dragon and tiger. As long as you do not underestimate the opponent, how could you fail?

To sum up, the two methods of dragon and tiger are exercised without choreographed techniques. The posture is like a tiger running a thousand miles. The energy is like a dragon flying three times as far. The power finishes without the intention finishing. And when the intention finishes, the spirit continues.

Without personal instruction, you will not be able to grasp these things. I have written here the general ideas, not comprehensive details.

## 意拳正軌

### [12] THE CORRECT PATH OF YIQUAN

意拳之正軌，不外古勢之老三拳與龍虎二氣。龍虎二氣為技，三拳為擊。三拳者踐攢裹也。踐拳外剛內柔有靜力〔又曰挺力〕，曰虛中，以含蓄待發之用。攢拳外柔內剛，如綿裹鐵，有彈力，曰實中，乃被動反擊之用。裹拳剛柔相濟，有驚力，曰化中，乃自動之用。任敵千變萬異，一驚而即敗之，所謂樞紐得其環中，以應無窮。

The correct path of Yiquan is nothing more than the “three classical techniques” and the two energies of dragon and tiger. While the energies of dragon and tiger are for skill building, the three techniques are for fighting. They are: stamping, drilling, and wrapping.

The stamping punch is externally hard and internally soft. It has a power of calmness (or of enduring). Within emptiness, it stores and waits to issue.

The drilling punch is externally soft and internally hard, like silk wrapped around iron. It has a springy power. Within fullness, it reverses the opponent’s own action and counterattacks him with it.

The wrapping punch is hardness and softness switching roles. It has a startling power. Within transformation, it uses natural movement.

Go along with the opponent’s endless changes, and then one shock will make him fail. As it is said [in *Zhuangzi*, chapter 3]: “Obtain the center of the circle and from there respond limitlessly”.

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[As a bonus to this brief book, included below is an article by Wang published in 國術

統一月刊 第五六期 *Martial Arts United Monthly* – issue #5/6, 1935, which also mentions the phrase “correct path”.]

## 拳之剛柔相濟論

DISCUSSING THE BOXING ARTS PRINCIPLE OF  
HARDNESS & SOFTNESS COMPLEMENTING EACH OTHER

王宇僧

by Wang Yuseng [Xiangzhai]

## 拳之剛柔相濟論

王宇僧

自當局提倡國術以還，於是習之者日衆，如雲擁霞蔚，相繼而起，甚盛事也。蓋國術之旨，略有二端，一健身，一衛身，厥功殊偉。此旨也，人且知之，又待余之一言而後信。

人之生於世也，孰不願其體健身泰，而甘終身輾轉於病痛間耶？孰不願其能自衛其身，而甘爲強暴者橫加鞭辱耶？此則習國術者，能如今茲之衆，決非妄加盲從，如瞽者觀獸，人曰此馬也，則應之曰馬，人曰此驢也，則應之曰驢者，其來蓋有自也。然而國術之途，何止萬千，人各一派，派各一說，入則主之力，出則侮之甚，互相詆侮，不可究詰，全憑意氣，而不細心研討於其間，於是弊實叢生，而遺害於無窮矣。

曩者余曾見有某拳師，挺其胸，凸其肚，肌肉既富且堅，可以舉重，

可以擣堅，於是人咸相指而言曰：『錢鏐銅鑄，不過如此耳。』誠入世之金剛，其壽必無量也。然而不半載，遽嘔血死，於是人又相顧而怪曰：『是何故？是何故？其天賦殊不知其外雖堅，而內傷已甚，是則習國術能健身，而反害身矣，習之又奚爲哉？』

又有某學者，動作時，毫不用力，如十七八女郎，作婀娜之舞，可以順氣，可以活血，是誠合於健身之道，然又不足以應敵擣堅，言國術能以衛身，殆又屬之子虛。

上之二端，由前之說，雖能壯其表面，而內實大有悖於生理，不僅不能健身已也，其失在於過剛，由後之說，雖能合於衛生之道，而又不能用以衛身，其失在於過柔。過剛與過柔，皆有所偏激，不合正軌，不能有成也，既或有成，亦不過斷簡零章，不成片段之學問耳。

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Ever since the government has been encouraging martial arts, the number of practitioners has daily increased, like clouds thronging the sky at sunset, appearing one after another, truly a magnificent thing. There are basically

two purposes to martial arts: strengthening the body and defending the self. These achievements are grand indeed. As these aims are well understood by all, I do not really need to explain in order for you to believe. When people are born into the world, who does not wish to be physically fit, and would instead be willing to spend one's life going through illness after illness? And who does not wish to be able to defend oneself, and would instead be willing to be brutalized by bully after bully?

This is why practitioners of martial arts can be so numerous nowadays. But they absolutely must not follow a system blindly. When a blind person looks at an animal, if he is told it is a horse that he is looking at, he responds that it is a horse, and if he is told it is a donkey that he is looking at, he responds that it is a donkey, simply assuming that it is true. However, the ways of doing martial arts are beyond counting. Each person joins a particular style, and each style has its particular interpretation. Going into a style, there is the strength of being part of something, but then emerging from it comes the extreme of insulting other styles. Practitioners slander each other for no reason other than getting carried away with emotion. If the contents of systems are not meticulously studied, such abuses will accumulate until there are harms without end.

I have previously seen certain boxing experts sticking out their chests or bulging their bellies. With bulky solid muscles, they can lift weights and smash hard objects. People consequently point at such a person and say: "He is quite simply iron coated in bronze. He has truly entered the realm of the arhats and will surely have great longevity." But then after not even half a year, he suddenly vomits blood and dies, whereupon they look around for where to lay the blame and say: "Why? Why? It must've been Fate!" Little do they realize that although externally hard, he was internally harmed. Therefore although martial arts can strengthen the body, they can also damage the body. So why practice them?

There are also certain boxer practitioners who put forth no effort at all while exercising. Like a maiden of seventeen or eighteen, they make graceful dancing movements that can smooth the energy and liven the blood. This indeed conforms to the way of strengthening the body, but it is insufficient for dealing with opponents or breaking bricks. To speak of martial arts being able to be used for self-defense would be almost meaningless in such a case.

Let us sum up both of these situations. In the case of the former, although it can build a robust appearance, internally it is actually greatly contrary to physiological principles, and so it cannot be used to properly strengthen the body. This is the mistake of being overly hard. In the case of the latter, although it is able to conform to the principles of health, it cannot be used for self-defense. This is the mistake of being overly soft. To be overly hard or overly soft are both extremes and is not the correct path. You will not be able to succeed in either case, and if you did succeed at all by such means, it would amount to but a simplified fragment, an incomplete piece of the learning.

In fact, the true teaching in martial arts is simply to strive to conform to principles. The complexity or simplicity of a posture is not important. The beauty or ugliness of a movement is not important. (Complex or simple, beautiful or ugly – these are not absolutes. Although a posture may appear complex, the action inside may actually be simple, and although a posture may appear simple, the action inside may actually be complex. What is within a posture is difficult to discuss because answers cannot be sought based on external appearances. What the world deems beautiful may in substance actually be ugly, and what the world deems ugly may in substance actually be beautiful. True beauty or ugliness is entirely a matter of appraising substance. Take for example the beauty of Xishi. Even dressed in poor clothing ["thorn hairpin and cloth skirt"], her beauty could not be affected. But when ugly Dongshi tried to imitate her beauty ["Dongshi trying to imitate the way Xishi knit her brows"], even covering herself in make-up only increased her ugliness.) You have to relax your body and free your energy. To "relax" actually means to give your body exercise. To "free" actually means to get your energy into the proper flow. By exercising your body and getting your energy to flow properly, you then have the basic foundation of martial

arts.

Proper exercise should be sought from relaxing the body and freeing the energy. It is then not contrary to physiological principles, and is instead beneficial for body and mind. By such means, you will thus be able to achieve the condition of proper exercise. When your body is relaxed, your energy is free. Then you must unify essence and spirit. With essence and spirit unified, you can quietly realize the inner work and can cultivate a fearless spirit. With a solid foundation coming from quiet realization, you will then respond to opponents properly. By cultivating a fearless spirit, you will then be able to be in a state of detachment from fretting in terror over a matter of life and death.

This powerful attitude has been described by Buddhists thus: “When I come upon the ‘mountain of sabers’, I will break the sabers. When I enter hell, I will extinguish the fire.” And then even if Mt. Tai collapses in front of you or the eastern sea drains away behind you, your mind will stay as dignified and calm as during any ordinary time. Equipped with this mentality, the art is now sufficient for strengthening the body and also defending the self, both aspects resulting in each other.

As for methods of dealing with opponents, consider of an opponent: What is the state of his spirit? What is the condition of his structure? How much target area is exposed? How strong is he? Empowered by being driven by intention and guided by spirit, you then have to always be analyzing in detail. When your analysis produces clarity, then you can be sure to perform with accuracy, whatever your technique or attack. In this way, you can then win with certainty.

At Wu Yihui’s request, I have here supplied my opinions, declared here with sincerity. But in my eagerness to fulfill my task, I have not expressed everything in my head. The way of martial arts is difficult to explain, and without a long treatise it is impossible to deliver even a tenth of a percent of its details. The most that can be described in an article is but the barest generalities.

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