

## FURTHER WRITINGS OF SUN LUTANG

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### ESSAYS BY SUN LUTANG

[translation by Paul Brennan, May, 2015]

In addition to Sun's five famous books...

[形意拳學](#) *A Study of Xingyi Boxing* (1915)

[八卦拳學](#) *A Study of Bagua Boxing* (1917)

[太極拳學](#) *A Study of Taiji Boxing* (1921)

[拳意述真](#) *Authentic Explanations of Martial Arts Concepts* (1924)

[八卦劍學](#) *A Study of Bagua Sword* (1927)

he also produced several important essays:

論拳術內家外家之別

“Discussing Distinctions Between the Internal & External Schools of Martial Arts” (1929)

拳術述聞

“Some Things I Have Been Told About Martial Arts” (1929)

國術源流之管見

“My Opinions on the Origins of Chinese Martial Arts” (1930)

詳論形意八卦太極之原理

“A Detailed Look at the Theories of Xingyi, Bagua, and Taiji” (1932)



教務長孫福全

Dean of Studies, Sun Fuquan

[photo from 江蘇省國術館年刊 *Jiangsu Martial Arts Institute Annual*, July 31, 1929]



強國之基

*The basis of strengthening the nation*

孫福全

– [calligraphy by] Sun Fuquan

[included in 鄞縣縣國術館一週紀念刊 *Yin County* (in Ningbo, Zhejiang) *Martial Arts Institute 1st Year Commemorative Publication*, New Year's Day, 1931]

論拳術內家外家之別

## DISCUSSING DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE INTERNAL & EXTERNAL SCHOOLS OF MARTIAL ARTS

孫祿堂

by Sun Lutang

[1929]

今之談拳術者，每云有內家外家之分。或稱少林為外家，武當為內家，在道為內家；或以在釋為外家，其實皆皮相之見也。名則有少林、武當之分，實則無內家外家之別。少林，寺也；武當，山也；拳以地名，並無軒輊。至竟言少林而不言武當者亦自有故。按少林寺之拳，門類甚多，名目亦廣，輾轉相傳，耳熟能詳。武當派則不然，練者既少，社會上且有不知武當屬於何省者，非余之過言也。浙之張松溪非武當之嫡傳乎？至今浙人士承張之緒者，何以未之前聞也？近十年來，人始稍稍知武當之可貴矣。少林、武當之一隱一現者其故在此。安得遽分內外耶！

或謂拳術既無內外之分，何以形勢有剛柔之判？不知一則自柔練而致剛，一則自剛練而致柔，剛柔雖分，成功則一。夫武術以和為用，和之中知勇備焉。

余練拳術亦數十年矣。初亦蒙世俗之見，每日積氣於丹田，小腹堅硬如石，鼓動腹內之氣，能仆人於尋丈外，行止坐臥，無時不然。自謂積氣下沉，庶幾得拳中之內勁矣。彼不能沉氣於丹田小腹者，皆外家也。一日，山西宋世榮前輩，以函來約，余因袱被往晉。

寒暄之後，因問內外之判，宋先生曰：「呼吸有內外之分，拳術無內外之別。善養氣者即內家，不善養氣者即外家。故善養浩然之氣一語，實道破內家之奧義。拳術之功用，以動而求靜，坐功之作用，由靜而求動。其實動中靜，靜中動，本係一體，不可歧而二之。由是言之，所謂靜極而動，動極而靜，動靜即係相生，若以為有內外之分，豈不失之毫厘，差以千里。我所云呼吸有內外者，先求其通而已。通與不通，於何分之？彼未知練拳與初練拳者，其呼吸往往至中部而止，仍行返回，氣浮於上，是謂之呼吸不通。極其蔽則血氣用事，好勇鬥狠，實火氣太剛過燥之故也。若呼吸練至下行，直達丹田，久而久之，心腎相交，水火既濟，火氣不致炎上，呼吸可以自然，不致中部而返。如此方謂之內外相通，上下相通，氣自和順，故呼吸能達下部。氣本一也，誤以為兩個，其弊亦與不通等。子輿氏曰：『求其放心，放心收而後道心生。』亦即道家收視返聽之理。」

余曰：「然則鄙人可謂得拳中之內勁乎？蓋氣已下沉，小腹亦堅硬如石矣。」

宗先生曰：「否！否！汝雖氣通小腹，若不化堅，終必為累，非上乘也。」余又問何以化之？

先生曰：「有若無，實若虛。腹之堅，非真道也。孟子言：『由仁義行，非仁義行也』。《中庸》極論『中和』之功用。須知古人所言，皆有體用。拳術中亦重中和，亦重仁義。若不明此理，即練至捷如飛鳥，力舉千鈞，不過匹夫之勇，總不離外家。若練至中和，善講仁義，動則以禮，見義必為，其人雖無百斤之力，即可謂之內家。迨養氣功深，貫內外，評有無，至大至剛，直養無害，無處不有，無時不然，卷之放之，用廣體微。昔人云『物物一太極，物物一陰陽。』吾人本具天地中和之氣，非一太極乎。《易經》云：『近取諸身，遠取諸物。』心在內而理周乎物，物在外而理具於心，內外一理而已矣。」

余敬聆之下，始知拳道即天道，天道即人道。又知拳之形勢名稱雖異，而理則一。向之以為有內外之分者，實所見之不透，認理之未明也。

由是推之，言語要和平，動作要自然。吾人立身涉世，處處皆是誠中形外，拳術何獨不然。試觀古來名將，如關壯繆、岳忠武等，皆以識春秋大義，說禮樂而敦詩書，故千秋後使人生敬仰崇拜之心。若田開強，古冶子輩，不過得一勇士之名而已。蓋一則內外一致，表裡精粗無不到，一則客氣乘之，自喪其所守，良可慨也。

宋先生又云：「拳術可以變化人之氣質。」余自審尚未能見身體力行，有負前輩之教訓。今值江蘇省國術館有十八年度年刊之發行，余服務館中，亦即兩載，才識淺陋，尸位貽譏，故以聞之前人者略一言之，以志吾愧。

Those who discuss martial arts nowadays always divide them into internal and external. Some say that Shaolin styles are external and Wudang styles are internal, or that Daoist styles are internal and Buddhist styles are external. Actually all of these judgments are superficial. When styles are categorized as either Shaolin or Wudang, there is really no distinction being made between internal or external. Shaolin is a temple. Wudang is a mountain. When boxing arts are named after places, there is no indication at all of whether they are good or bad. When all is said and done, to label something Shaolin instead of Wudang is just as good as otherwise.

Regarding the Shaolin Temple boxing arts, there are a great many styles and the names of their contents are extensive, having been handed down through many generations and repeated over and over again in detail. This is not the case for the Wudang arts, which have been practiced by so few that the highest members of its society do not even know for sure which province the Wudang arts started in, and no, I am not exaggerating the matter. Was not Zhang Songxi of Zhejiang a disciple of the Wudang arts? Then why is it to this day that the people of Zhejiang have never heard of him? It is only in recent decades that people have begun to somewhat understand the value of the Wudang arts. The reason for this situation with Shaolin and Wudang is that one school is on display while the other is obscure. How then can they so easily be put into classifications of internal and external?

Some say that if boxing arts are not divided into internal and external, their techniques could not be discerned as being hard or soft. It is not understood that one [internal] trains to go from softness to hardness and the other [external] trains to go from hardness to softness, and that although hardness and softness are distinct, the achievement in either direction is the same. When martial arts make use of harmony in order to function, it is from a condition of harmoniousness that fighting prowess is developed.

I have practiced boxing arts for several decades. In the beginning, I too accepted common views. Every day I accumulated energy into my elixir field until my lower abdomen became as hard as a rock. When I roused the energy in my abdomen, I could throw an opponent some eight or ten feet away. Whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, at any time it was thus. I thought that by accumulating energy through sinking it down, I would likely attain the art's internal power, and that those who were unable to sink energy to their lower abdomens were all of the external school.

One day, I sent Song Shirong of Shanxi a letter requesting a visit to him since I would be visiting Shanxi. After exchanging conventional greetings, I asked about the distinction between internal and external.

Song said: “Breathing is divided into internal and external, but in boxing arts there's no distinction between internal and external. If you are good at nurturing energy, then it's internal. If you're not good at nurturing energy, then it's external. Consider the phrase [*Mengzi*, chapter 2a] “good at nurturing one's noble energy”. Surely it reveals the deeper meaning of the internal school. When practicing boxing arts, seek stillness through movement. In meditation arts, seek movement through stillness. Truly there is stillness within movement and movement within stillness, because basically they represent a single essence that cannot be branched off into two. Building on this point, when stillness is at its peak, there is movement, and when movement is at its peak, there is stillness, because movement and stillness are so connected that they generate each other. If movement and stillness were used to make distinction between internal and external, how would this not be a case of miscalculating by an inch and being off by a thousand miles?

“My opinion is that there are internal and external types of breathing. First seek for the breath to be fully getting through. The distinction is whether or not the breath is getting through. Those who have never practiced boxing arts or are just beginning to, their breathing usually goes no lower than mid-torso before it goes back up, and so their energy ends up floating upward. This is called ‘hindered breathing’. When the breath is suppressed to an extreme degree, the temperament is affected, and that person develops a combative personality. Such a level of internal fire burns them up until they are scorched.

“If the breath is trained to move downward and go directly to the elixir field, then in the course of time, the heart [the peak active organ] and kidneys [the peak passive organ] will be cooperating. Water and fire will be in a state of mutual benefit [as in hexagram 63 (made of water ☵ on top of fire ☲)], keeping internal fire from burning upward. Breathing can thus be natural and not get turned around mid-torso. In this way, the body can be said to be connected inside and out, upper body and lower, energy will flow smoothly, and the breath can get through to the lower torso. But there’s basically only one kind of energy and it’s a mistake to think there are two. The problem is when it is kept from getting through. Ziyu said: ‘Seek for your lost mind. Once you have found it, your Daoist mind is born.’ [This seems to be a paraphrasing from *Mengzi*, chapter 6a: ‘The study of the Way is nothing more than the quest for your lost mind.’] This describes the Daoist principle of watching and listening inwardly.”

I said: “All that being the case, can I say I’ve obtained the internal power of boxing arts? My energy has sunk down and my lower abdomen is hard as a rock.”

Song said: “Oh, no no no. Even though energy might be getting through to your lower abdomen, if it doesn’t transform that hardness, it’ll eventually just make you feel overworked, and that isn’t the highest level.”

I then asked: “So how does such a transformation happen?”

Song said: “By way of something seeming like nothing, of fullness seeming like emptiness. If there is hardness in the abdomen, it is not the authentic method. Mengzi said [*Mengzi*, chapter 4b]: ‘As his [Emperor Shun’s] actions already came from compassion and justice, he did not need to act in a way that would make him become compassionate or just.’ This is the ‘centered harmoniousness’ discussed in the *Zhong Yong*. It must be understood that what the ancients talked about had both theory and practical application. Within boxing arts, both centered harmoniousness is valued as well as compassionate justice.

“If this is not clear, then even if you practice until you are as agile as a fluttering bird or strong enough to lift a ton, you will be no more than a brash oaf and always be one of the external school. If instead you train to the point of centered harmoniousness, you will then speak knowledgeably about compassion and justice, conducting yourself appropriately and imitating what is right, and then even if you are a mass of muscle, you can be considered one of the internal school. Once you are nurturing energy at a deep level of practice, it will connect inside and outside together, and you will be able to fully determine whether you have it or not. Your energy will be [*Mengzi*, 2a:] ‘vast and strong’, and you will be ‘nurturing energy with integrity so it will not be corrupted’. There will be no place where it is not there and no moment when it is not thus. In hiding it away or expressing it, its use will be broad even though its presence may be slight.

“It was said by a previous generation: ‘Every single thing is a grand polarity. Every single thing is a single passivity-activity.’ We inherently possess the centered harmonious energy of the universe, for are we not each a grand polarity unto ourselves? It says in the *Book of Changes* [Great Treatise, part 2]: ‘For what is near, he [Fu Xi] examined within himself. For what is distant, he observed all things.’ [It says in the Xingyi Boxing Classics:] ‘The mind is internal, yet its reasoning extends to all things. Things are external, yet their principles are all there in the mind.’ Internal and external follow the same principle.”

After I had respectfully heard him out, I then realized that the way of boxing arts is the way of Nature, and



that the way of Nature is the Way of mankind. I also understood that although boxing techniques and names may be different, they share a common theory. As for the distinction between internal and external, I indeed saw that it is not very penetrating and recognized the principle of dividing into such categories to be unenlightened. This encouraged me to be aware that speech should be mild and action should be natural. While we establish ourselves and make our way in the world, we have an inner sincerity and an outward behavior. Why would boxing arts be any exception to this?

When we look into famous ancient generals, such as Guan Yu or Yu Qian, they all understood the classical concept of righteousness. They are evoked in rituals and music, celebrated in poems and prose, causing people centuries later to still revere and make offerings to them. But what of men like Tian Kaiqiang or Ye Zibei, who only achieved the repute of being brave warriors? In the case of those famous men, internality and externality are in agreement [those men being both righteous and celebrated], everything fulfilled whether it is what was in them or what is displayed to us, whether we view them generally or in detail. But in the case of those other men, they are merely politely remembered, mourned for doing their duty, granted sighs.

Song had also said: “Boxing arts can transform a person’s temperament.” Examining myself, I cannot see any evidence that I am living up to this, but I am constantly haunted by the lessons I have been taught by previous generations. With this year’s publication of the Jiangsu Martial Arts Institute’s [first] annual, the organization commemorates its eighteenth year. I have served the institute for the last two years, despite my meager knowledge and abilities, having been given a sinecure which I do not deserve. Therefore I have here presented some brief remarks I have been told by one of a previous generation as a record of my unworthiness.

[This piece was clearly intended to appear in the 1929 *Jiangsu Martial Arts Institute Annual*, though it was not actually included in that publication. It has instead survived due to repeated inclusion in later books, thanks mainly to Sun’s daughter. Below is the piece by Sun that did appear in the *Annual*.]

拳術述聞

**SOME THINGS I HAVE BEEN TOLD ABOUT MARTIAL ARTS**

孫祿堂

**by Sun Lutang**

**[published in 江蘇省國術館年刊 *Jiangsu Martial Arts Institute Annual*, July 31, 1929]**

## 拳術述聞

孫祿堂

余幼時。卽好拳術。初不存有門派之見。故於各種拳術。均涉足而研究之。然拳術之爲道也至大。體萬物而不遺。余旣無身體力行之實功。亦未明此中之精義。僅略窺其大概而已。

曩居北平。有高道夫君者。漢中人。工書法。於大小篆及漢魏源流殆無所不通。從余習拳年餘。伊云。吾茲習此。爲日不久。而心領神會。乃知拳術之與書法及身體。故有莫大之關係者。運用雖不同。其理則一也。余詰之。伊云。拳術有五綱之起點。書法有五鋒之起筆。余復詢二五之理。曰。拳術之五綱。爲劈、崩、攢、炮、槓。卽五行中金、木、水、火、土也。至十二形之奧妙。亦不外五拳中和之起點。進退、起落、變化、之要道。古人云。五行合一。致其中和。天地之事。無不可推矣。書法則有五鋒。爲中、逆、齊、側、搭。卽臨碑帖之五筆法也。碑中張遷鄭文公大小篆等。都不外乎五鋒。雖有中、逆、齊、側、搭、之分。及用筆之不同。然皆中鋒。故拳術五拳之中和。書法五鋒之中鋒。二者運用雖有不同。然其精奧其原理固二而一者也。吾習此雖年餘。而觀今日之書法。及乎一己之精神。與去歲已迥然不同。故知拳術實與書法身體。俱有密

切之關係也。嗣高君因事返漢中。數年闊別。直至去秋。余在新都供職本館。高君聞訊來訪。斯時高君則已由王鐵珊先生之介紹。充馮煥章司令之書法教授矣。

又余在北平時。直隸督辦李芳宸先生。在天津創武士會。專人相約。余素昧生平。雅不欲往。繼悉先生精劍術。朝夕鍛鍊。數十年如一日。深得斯道奧妙。因應約來津。與先生長談數日。乃知先生之於劍術。已得其中三昧。其動作道理。無所不善。蓋出自武當太極劍之嫡傳也。據先生云。爲陳士鈞（按爲安徽人自幼好道學問淵博隱居於峨嵋山）前輩所授。朝夕不輟。數年始知劍術之道理甚廣。包羅無窮。與各派之理皆相連貫。又云。余自隸軍籍。用兵之法則。天時地利人和之道。察人動作奸詐虛實之情。山川向背形勢利害之式。進退開合之理。以進爲退。以退爲進。若隱若現之機。至於武侯八陣之大義。殆無不師倣劍術之理焉。

民十七。中央設國術館。先生受聘爲副館長。七月。滬上法公園舉行游藝會。先生亦參加表演。四日中。觀先生舞劍時。其精神動作。剛柔開合。伸縮婉轉。曲盡劍術奧妙之能事。於是知先生向日之作爲。經過之情形。實於劍術神而明之。令吾人嘆觀止矣。

今年夏。小住焦山。統志局莊思緘先生來訪。談及劍術。先生詢李芳宸先生之劍。與余之劍是否同派。余曰。芳宸先生所練爲太極劍。而余則八卦劍也。但二者門派雖不同。其所用之法。則十同五六。如八卦之名稱。老陰老陽。少陰少陽是也。又問。二者之巧妙孰善。余曰。芳宸先生。



孜孜於劍者。念餘年。已至爐火純青之候。余非專門。得其形勢與大概之道而已。安能同日語哉。先生復倩余舞。余以荒疎日久。身步兩法。皆遲滯不靈。謝却之。先生教促再四。並認略舞數式。觀其意義而已。余遂按八卦之名稱。錯綜變互之形勢。爲舞數十節。又詢拳劍之理。余曰。拳劍之理。大別有三。其一。上下相連。手足相顧。內外如一。其二。不卽不離。不丟不頂。勿忘勿助。其三。拳無拳。意無意。無意之中。是真意也。先生曰。內外如一。是誠中也。合乎儒家。不丟不頂。勿忘勿助。是虛中也。合乎道家。無拳無意。是空中也。合乎釋家。斯三者。修身之大法則。亦人生之不可或缺者也。又觀乎舞劍之形勢。行如游龍。屈曲婉轉。變化之意義。與草書用筆之法度、神氣、結構、轉折、形式。實相同。始信昔人觀公孫大娘舞劍。而曰。得書法之道。爲不虛也。是則古人之善草書者。迨皆明劍術之理。蓋不如是。焉能得草書中之實質與其精神乎。

余初聞前輩云。拳術之道。體萬物而不遺。頗疑惑不解。茲聆高李莊三先生之言。始茅塞頓開。一掃胸中疑團。因筆而書之。以告我同志。

余幼時。卽好拳術。初不存有門派之見。故於各種拳術。均涉足而研究之。然拳術之為道也至大。體萬物而不遺。余既無身體力行之實功。亦未明此中之精義。僅略窺其大概而已。

When I was young, I adored boxing arts. Initially I had no bias toward any style, and so I tried out and studied various systems equally. It turns out that the way of boxing arts is all-encompassing, embodying everything with nothing left out. But I did not yet have the skill to back this statement up, for I did not yet understand the essentials of these arts, having merely a narrow view of some general ideas.

曩居北平。有高道夫君者。漢中人。工書法。於大小篆及漢魏源流殆無所不通。從余習拳年餘。伊云。吾茲習此。為日不久。而心領神會。乃知拳術之與書法及身體。故有莫大之關係者。運用雖不同。其理則一也。余詰之。伊云。拳術有五綱之起點。書法有五鋒之起筆。余復詢二五之理。曰。拳術之五綱。為劈、崩、釙、炮、槓。卽五行中金、木、水、火、土也。至十二形之奧妙。亦不外五拳中和之起點。進退、起落、變化、之要道。古人云。五行合一。致其中和。天地之事。無不可推矣。書法則有五鋒。為中、逆、齊、側、搭。卽臨碑帖之五筆法也。碑中張遷鄭文公大小篆等。都不外乎五鋒。雖有中、逆、齊、側、搭、之分。及用筆之不同。然皆中鋒。故拳術五拳之中和。書法五鋒之中鋒。二者運用雖有不同。然其精奧其原理固二而一者也。吾習此雖年餘。而觀今日之書法。及乎一己之精神。與去歲已迥然不同。故知拳術實與書法身體。具有密切之關係也。嗣高君因事返漢中。數年闊別。直至去秋。余在新都供職本館。高君聞訊來訪。斯時高君則已由王鐵珊先生之介紹。充馮煥章司令之書法教授矣。

When I used to live in Beijing, there was a Gao Daofu of Hanzhong [in Shaanxi] who was a master calligrapher,

an expert in the greater and lesser seal scripts of the Han and Wei Dynasties. He learned boxing arts from me for over a year. He told me: “Since I’ve been practicing this, though it has not been for very long, I have come to understand that boxing arts and calligraphy are in essence greatly related. Although their functions are different, their principles are the same.” I asked him to elaborate. He said: “This boxing art [Xingyi] has five core techniques and calligraphy has five kinds of strokes.”

After prompting him further on the theory of the dual aspects and five elements, he said: “This boxing art’s five core techniques – chopping, crashing, drilling, blasting, crossing – correspond to the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. As for the subtleties of the twelve animals, they never depart from the centered harmoniousness of the five techniques’ basic essentials of advancing and retreating, lifting and dropping, and transforming from one to another. As an ancient master said: ‘When the five elements are united, the result is centered harmoniousness. And thereby the workings of Nature can all be heightened.’

“In calligraphy, there are five kinds of strokes: centered, contrary, uniform, slanted, and lifted, which can be seen even in old stone inscriptions. The greater and lesser seal scripts of Zheng Wengong upon stone tablets never departed from these five strokes. Despite the distinction of the five kinds of strokes, the different ways of using a writing brush really all come down to the centered stroke. Therefore although the centered harmoniousness of the five boxing techniques and the centered stroke in calligraphy are two different actions, nevertheless the essential principle of both is really the same. Although I have practiced this art for over a year, I have observed that both my present method of calligraphy and my personal spirit are completely different than they were a year ago. Thus I know that the reality of boxing arts and the essence of calligraphy are intimately related.”

Because Gao soonafter went back to Hanzhong, I did not see him for several years. Then last autumn, I held a teaching position in Xindu [in Chengdu, Sichuan – about three hundred miles from Hanzhong]. Gao heard I was in the neighborhood and came to visit me. He had at that time, by way of a recommendation from Wang Tieshan, become calligraphy instructor to General Feng Huanzhang.

又余在北平時。直隸督辦李芳宸先生。在天津創武士會。專人相約。余素昧生平。雅不欲往。繼悉先生精劍術。朝夕鍛鍊。數十年如一日。深得斯道奧妙。因應約來津。與先生長談數日。乃知先生之於劍術。已得其中三昧。其動作道理。無所不善。蓋出自武當太極劍之嫡傳也。據先生云。為陳士鈞（按為安徽人自幼好道學問淵博隱居於峨嵋山）前輩所授。朝夕不輟。數年始知劍術之道理甚廣。包羅無窮。與各派之理皆相連貫。又云。余自隸軍籍。用兵之法則。天時地利人和之道。察人動作奸詐虛實之情。山川向背形勢利害之式。進退開合之理。以進為退。以退為進。若隱若現之機。至於武侯八陣之大義。殆無不師倣劍術之理焉。

民十七。中央設國術館。先生受聘為副館長。七月。滬上法公園舉行游藝會。先生亦參加表演。四日中。觀先生舞劍時。其精神動作。剛柔開合。伸縮婉轉。曲盡劍術奧妙之能事。於是知先生向日之作為。經過之情形。實於劍術神而明之。令吾人嘆觀止矣。

Also while I lived in Beijing, the military supervisor Li Jinglin of Hebei went to Tianjin to found the Warriors’ Society. I decided to make an appointment to see him, for I had not yet met him. He is refined and modest. I got to know the exquisiteness of his sword art, how he trained so continuously through several decades that it seemed as though it was but a single day, and he has deeply obtained the art’s subtleties. Because I had deliberately come to Tianjin, he and I conversed at length over several days, and I subsequently knew that he had achieved the highest level in the art. His movements and theory are in all ways superb, and are descended from Wudang’s Taiji Sword.

According to Li: “I was taught by Chen Shijun. (Chen was from Anhui. He adored Daoism ever since his youth and deeply studied it, living as a hermit at Mt. Emei.) I trained daily without interruption. After several years, I

then had a very broad understanding of the sword art theory. It touches upon everything, thereby connecting it to all other systems.”

He also told me: “While I was in the Hebei army, I made use of military strategies, such as the ways of reading the weather, taking advantage of the terrain, and employing the services of local people. I scrutinized my enemy’s movements and deployed my forces with treachery and deception. I made use of the landscape to position my troops so as to cause the most damage. There were the principles of advancing and retreating, opening and closing, using advance as retreat, retreat as advance, and the stratagem of disappearing and reappearing. And then there were the main ideas of Zhuge Liang’s ‘eight battle formations’. Almost all of this had an effect on my sword art theory.”

In 1928, Li accepted the post of vice-director of the Central Martial Arts Institute. In July, he held a celebration in a public park in Shanghai, in which he participated in the performances. During the fourth day of it, while we watched him perform with the sword, his spirit and movement, hardness and softness, opening and closing, expanding and contracting, twisting and turning, displayed a skillfulness in the sword art that encompasses all of its subtleties. We then realized the glorious achievement that had been built upon his experience. Truly he has a magical understanding of the sword art which caused us to proclaim him as supreme.

今年夏。小住焦山。統志局莊思緘先生來訪。談及劍術。先生詢李芳宸先生之劍。與余之劍是否同派。余曰。芳宸先生所練為太極劍。而余則八卦劍也。但二者門派雖不同。其所用之法。則十同五六。如八卦之名稱。老陰老陽。少陰少陽是也。又問。二者之巧妙孰善。余曰。芳宸先生。孜孜於劍者。念餘年。已至爐火純青之候。余非專門。得其形勢與大概之道而已。安能同日語哉。先生復倩余舞。余以荒疏日久。身步兩法。皆遲滯不靈。謝却之。先生敦促再四。並認略舞數式。觀其意義而已。余遂按八卦之名稱。錯綜變互之形勢。為舞數十節。又詢拳劍之理。余曰。拳劍之理。大別有三。其一。上下相連。手足相顧。內外如一。其二。不即不離。不丟不頂。勿忘勿助。其三。拳無拳。意無意。無意之中。是真意也。先生曰。內外如一。是誠中也。合乎儒家。不丟不頂。勿忘勿助。是虛中也。合乎道家。無拳無意。是空中也。合乎釋家。斯三者。修身之大法則。亦人生之不可或缺者也。又觀乎舞劍之形勢。行如游龍。屈曲婉轉。變化之意義。與草書用筆之法度、神氣、結構、轉折、形式。實相同。始信昔人觀公孫大娘舞劍。而曰。得書法之道。為不虛也。是則古人之善草書者。迨皆明劍術之理。蓋不如是。焉能得草書中之實質與其精神乎。

This summer, I stayed briefly in Jiaoshan [in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu]. Records Bureau compiler Zhuang Sijian came to visit me while I was there and we discussed the sword art. He asked whether Li Fangchen’s sword art and mine were the same.

I said: “What Li practices is Taiji Sword and what I practice is Bagua Sword. Although the two styles are different, their methods of application are fifty or sixty percent the same, and they share the same names of the different grip positions: three-quarter passive grip, three-quarter active grip, one-quarter passive grip, one-quarter active grip, etc.”

He then asked: “Between the two of you, whose skill is better?”

I said: “Li’s. He is a diligent swordsman. After working at it for many years, he has achieved a high degree of skill. As I have not specialized in the art, I have obtained only the postures and the general idea. So how can his ability and mine be spoken of on the same day? [equivalent of ‘mentioned in the same breath’]”

He then asked me to demonstrate my swordwork. As I had gotten rusty over time, and the movements of my body and feet were sluggish and awkward, I politely declined. He urged me a further four times, so I gave up and performed a few postures to show just the basic idea. I then went through the names of the techniques and the way the postures intricately change from one to another, demonstrating the whole ten-section set [i.e. including the NONPOLARITY POSTURE and GRAND POLARITY POSTURE as well as the eight trigrams

techniques]. Then he also inquired about the principles of boxing and sword arts.

I said: “The principles of boxing arts and sword arts roughly amount to three:

“1. Above and below coordinate with each other. Hands and feet look after each other. Inside and outside are as one.

“2. Neither reaching nor separating, neither coming away nor crashing in, neither under-involved nor over-involved.

“3. The boxing is without boxing. The intention is without intention. Within no intention is true intention.”

He told me: “Inside and outside are as one – this is the ‘sincerity’ of the Confucianists. Neither coming away nor crashing in, neither under-involved nor over-involved – this is the ‘undifferentiation’ of the Daoists. Being without boxing and without intention – this is the ‘non-identity’ of the Buddhists. These three things are the fundamental rules of cultivating one’s character and are indispensable in life. Observing the sword postures in action, the movements are like a swimming dragon, bending and twisting, the intention being that of transformation.

“This is actually the same as in the rules, spirit, structure, transitioning, and manner of calligraphy. Thus we can believe what was said about the ancient man watching Lady Gongsun’s sword dancing, that he obtained from it a calligraphy method that was very soulful. [This refers to the preface to Du Fu’s poem “Watching Lady Gongsun’s Student Performing a Sword Dance”, in which he describes the effect of Lady Gongsun’s performance upon the master calligrapher Zhang Xu.] His expertise at cursive script was entirely down to understanding the theory of the sword art. If this had not been the case, he could not have achieved such substance and spirit in his cursive script.”

余初聞前輩云。拳術之道。體萬物而不遺。頗疑惑不解。茲聆高李莊三先生之言。始茅塞頓開。一掃胸中疑團。因筆而書之。以告我同志。

When I first heard one of my teachers say “the way of boxing arts embodies everything and leaves nothing out,” I did not really believe it. Upon hearing these words from Gao, Li, and Zhuang, I then saw the light [“The long grass suddenly parted in front of me.” (quoting from *Journey to the West*, chapter 64)] and the maze of doubts was cleared from my mind. I have therefore written them down to inform my comrades.

國術源流之管見

**MY OPINIONS ON THE ORIGINS OF CHINESE MARTIAL ARTS**

孫祿堂

**by Sun Lutang**

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## 國術源流之管見

孫祿堂

古者國有術非輓近國術之意義也然則國術何自昉乎穴居之世禽獸逼處於是製竹木之器械以禦之迨黃帝戰蚩尤兵刃始興三代而還史稱走及奔馬手接飛鳥及托梁舉鼎率能以力自雄然天賦之歟抑人為之歟不可得而知也有周肇興兼重武舞詩曰有力如虎是也厥後猿公教刺為劍術之權輿而干將莫邪湛盧巨闕之名相望於冊然不過劍之名稱耳炎漢游俠踵起而劍道手搏角觝並載諸史惜未詳其法東漢末之五禽經今頗有承其緒者是誠國術之萌芽也相傳少林寺初有潭腿擅奉諸法梁武帝時達摩東來慮其徒衆未諳動靜相養之道於是著易筋洗髓兩經內外交修為強健身體之初步否則禪寂枯坐易滋流弊繼之者分剛柔兩派而少林內家之拳自茲始矣岳武穆得經髓兩經復闡發易骨之功用命名曰形意然則形意拳者實達摩倡之而武穆成之者也太極則濫觴於唐之李道子許宣平張三峯從而擴充之參以點穴諸法張松溪單征南等傳其衣鉢若梅花八式則始於志公長老世所稱峨眉派者八卦掌當咸同時文安董海川先生得自南省傳之北方聞其源流甚遠至炮錘心意羅漢無極五極八極彌祖太祖劈卦通臂阮俞孔諸家各樹一幟或論理或論氣或論力皆有精能獨到之處以意度之今時之國術大半胚胎於達摩三峯兩派其所以有種種派別者後之人從而變化之耳管窺之見大雅所譏尚祈海內明達之士有以教之

古者國有術非輓近國術之意義也然則國術何自昉乎穴居之世禽獸逼處於是製竹木之器械以禦之迨黃帝戰蚩尤兵刃始興三代而還史稱走及奔馬手接飛鳥及托梁舉鼎率能以力自雄然天賦之歟抑人為之歟不可得而知也有周肇興兼重武舞詩曰有力如虎是也厥後猿公教刺為劍術之權輿而干將莫邪湛盧巨闕之名相望於冊然不過劍之名稱耳炎漢游俠踵起而劍道手搏角觝並載諸史惜未詳其法東漢末之五禽經今頗有承其緒者是誠國術之萌芽也相傳少林寺初有潭腿擅奉諸法梁武帝時達摩東來慮其徒衆未諳動靜相養之道於是著易筋洗髓兩經內外交修為強健身體之初步否則禪寂枯坐易滋流弊繼之者分剛柔兩派而少林內家之拳自茲始矣岳武穆得經髓兩經復闡發易骨之功用命名曰形意然則形意拳者實達摩倡之而武穆成之者也太極則濫觴於唐之李道子許宣平張三峯從而擴充之參以點穴諸法張松溪單征南等傳其衣鉢若梅花八式則始於志公長老世所稱峨眉派者八卦掌當咸同時文安董海川先生得自南省傳之北方聞其源流甚遠至炮錘心意羅漢無極五極八極彌祖太祖劈卦通臂阮俞孔諸家各樹一幟或論理或論氣或論力皆有精能獨到之處以意度之今時之國術大半胚胎於達摩三峯兩派其所以有種種派別者後之人從而變化之耳管窺之見大雅所譏尚祈海內明達之士有以教之

In ancient times, our ancestors had skills that did not at all resemble what we think of as martial arts. That being so, how then did our martial arts arise out of a world of cavemen? Compelled by the wildlife, they made bamboo and wooden weapons to defend themselves.

When finally the Yellow Emperor had an armed conflict against Chiyou, this began the era of the Three Dynasties [Xia, Shang, Zhou] [i.e. the switch from prehistory to history]. History describes running among horses, as well as grabbing birds out of the air or lifting heavy objects such as roof beams and caldrons, which were typical ways of using strength to make oneself more imposing. However, whether these were expressions



of inherent or trained abilities cannot be determined with certainty.

In the beginning of the Zhou Dynasty, there was equal regard for martial skill and dance. [This would seem natural since the words for “martial” and “dance” have identical pronunciation.] A poem says [*Book of Poetry*, poem 38]: “[The performers were as] fit as tigers.”

Later on [Spring & Autumn era], Duke Yuan had an instructive duel [with the Maiden of Yue], bringing about the renown of the sword art. Famous swords such as Gan Jiang, Mo Ye, Deep River, and Big Watchtower appeared in written records. However, these are only names of swords.

It is during the Han Dynasty that sword heroes arise. Historical records from this time mention swordsmanship, barehanded fighting, and wrestling, but unfortunately no details about any of the methods of these practices.

By the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, there was the Five Animal Frolics, which has been practiced by many up to this day. This is really the sprouting of our martial arts [everything preceding being merely a matter of seed and soil].

Tradition has it that the Shaolin Temple originally emphasized various Tantui methods. Then during the reign of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty, Damo came east. He worried that the monks at the temple had not yet ingrained the doctrine of movement and stillness nurturing each other, and thus he wrote the two classics on Sinew Changing and Marrow Washing for the purpose of mutual cultivation of both internal and external. Strengthening the body thereby became the first stage of training. The monks were otherwise growing so bored in their meditation that it had been turning into an unhealthy practice. Over the course of time, there was then division into the two categories of “hard” and “soft”, the beginning of the enduring distinction between the “Shaolin” and “internal” boxing arts.

Yue Fei [Song Dynasty] obtained the two classics, added his own *Bone Changing Classic*, then took the functional sum of all three and called the result Xingyi [“form & intent”], and subsequently there was “Xingyi Boxing”. Indeed, what Damo initiated, Yue Fei completed.

Taiji started in the Tang Dynasty with Li Daozi and Xu Xuanping. Zhang Sanfeng later expanded the art to include methods of attacking acupoints, and this version was passed down to Zhang Songxi and Dan Sinan.

The Eight-Posture Plum Blossoms art seems to have come from the venerable monk Bao Zhi [a contemporary of Damo] and became what the world knows as the Emei school.

As for the place of Bagua Palming among these arts, Dong Haichuan of Wen’an obtained it in the southern provinces and then transmitted it in the north. I have heard that its origin is in the distant past.

Then there are the arts of Cannon Boxing, Xinyi, Luohan, Wuji Boxing, Five Foundations Boxing, Baji, Mizu, Taizu, Pigua, Tongbi, and the boxing arts of the Ruan family, Yu family, and Kong family. Each takes its own position on what qualities are most important. Some emphasize theory, some emphasize energy, some emphasize strength. They all have their own specialties and distinctive characteristics.

If we are intent upon making classifications, the martial arts we have now were descended mainly from two branches: those of Damo and Zhang Sanfeng. The great variety of styles was the result of later generations of practitioners developing these systems further. Narrowmindedness toward other styles leads to snobbery, and so I fervently hope that throughout the nation it is the broadminded masters who are doing the teaching.

詳論形意八卦太極之原理

**A DETAILED LOOK AT THE THEORIES OF XINGYI, BAGUA, AND TAIJI**

## 詳論形意八卦太極之原理

孫祿堂

拳術之榮華大者。約分三派。一少林。二武當。三峨眉。其餘門類繁多。大半不出此三派之範圍。少林始於達摩之易筋、洗髓、兩經。至有宋岳武穆。始有形意拳之名。即易筋之作用也。謂之形意。形即形式。意即心意。由心之所發。而以手足形容也。其拳有五綱十二目。五綱者。金、木、水、火、土、五行也。而拳中、有劈、崩、鑽、炮、橫、之五拳。十二目者。即十二形也。有龍、虎、猴、馬、鼠、雞、鴛、鴦、燕、蛇、鷹、熊、是也。其取此十二形者。即取性能。而又能包括一切。所謂盡人之性。則能盡物之性。可以知其然也。勢拳對金。在人

人對腎。炮拳對火。在人屬心。橫拳對土。在人屬脾。練之既久。可以祛五臟之病。此謂居人之性也。至若龍有搜骨之法。虎有撲食之猛。猴有縱山之靈。熊有浮水之性。推之其他八形。各有其妙。此所謂居物之性也。人物之性既居。起落進退。變化無窮。是其智也。得中和。體物不遺。是其仁也。心與意合。意與氣合。氣與力合。為內三合。肩與胯合。肘與膝合。手與足合。為外三合。內外始一。成為六合。是其勇也。三者既備。動作運用。上下相連。手足相顧。至大至剛。發吾浩然之氣。與儒家誠中。形外之理。一以貫之。此形意拳之大概也。

八卦拳始於有清咸同之季。直隸文海蜚海川先生。漫遊南省。於皖蜀渝花山。得異人之傳。謂之八卦者。由無極而太極。太極生兩儀。兩儀生四象。四象生八卦。參互錯綜。拳即運用八卦之理。何以言之。今腹為無極。辟為太極。腎為兩儀。兩臂膊與腿為四象。其生八卦者。兩臂與腿。曲之為八節。共生八八六十四卦者。兩手十指。每指三節。指大指係兩節。八卦共二十四節。加兩指係四節。得二十八節。加兩足念八節。為五十六。又加兩臂兩腿之八節。為六十四節。故六十四卦。為拳之體。體為三百六十四爻。則互為其用也。每爻有每爻之意。陽極

其中和。氣歸丹田。含有靜極而動。動極而靜之意。上下相通。是為內呼吸。此拳與道家工夫。相為表裏。不特此也。乾坤坎離。等卦。或為龍。或為馬。或為牛。皆取象于物。心在內。而理周於物。物在外。而理具於心。近取諸身。遠取諸物。奇正變化。運用不窮。而又剛柔相濟。虛實兼到。空而不空。不空而空。此八卦拳之妙用也。

太極拳發明於張三丰祖師。盡人知之。惟練此拳之起點。當先求一個不偏不倚。不



上。下。至簡至易之道。拳經云。抱元守一。而虛中。虛空而念化。實其

腹而道心生。即此意也。太極從無極而生。為無極之機天。萬極之先天。承上啓下。能與天地合德。日月合明。四時合序。與鬼神合其吉凶。練之到至善處。以和為體。和之中智勇生焉。極未動時。為未發之和。極已動時。為已發之中。所以拳術一道。首重中和。中和之外。無元妙也。故太極拳。要純任自然。不尚氣。以精神為主。則身自健。

將起點之極。逐漸推之。貫於周身。無微不至。易曰。黃中通理。正位居體。即此也。昔年曾問之師云。此起點之極。與丹道中之元關相同。鄙人研究數十年。不敢云確有心得。然考其本源。實與形意八卦。其理相通。不過名稱與形式之動作不同耳。至若奔騰氣練神。則初無少異。譬之形意。地也。八卦天也。太極人也。天地人三才。合為一體。混然一氣。實無區分。練之久。而動靜亦重氣養之功。茲不必更贅也。

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The major boxing arts are generally divided into three schools: Shaolin, Wudang, and Emei. As for the rest, there is a great variety, but more than half can be classified under these schools. Shaolin began with Damo's two classics – *Sinew Changing* and *Marrow Washing*. Then Yue Fei in the Song Dynasty started what was called Xingyi Boxing, applying his own *Bone Changing Classic* and calling his art Xingyi [“form” & “intent”]. “Form” means the shape. “Intent” means the mental intention. What is expressed from the mind manifests in the hands and feet.

This boxing art has “five cores” and “twelve imitations”. The five cores are the five elements – metal, wood, water, fire, earth – which make the five boxing techniques of chopping, crashing, drilling, blasting, and crossing. The twelve imitations are the twelve animals: dragon, tiger, monkey, horse, alligator, rooster, hawk, kestrel, swallow, snake, eagle, and bear. Strive for the instincts and abilities of these twelve animals, and to be able to incorporate within yourself everything they can do. Thus it is said [in the *Zhong Yong*]: “Giving full expression to human nature, one is thus able to give full expression to the nature of animals.”

What should we understand to be the nature of this art? The chopping technique corresponds to metal, and in the body to the lungs. The crashing technique corresponds to wood, and in the body to the liver. The drilling technique corresponds to water, and in the body to the kidneys. The blasting technique corresponds to fire, and in the body to the heart. The crossing technique corresponds to earth, and in the body to the spleen. After practicing for a long time, it can dispel the ailments of the five organs. This is called “ingraining human nature”.

As for the animals, the dragon has the method of shrinking its body, the tiger has the fierceness of pouncing on prey, the monkey has the nimbleness of bounding up hillsides, the bear [alligator] has the quality of floating on water, and the other eight animals each have their own ingenuities. This is called “ingraining the nature of animals”.

When both human and animal natures are ingrained, then lifting and dropping, advancing and retreating, transforming without limit, will all as a result be performed with resourcefulness.

Obtaining a state of centered harmoniousness, the essence of the animal does not get discarded and yet the result is humanity.

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 shoulder is united with the hip, the elbow united with the knee, and the hand united with the foot. These are the three external unions. The internal and external unions merged together makes the six unions, and the result is courage.

Once these three things [resourcefulness, humanity, courage] are prepared, then in every action and movement, upper body and lower will be coordinated with each other, hand and foot will be aligned with each other, and you will be [from *Mengzi*, chapter 2a:] “nurturing your noble energy... until it is vast and strong”. It is within the Confucian concept of sincerity that can be found the key to these external shapes, the [from the *Lun Yu*, 15.3:] “single principle running through the whole thing”. These are the main ideas of Xingyi Boxing.

八卦拳始於有清咸同之季。直隸文海董海川先生。漫遊南省。於皖屬淪花山。得異人之傳。謂之八卦者。由無極而太極。太極生兩儀。兩儀生四象。四象生八卦。參互錯綜。拳即運用八卦之理。何以言之。今腹為無極。臍為太極。腎為兩儀。兩臂膊與腿為四象。其生八卦者。兩臂與腿。曲之為八節。共生八八六十四卦者。兩手十指。每指三節。惟大拇係兩節。八卦共二十四節。加兩拇指四節。得二十八節。加兩足念八節。為五十六。又加兩臂兩腿之八節。為六十四節。故六十四卦，為拳之體。體為三百六十四爻。則互為其用也。每爻有每爻之意。陽極〔而陰。陰極而陽。逆中行順。順中用逆。求〕其中和。氣歸丹田。含有靜極而動。動極而靜之意。上下相通。是為內呼吸。此拳與道家工夫。相為表裏。不特此也。乾坤坎離。等卦。或為龍。或為馬。或為牛。皆取象于物。心在內。而理周於物。物在外。而理具於心。近取諸身。遠取諸物。奇正變化。運用不窮。而又剛柔相濟。虛實兼到。空而不空。不空而空。此八卦拳之妙用也。

Bagua Boxing began during the reigns of Emperors Xianfeng [1850-1861] and Tongzhi [1861-1875]. Dong Haichuan of Wenhai, Hebei, was roaming through the southern provinces. At Mt. Yuhua in Anhui he was taught by an extraordinary man an art called Bagua [“eight trigrams”], as in [from the *Book of Changes*, Great Treatise, part 1:] “Nonpolarity generated the grand polarity, the grand polarity generated the dual aspects, the dual aspects generated the four manifestations, and the four manifestations generated the eight trigrams.” The eight then mix together intricately. The boxing art is the theory of the utilizing of the eight trigrams. What does this mean?

The abdomen represents nonpolarity. The navel is the grand polarity. The kidneys are the dual aspects. The arms and legs are the four manifestations. They generate the eight trigrams by way of the two joints of each limb [i.e. elbow/knee, wrist/ankle]. To then multiply this eight by eight and make sixty-four: the ten fingers each have three joints, except for the thumbs, which have only two, and this totals an additional twenty-four, then adding the four joints of the thumbs brings the additional total up to twenty-eight, then adding the same [twenty-eight] joints from [all of the toes of the] feet brings the additional total up to fifty-six, then with the initial eight limb-joints this makes sixty-four joints. The sixty-four hexagrams in this way make the basis of the boxing art.

Then the three hundred sixty-four [three hundred eighty-four] lines of the hexagrams [each hexagram of course having six lines] interact to produce effects. There is an intention of every line having the potential to become the other type of line [active lines (called “nines”) able to become passive lines (called “sixes”) and vice versa]. When the active aspect reaches its peak, there is the passive. When the passive aspect reaches its peak, there is the active. Within going against, there is the action of going along, and within going along, there is the



function of going against.

Seek for a state of centered harmoniousness, energy returning to your elixir field. Contained within this is the idea that when stillness reaches its peak, there is movement, and when movement reaches its peak, there is stillness. This up and down switching of states [in the way that the trigrams composing a hexagram can be flipped above and below to produce a new hexagram] is called “internal breathing”.

This boxing art is interrelated with Daoist practices not only in this way. The trigrams are also each associated with animals, for instance the dragon [associated with the Zhen trigram], horse [Qian trigram], cow [Kun trigram], and so on, all represented by animals. “The mind is internal, yet its reasoning extends to all things. Things are external, yet their principles are all there in the mind.” “For what is near, examine within the self. For what is distant, observe all things.” There is limitless alternating between direct and indirect techniques. There is also hardness and softness assisting each other so that emptiness and fullness are mutually achieved, and you can be empty but not empty, not empty and yet empty. Such are the subtleties of Bagua Boxing.

太極拳發明於張三丰祖師。盡人知之。惟練此拳之起點。當先求一個不偏不倚。不上不下。至簡至易之道。拳經云。抱元守一。而虛中。虛空而念化。實其腹而道心生。即此意也。太極從無極而生。為無極之後天。萬極之先天。承上啓下。能與天地合德。日月合明。四時合序。與鬼神合其吉凶。練之到至善處。以和為體。和之中智勇生焉。極未動時。為未發之和。極已動時。為已發之中。所以拳術一道。首重中和。中和之外。無元妙也。故太極拳。要純任自然。不尚血氣。以蓄神為主。周身輕靈〔。不即不離。勿妄勿助。內天德而外王道。〕將起點之極。逐漸推之。貫於周身。無微不至。易曰。黃中通理。正位居體。即此意也。昔年曾聞之師云。此起點之極。與丹道中之元關相同。鄙人研究數十年。不敢云確有心得。然考其本源。實與形意八卦。其理相通。不過名稱與形式之動作不同耳。至若善養氣練神。則初無少異。譬之形意。地也。八卦天也。太極人也。天地人三才。合為一體。混然一氣。實無區分。練之久。而動靜〔自如。頭頭是道。又何形意。八卦。太極之〕有哉。至峨眉派。傳之梅花八式。志公禪師亦重氣養之功。茲不必更贅也。

Taiji Boxing was invented by Zhang Sanfeng, as everyone knows. At the beginning of practicing this art, you should first seek for the method of “neither leaning nor inclining, neither rising nor falling, acting with absolute simplicity and absolute ease”. A boxing text says [paraphrasing from the kestrel section in his own Xingyi manual]: “By embracing primal oneness, there is emptiness. With emptiness, there is transformation. Then with fullness in the abdomen, the Daoist mind is born.” It is this idea.

Taiji [“grand polarity”] comes from wuji [“nonpolarity”]. It is nonpolarity’s acquired state and the innate quality of all things, and thus the transition from nothing to everything, [again from his Xingyi manual:] “just as the sky and ground combine to make virtue, the sun and moon combine to make illumination, the four seasons combine to make the cycle of the seasons, and ghosts and spirits combine to make the foretelling of good or bad fortune.” If you practice it to a high level, harmoniousness will manifest, then from within harmoniousness, wisdom and courage will arise. Right before taking any action, there is the harmoniousness of not yet expressing. Once action is taken, there is the centeredness of having expressed.

Therefore the way of this boxing art most of all emphasizes centered harmoniousness. Without this centered harmoniousness, there would be nothing wonderful about it. Thus Taiji Boxing seeks to be purely natural and puts no value on vigor. It aims to store up spirit, making the whole body nimble, so that there is neither reaching nor separating, neither rashness nor rescuing, internally the virtue of Nature and externally the way of kings.

Right from the start, gradually work at it until a centered harmoniousness fills your whole body, reaching even to the smallest part. It says in the *Book of Changes* [hexagram 2 explanation]: “The gentleman takes yellow



[the color associated with the center, i.e. centeredness] as his guiding principle, which corrects his behavior and affects his very being. [The beauty within this condition reaches to his extremities, making everything he does sublime.]” This is the idea.

My teacher [Hao Weizhen] once told me: “Right from the start, this art is the same as the ‘primal gateway’ of the elixirists.” I have been studying this art for several decades, but I would not dare to say that I have a true grasp of it. However, when considering its origins, it is truly interconnected with Xingyi and Bagua in terms of theory. It is only different in its movements and the names of its postures, while as for its qualities of nurturing energy and developing spirit, there is not the slightest difference.

By analogy, Xingyi is the ground, Bagua is the sky, and Taiji is mankind. The three substances of sky, ground, and mankind are merged into a single whole, mixed into a union with no meaningful distinctions. After practicing for a long time, there is fluency in both movement and stillness, and clarity as to the reasoning of the method. Ah, what a thing it is to have Xingyi, Bagua, and Taiji! As for the Emei school's transmission of the Eight-Posture Plum Blossoms art, as well as Zen master Bai Zhi's breathing exercises, it is not necessary to go into them here.

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