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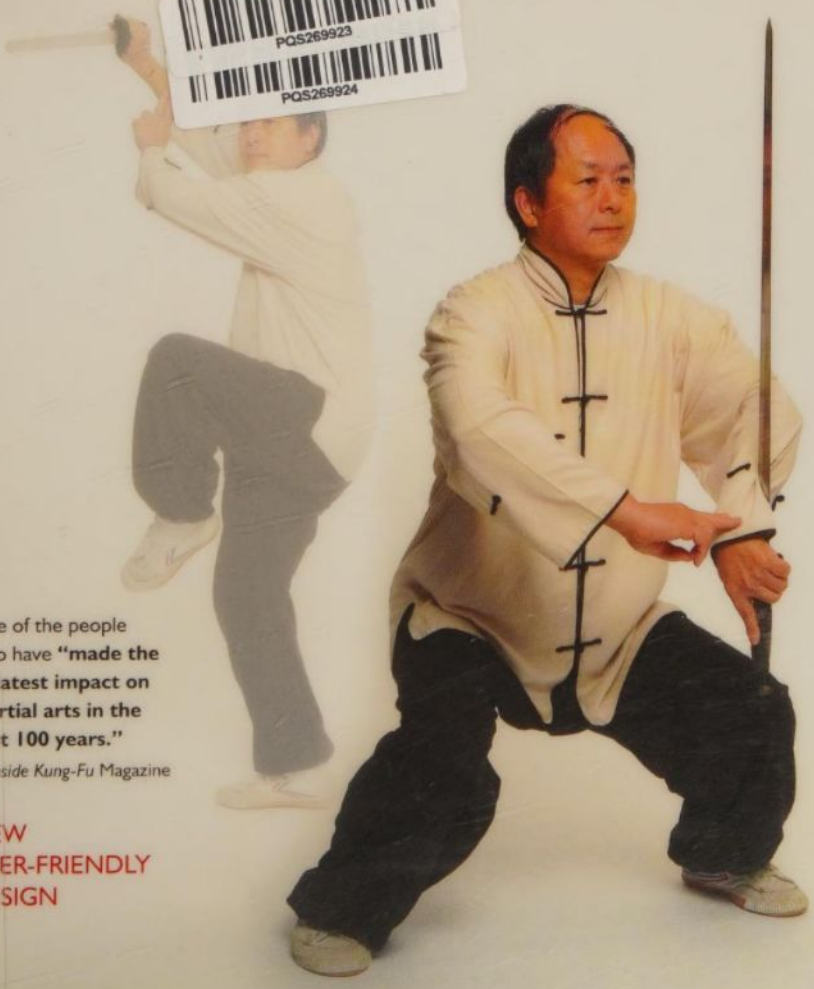
DR. YANG, JWING-MING

Tai Chi Sword

CLASSICAL YANG STYLE

THE COMPLETE FORM, QIGONG, AND APPLICATIONS

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CLASSICAL YANG STYLE

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CLASSICAL YANG STYLE

THE COMPLETE FORM, QIGONG, AND APPLICATIONS

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Revised edition of "Taiji sword, classical Yang style" (YMAA Publication Center, 1999).
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Summary: This revised edition of YMAA's classic book on tai chi sword includes a new modern, easy-to-follow layout: each movement is presented in 4-6 large photographs with lucid instructions on how to perform it, and shows martial applications to help get the angles correct. Other sections offer a brief history of tai chi sword, fundamental training routines, and qigong exercises to connect your tai chi sword practice to your internal health.--Publisher.

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Warning: While self-defense is legal, fighting is illegal. If you don't know the difference, you'll go to jail because you aren't defending yourself. You are fighting—or worse. Readers are encouraged to be aware of all appropriate local and national laws relating to self-defense, reasonable force, and the use of weaponry, and act in accordance with all applicable laws at all times. Understand that while legal definitions and interpretations are generally uniform, there are small—but very important—differences from state to state and even city to city. To stay out of jail, you need to know these differences. Neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility for the use or misuse of information contained in this book.

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When it comes to martial arts, self-defense, and related topics, no text, no matter how well written, can substitute for professional, hands-on instruction. These materials should be used for academic study only.

Printed in Canada.

Editorial Notes

Romanization of Chinese Words

The interior of this book primarily uses the Pinyin romanization system of Chinese to English. In some instances, a more popular word may be used as an aid for reader convenience, such as "tai chi" in place of the Pinyin spelling *taiji*. Pinyin is standard in the People's Republic of China and in several world organizations, including the United Nations. Pinyin, which was introduced in China in the 1950s, replaces the older Wade-Giles and Yale systems.

Some common conversions are found in the following:

Pinyin	Also Spelled as	Pronunciation
qi	chi	chē
qigong	chi kung	chē gōng
qin na	chin na	chǐn nă
jin	jing	jǐn
gongfu	kung fu	gōng foo
taijiquan	tai chi chuan	tī jē chǔén

For more information, please refer to *The People's Republic of China: Administrative Atlas; The Reform of the Chinese Written Language;* or a contemporary manual of style.

Formats and Treatment of Chinese Words

The first instances of foreign words in the text proper are set in italics.

Transliterations are provided frequently: for example, Eight Pieces of Brocade (Ba Duan Jin, 八段錦).

Chinese persons' names are mostly presented in their more popular English spelling. Capitalization is according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* 16th edition. The author or publisher may use a specific spelling or capitalization in respect to the living or deceased person. For example, Cheng, Man-ch'ing can be written as Zheng Manqing.

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Foreword

I remember my early training with my teacher, Master Yang, the author of this book. Many things he taught me then made more and more sense as my own experience, both as a student and as a teacher myself, increased over time. As in life itself, the martial artist's progression in the beginning is very awkward and rough, and the individual is not sure where this path is leading. For a while, there are always more questions than answers and again, just like life itself, answers are realized with time and experience.

A good teacher will help one to stay on the right path and help the students find out the answers for themselves rather than dictate the way things should be, which is usually the way that teacher wants them to be rather than the way things are. The teacher can only teach the correct basics; the student is totally responsible for the final outcome of all of his or her efforts. The students have freedom to express these basics into whatever form they wish. As long as the proper foundation is present, the expression of what the martial arts mean to a given individual is up to him or her. A good teacher will not restrict the student from this self-expression in the martial arts nor restrict the student in other life adventures. A good teacher will give this freedom, knowing that the real truth lies within the self-expression of the individual and not merely the continued expression of the teacher.

Many teachers will not allow their students to seek knowledge or to learn from others while training in the martial arts. I remember during my first year of training that there were some students who asked Master Yang if they could learn with other teachers at the same time. He told them, "Sure, why not?" Some other classmates who had training from other schools before told me that their other teachers would never have said that. I have learned, as apparently Master Yang had already known, that the students must choose their own path and make their own decisions. The teacher can teach them what they need to learn regardless of the students' "other" interests.

It is up to the student to figure things out. The students mentioned above eventually dropped their other classes and studied with Master Yang. The students had then made up their own minds and freely chose to stay at our school only—I suspect they might have left our school if Master Yang demanded they study only with him. I have learned that when restrictions are lifted, the potential of the individual is limitless. I thank my teacher, Master Yang, for teaching me *taiji* and giving me the foundation I needed to express myself "my way."

The practicing of taiji has a great many benefits, one of which is the training of self-expression. This book gives much valuable information about the taiji sword, which trains the expression of energy from within the body to the sword itself. Many readers will be amazed at all of the detail and specifics that can be learned. Many current

practitioners will gain a lot of valuable insights into the uses and applications of their own particular forms, even though some of the applications may be different from their own. I'm sure everyone will find this book extremely helpful.

Jeffery A. Bolt
Houston, Texas

Preface

Since the 1960s, *taijiquan* has become widely recognized as a valuable exercise and *qigong* practice to calm the mind and bring about a healthful, peaceful state. It has also proven to be one of the most effective methods for aiding in the treatment of high blood pressure, depression, hypertension, and cardiovascular problems. In the last few years, it has also been shown to help the elderly regain their balance, both physically and mentally.

Taijiquan was created based on *yin* and *yang* theory. On the yang side, it emphasizes maintaining physical strength, especially in the joints and internal organs. On the yin side, it improves the storage of inner energy (*qi* or bioelectricity) through the use of breathing, the concentrated mind, and the uplifting of spiritual vitality.

Now, taijiquan has become a popular practice worldwide. More and more, people are searching for a deeper theory and purer expressions of this art. Because of this, I have written many taijiquan books based on my personal study and more than forty years of experience in taijiquan practice. The books that I have written about taijiquan are

1. *Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan,* Unique Publications, Inc., 1981
2. *Tai Chi Chin Na,* YMAA, 2014
3. *Tai Chi Theory and Martial Power,* 2nd ed., YMAA, 1996
4. *Tai Chi Chuan Martial Applications,* 2nd ed., YMAA, 1996
5. *Tai Chi Secrets of the Ancient Masters,* YMAA, 1999
6. *Tai Chi Secrets of the Wu and Li Styles,* YMAA, 2001
7. *Tai Chi Secrets of the Yang Style,* YMAA, 2001
8. *Tai Chi Secrets of the Wu Style,* YMAA, 2002
9. *Taijiquan Theory of Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming,* YMAA, 2003
10. *Tai Chi Chuan Classical Yang Style,* 2nd ed., YMAA, 2010
11. *Tai Chi Ball Qigong,* YMAA, 2010
12. *Tai Chi Qigong,* 3rd ed., YMAA, 2013
13. *Tai Chi Sword Classical Yang Style,* 2nd ed., YMAA, 2014

Although bare hand taijiquan and *taiji* sword have been introduced in the first referenced book, *Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan* (published by Unique Publications), in the years since its publication in 1981, my understanding and experience have deepened. After many more years of practice and teaching, I feel an obligation to clarify and revise certain aspects of my earlier works.

The original 1999 edition of this book contains all new writing and pictures. Revised taiji sword theory and qigong practices are also included. Martial applications for each movement are also discussed. However, even though I have tried to make the movements and applications as clear as possible, I still find that the feeling of the art remains missing. This feeling cannot be expressed in words, pictures, or even through videos. The profound comprehension of the art comes only from diligent, continuous, and regular practice, study, and thought. Learning taiji is like learning a complex piece of music. The feelings of a musician with five years' experience can be conveyed so much differently than those of one with twenty years of experience. The final goal of taiji practice is to reach this deep level of understanding to live a more enlightened life. If you ignore this ultimate goal, your accomplishments in the art will remain shallow.

In the first chapter of this book, a general introduction is provided, including a brief history of the sword and the philosophical foundation of sword practice. In the second chapter, basic training for both the external and internal aspects of sword craft is discussed. This chapter will help you build up a firm foundation for your taiji sword practice. Traditional Yang Taiji Sword Form and its applications are introduced in the third chapter. In order to help you understand the applications of the sword techniques, several matching sets using the sword are recommended in the fourth chapter.

The purpose of this revised edition is to improve the layout for easier learning and establish a good format for the ebook and enhanced ebook.

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming
Boston, Massachusetts

Chapter 1: General Introduction

1-1. About the Sword

Many martial artists, even those who have studied Chinese martial arts for many years, still have a number of questions about the structure, use, history, and geographical background of the Chinese straight sword (*jian,* 劍). This is because most students of Chinese martial arts have not also studied Chinese culture. Very little of the available martial literature has been translated into European languages and the number of qualified and knowledgeable masters is steadily diminishing. This section will discuss general information about the sword. The history and structure of the sword itself, as well as the spirit of *taiji* sword, will be discussed in sections 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, and 1-5 respectively.

Definition of the Sword. There are two kinds of weapons commonly called a sword by the Western world. One is the double-edged, straight, and narrow-bladed weapon, which is called a "jian" (劍) in Chinese. The other is the single-edged weapon with a slightly curving, wide blade, which in China is called a *dao* (刀). This second weapon will, in this book, be referred to as a saber. If either of these two types of weapons is shorter than the forearm, it is referred to as a dagger (*bi shou,* 匕首). Daggers can easily be hidden in one's boot or sleeve.

Names of Swords. Chinese swords were often given names. These names usually indicated either the sword's origin or its owner. The origin could be the name of the mountain where the ore used to make the sword was found (e.g., Kun Wu jian, 崑峿劍), the place where the sword was forged (e.g., Long Quan jian, 龍泉劍), or the smith who forged the sword (e.g., Gan Jiang, 干將 and Mo Xie, 莫邪). Of course, the sword could also be named by its owner as he or she pleased (e.g., Judge Dee's sword, Rain Dragon, 雨龍). The sword could also be named for the style of the sequence for which it was designed to be used (e.g., taiji jian, 太極劍).

Names of Sword Sequences. Sword sequences are commonly named for mountains near where the sequence was created, such as Wudang jian (武當劍); for a division or style of *gongfu* (功夫), such as taiji jian (太極劍); or for the person who composed the sequence, such as Qi's family sword (Qi men jian, 戚門劍). They can also be named by the creator of the sequence as he pleases, such as Three Power sword (San Cai jian, 三才劍).

Functions of the Sword. More than most weapons, the sword serves a variety of purposes. Its length and structure made the sword an effective and portable defensive weapon, and it was used most often as a defensive, rather than an offensive, weapon. Because the

sword is shorter than the spear, the halberd, and many of the other large battle weapons, the sword lacks long-range killing potential. Thus, in battle, the sword was used when the soldier's main weapon was lost or broken. In peacetime, the sword was carried by scholars and magistrates, as well as by soldiers. The sword came to symbolize the bearer's status. This function of the sword developed to the point that some swords carried by scholars (*wen jian*, 文劍) were so ornate they could not easily be used for fighting, although this was unusual before the advent of firearms. Lastly, the sword was an integral part of many dances.

Why the Sword is Respected. The sword art has been respected in China not only because the techniques and skills needed to wield it are hard to learn, but more importantly because the morality and spirit of the practitioner have to be of a very high order to reach the highest levels of the art. The training is long and arduous, and most people first learn to use other short weapons, such as the saber, in order to build a foundation.

In addition, the sword provides both scholars and martial artists with an elegant feeling and self-respect. It often comes to represent the morality and profound accomplishments in Chinese martial arts that its bearer has achieved. Moreover, since many Chinese emperors in the past specially favored the sword, it has come to symbolize both power and authority in Chinese culture, much as it does in the rest of the world.

Carrying the Sword. In China, the sword was either slung from a belt around the waist or hung on the back with shoulder straps.



Sword worn from a waist belt.



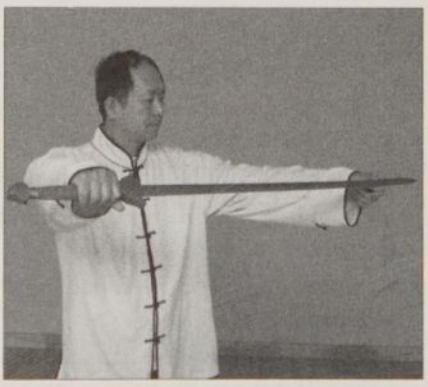
Sword worn from shoulder straps.

The sword could be either carried over the shoulder in a soft scabbard for easy drawing, or a hard scabbard that could be quickly untied from the back for quick access. The way a person carried his sword depended on the weight and length of the sword—double swords and martial swords (*wu jian*, 武劍) were ordinarily carried on the back—as well as personal preference.

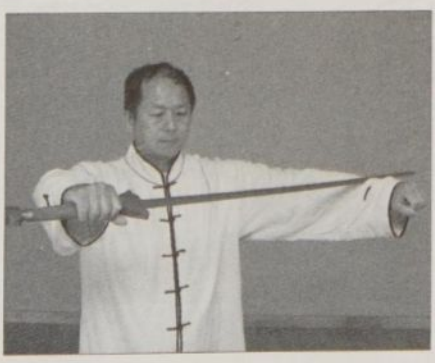
How to Inspect a Sword. There are two occasions upon which a sword will be inspected: by the swordsman after using the sword, and by an admirer of the weapon (possibly for purchase). There are several very important conventions to be observed when one inspects a sword, and they should be communicated to the neophyte prior to allowing him to handle the weapon. First, the sword is always passed from person to person hilt first. This minimizes the danger of accidental injury, which is always a possibility when dealing with any weapon. Second, the sword handler never touches the blade with bare skin because the sweat-salt and oils from the skin will result in corrosion. Third, the blade is always kept at least eight inches (20–30 cm) away from the nose and mouth, since moisture from the breath can also result in corrosion of the blade. Fourth, the sword handler never points the sword at another person, both for safety and out of courtesy. Fifth, the edge of the blade is inspected by holding the sword by its hilt in one hand and resting the other end against the scabbard.



The edge of the blade is inspected by holding the sword by its hilt and resting the other end on the scabbard.



If there is no scabbard, the thumbnail of the free hand may be used.



If there is no scabbard, the sleeve may be used so that the blade is protected from corrosion.

Finally, although it is not a traditional observance, experience has shown that it is generally not a good idea to flourish the sword while inspecting it. This sort of cavalier treatment of the weapon can often result in accidental injury, especially in crowded areas, and most especially if there are children about. The sword is a dangerous weapon. It should be wielded only for practice or defense, and safety must always be your first priority.

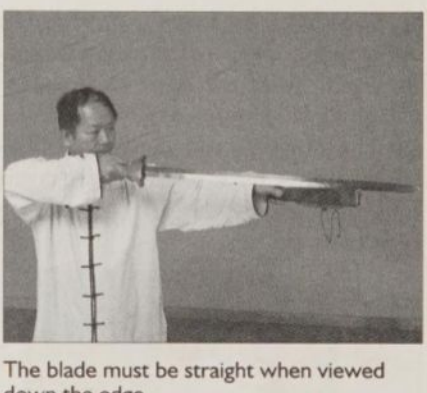
How to Select a Taiji Sword. Because of the success of modern metallurgical techniques, there is no longer a need for the student to forge his own sword, as was sometimes necessary in ancient times. Excellent swords can be bought at most martial arts supply stores. A modern sword made from spring steel is the equal of or superior to most common swords of antiquity. Plated, nontempered swords are also available and are considerably cheaper than the spring steel variety; however, these are definitely only practice swords. Selection criteria for a taiji sword are as follows:

1. The length from the tip of the sword to the handle should be as long as the height from your feet to the base of your sternum.
2. The taper of the blade from hilt to tip should be smooth and steady, with no abrupt changes in width or thickness.
3. The blade must be straight when viewed down the edge.
4. The blade must be firmly mounted in the handle. It should not rattle when you shake it.
5. Spring steel blades must be flexible enough to bend 30 degrees and not retain any bow.
6. The sword should be balanced at a point one-third of its length up from the hilt end. If it is not, the balance must be altered or the sword will not handle properly.
7. The tang of the blade (the part of the blade that extends down into the handle) should be as long and as wide as possible. Often, cheaper swords are merely bolted into the handle and will break easily at this point.

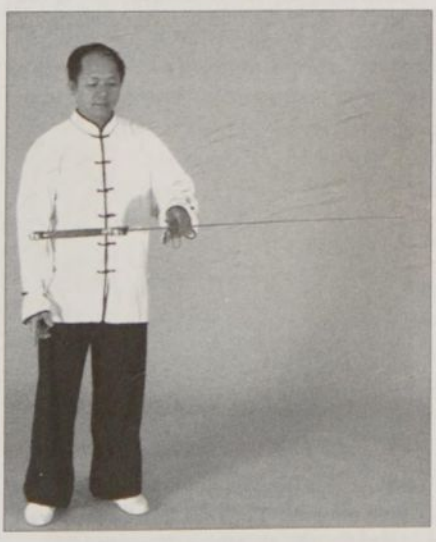
The quality and finish of the wood and fittings used to construct the sword's handle and scabbard must be adequate. Traditionally, the fittings would be made from brass. Stainless steel might also be a good choice, but I have never seen it used. Cheap wood in the handle and scabbard will quickly crack, rendering the sword useless, no matter how strong its blade.



The length from the tip of the sword to the handle should be as long as the height from your feet to the base of your sternum.



The blade must be straight when viewed down the edge.



The sword should be balanced at a point one-third of its length up from the hilt end.

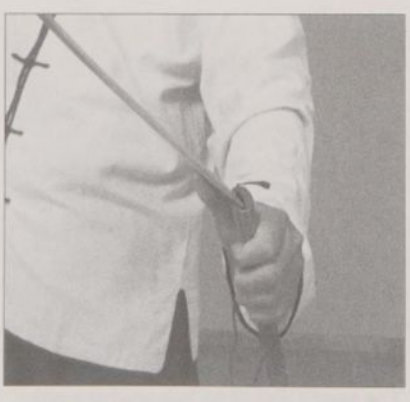
Sheathing the Sword. Sword and scabbard were formerly created as one interlocking assembly. Many of these units were spring loaded so that the sword leaped from the sheath when the latch was released. Even when not spring loaded, swords would frequently latch to the scabbard to ensure their protection, and these latching scabbards would have a stud at the open end. If you have such a sword, put it away by resting the hilt end of the blade on the stud, drawing the blade out to the tip, and letting the blade slide easily into the sheath. If the scabbard does not have this stud, your thumbnail must serve in its place.



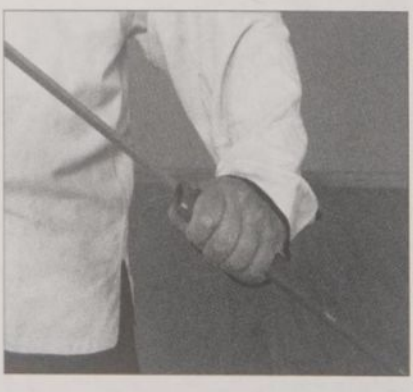
The first step in sheathing the sword is to place the thumb over the open end of the sheath so that it is half covered.



Then bring the sword around, resting the part of the blade closest to the hilt on the thumb and sheath.



The second step is to slide the sword back along your thumbnail to the tip of the sword so that the tip will then fall into the end of the sheath.



Move your thumb out of the way and slide the sword into the sheath. Practice carefully until sheathing the sword becomes natural.

Care of the Sword. In order to protect the sword from damage, the following procedures should be observed:

1. When you show your sword to someone who knows nothing about it, be sure to tell the person what to do before giving it to him. This will protect your sword and will also prevent anyone from getting cut.
2. Never lay a sword on the ground. It will absorb moisture from the ground, and in addition, someone might step on it.
3. Never touch the blade with your bare skin. The sweat and oil of your skin will cause the blade to corrode.
4. Avoid unnecessary cutting with the sword, since this will dull the blade and shorten the sword's life.
5. Always keep the sword sheathed when it is not in use.

After using the sword, apply a light coating of oil to the blade. Until your level of skill warrants it, don't use a real sword to practice. This will protect you as well as the sword.

Sword Proverbs

We draw on the proverbs to help us understand the complexities and deeper feeling needed to fully develop our skills in martial arts. The following proverbs reveal the difficulties of this esteemed weapon.

"The staff is the root of all the long weapons, and the saber is the prerequisite for the short weapons."[1] This proverb implies that the long staff and the saber serve as a foundation for further work within each group of weapons.

"The spear is the king of the long weapons, whereas the sword is the leader of the short weapons."[2] This saying implies that the spear and the sword are the hardest weapons of their kind to learn and that once someone can skillfully use them in battle, he or she can quickly understand the techniques and skills needed to wield other weapons and become the leader of any battle.

"A hundred days of bare hand, a thousand days of spear, and ten thousand days of sword."[3] From this proverb, one learns that the sword is the hardest weapon of all to learn. This is because the sword is light, and it requires more than ten years of internal power training to master the techniques for blocking heavy weapons. Also, because the sword is double edged, more skill is required to use both edges effectively without dulling them or cutting yourself.

"Sword uses speed and technique; saber requires cunning, trickery, and power."[4]

"Saber: power, won by strength. Sword: soft, won by technique."[5]

"The saber is like a tiger, the sword is like a phoenix, and the spear is like a swift dragon."[6]

1-2. Historical Survey

The ancient Chinese regarded the sword as a very important weapon, as evidenced by the relatively large number of documents about it and the frequency with which swords turn up in archeological digs. It is the only weapon that has been used and admired continuously from the beginning of Chinese history to the present day.

Over time, the sword has evolved from a short, wide copper weapon to a long, slim steel one, a result of gradual improvements in metallurgy over thousands of years. The techniques for using the sword have also evolved with the changes in structure and quality. The short, wide copper blade would not hold an edge and was soft so that it could be used only at short range to hack and stab. Bronze is brittle, as is cast iron. Therefore, blades made of these materials would break easily when they were used for blocking. The longer the sword, the longer the effective fighting range, so the full array of fundamental techniques in use today were only made possible with the discovery of hardened, tempered steel. The number of fundamental techniques increased significantly from a very few with the early short, wide swords to more than thirty in use today.

In examining the illustrations accompanying this chapter, the reader will notice that swords differed from one dynasty to another, in terms of shape, handle style, and sheath decoration. The changes came about not only because of developments in metallurgy but also because of the influence of other cultures, particularly those of the invaders of China: the Mongolians (蒙古人), Manchurians (滿州人), Tibetans (西藏人), and Himalayans (喜馬拉亞人). China has in turn been a major influence on the cultures of nearby regions, such as Korea, Japan, and Indo-China. For example, the Japanese *samurai* sword may have been imported originally from China during the Tang dynasty (唐朝) (AD 618–907), as well as many other weapons, which are similar in appearance to those of Tang China.

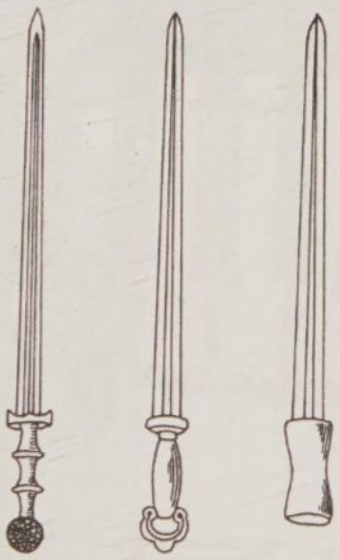
The Chinese of 3000 to 4000 BC, like other prehistoric societies, probably used the sticks and stones that lay about them to settle their disputes. Not until the time of the first recorded emperor, Huang Di (黃帝) (2697–2597 BC), called the "Yellow Emperor" because he ruled the territory near the Yellow River, does evidence exist for weapons made of something other than stone. Huang Di had swords made of jade, copper, and gold. This period, therefore, marks the beginning of the metallurgical science in arms manufacturing in China.

Knowledge of Huang Di's weapons comes from discoveries near Zhuo Lu (涿鹿) of knives and swords, remnants of ancient battles between the emperor's forces and those of Chi Yu (蚩尤).

By the time of the Shang dynasty (商朝) (1766–1122 BC), swords made of copper alloys were in use. Bronze ushered in this era, but by its close, iron was being used.

The Zhou dynasty (周朝) (909–255 BC) replaced the Shang, following fierce warfare. Both emperors demanded better swords and in this way stimulated advances in metallurgy, although naturally the emphasis was on finding alloys for stronger swords.

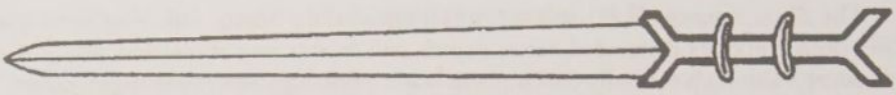
As the power of the Zhou dynasty diminished and the emperor's control weakened, China was thrust into a series of civil wars. This time is known as the Spring and Autumn Period (Chun Qiu, 春秋) (722–484 BC) and the Warring States Period (Zhan Guo, 戰國) (403–222 BC). Each of the many warring factions strove to produce stronger and sharper weapons than before, and sword makers of the day were held in the highest regard. Three of the most famous sword makers of that period were Ou Ye Zi (歐冶子), Gan Jiang (干將), and Mo Xie (莫邪).



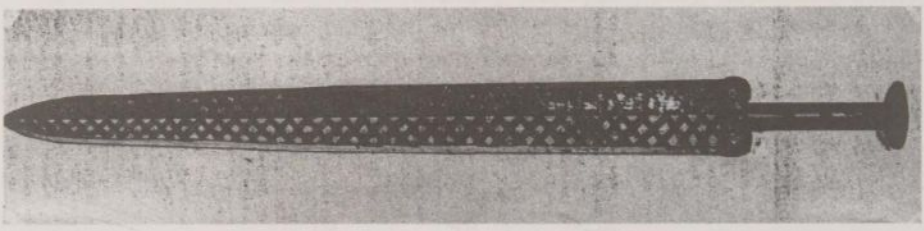
Zhou Dynasty Swords.



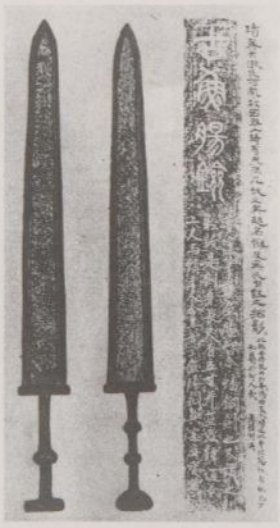
Zhou Dynasty Sword.



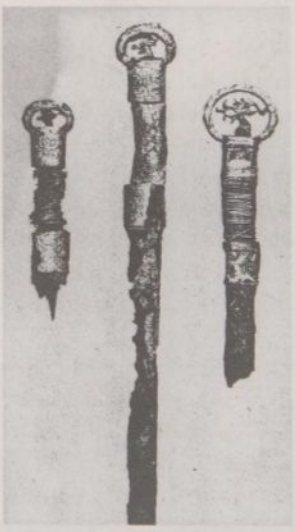
Sword from Spring and Autumn Period, and Warring States Period.



Sword from Spring and Autumn Period, and Warring States Period.



Swords from Spring and Autumn Period, and Warring States Period.



Swords from Spring and Autumn Period, and Warring States Period.

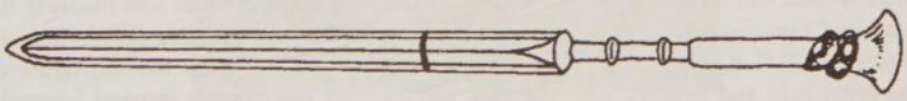
Ou Ye Zi forged two very famous swords, Ju Que (巨闕) and Zhan Lu (湛盧). It is said that these swords were so sharp that if they were dipped in water, they would be

withdrawn perfectly dry. Gan Jiang and Mo Xie were husband and wife, and forged two swords that bore their names.

After Zhou, the Qin dynasty began (秦朝) (255–206 BC).



Qin Dynasty Swords.



Qin Dynasty Sword.

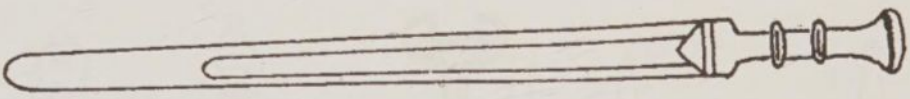
When the emperor Qin Shi Huang (秦始皇) (221–209 BC) took power, he heard that the Wu Emperor (吳) He Lu (闔閭) had collected tens of thousands of swords from all over China, and had them buried with him when he died. Three hundred years later Emperor Qin Shi Huang ordered his men to find the swords. After many years of searching and digging, the emperor had only a large hole for his efforts. Eventually, the pit filled with water and came to be known as the Sword Pond (劍池) in Suzhou (蘇州).



Stone carving at "Sword Pond" in Suzhou.

During the Han dynasty (漢朝) (6 BC–AD 220), the process of alloying iron instead of copper was first described in the book *Huai Nan's Thousand Crafts* (*Huai Nan Wan Hua Shu,* 淮南萬華術), a volume on metallurgy.

The Three Kingdoms Period followed (San Guo, 三國) (AD 220–280). The famous Cao-Cao (曹操) is reputed to have had swords that could cut iron as if it were mud. There is a story about his rival, Liu Bei (劉備), that illustrates the effect of tempered iron swords. Liu, as a descendant of the Han imperial family, felt he had the duty to reunite China. To do this he occupied Shu (蜀) in western China, also called Sichuan Province (四川省), and began preparing his army for war. To recruit the best fighters, he often held and presided over contests, and one day two fighters stepped forward, one with an iron rod, the other with a saber. During the fight, the rod wielder knocked down the saber man and brought his rod down to finish the fight. Everyone present was amazed when the iron rod broke in two as it was blocked by the saber. The maker of that saber, Pu Yuan (浦元), was found and immediately commissioned to forge weapons for Liu Bei.



Three Kingdoms Period Sword.



Three Kingdoms Period Sword.



Liu Bei, a descendant of the Han imperial family.

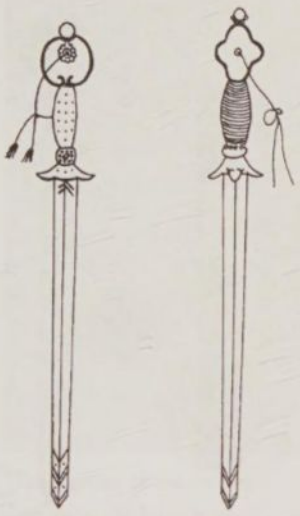
From the Three Kingdoms Period to the Northern Zhou dynasty (Bei Zhou, 北周) (AD 557–581), little is known about the weapons used, although copper is considered to have been the predominant metal in use during this time.



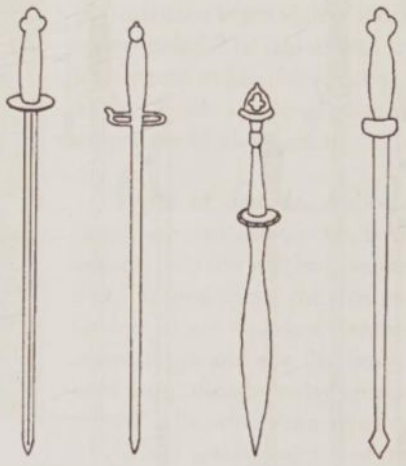
Sword circa AD 557–581.

The Sui and Tang dynasties (隋、唐) (AD 581–907) are the brightest and most peaceful eras in Chinese history. Famous scholars, poets, and other artists flourished, while the arts of war were not demanded.

In AD 907, the country was once again divided, this time into five parts, known as the Five Dynasties (Wu Dai, 五代) (AD 907–960). They were later reunited in the Song dynasty (宋朝) (AD 960–1280). The Song ended with the invasion of the Mongols (the Jin race, 金), who founded the Yuan dynasty (元朝) (AD 1206–1368). This mixing of cultures resulted in more changes in sword styles.

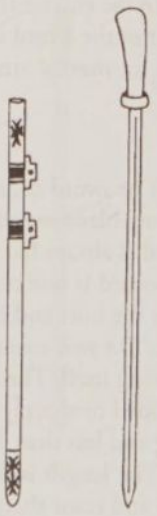


Song Dynasty Swords.

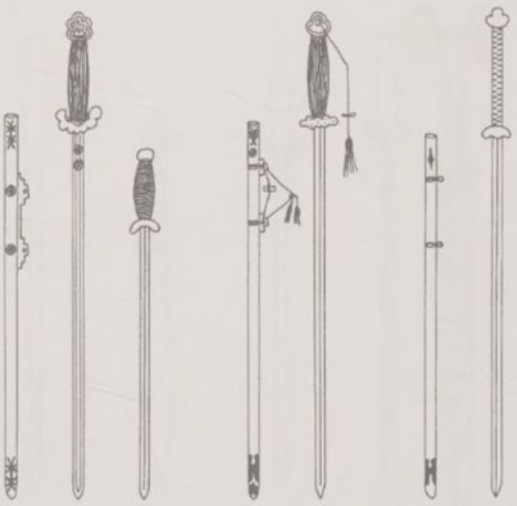


Yuan Dynasty Swords.

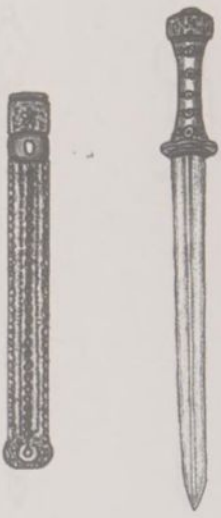
In AD 1368 the Mongols were defeated by the Chinese, and the Ming dynasty (明朝) (AD 1368–1644) began. Then the Manchurians invaded and formed the Qing dynasty (清朝) (AD 1644–1911). During these later dynasties, steel and other alloys were used to make swords, which were longer than ever. There were three places during the Qing dynasty that became famous for the quality of their weapons. Two are in Zhejiang Province (浙江省) in eastern China: Long Quan (龍泉) and Wu Kang (武康). The other is Qin Yang (沁陽) in Henan Province (河南省), the site of the Shaolin Temple (少林寺). These places attracted great sword makers because of the quality of their water. No one was sure why the water was superior, but the great arms forged in Long Quan for centuries were attributed to its superior qualities.



Qing Dynasty Sword.



Qing Dynasty Swords.



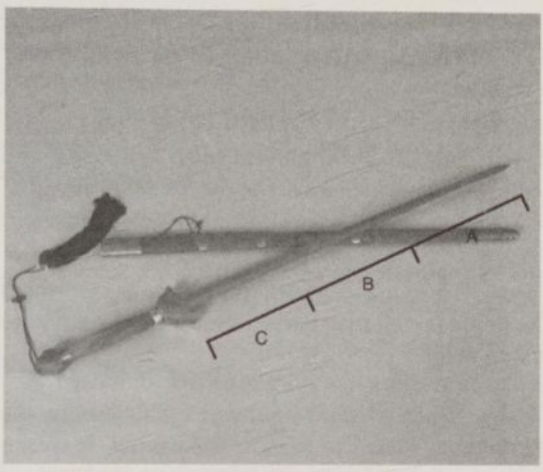
Qing Dynasty Sword.

In the eighteenth century, firearms were introduced into China, and further development of the sword as a martial weapon ceased. Consequently, swords and other weapons used for martial arts study remain in the style of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

1-3. Sword Structure

The sword consists of two parts: the blade and the hilt or handle. Both edges of the narrow-blade sword are sharp; the handle and sword body are always straight. The hand guard is always flat and perpendicular to the blade, rather than circular or oval. Usually, the sword is one continuous piece of metal, and the hand guard and handle are slipped onto the butt end (the tang) and held in place with a knot-shaped nut or with a pin or rivet. On well-made swords, there may also be brass pegs going through the handle and the tang itself. The blade or sword body is sharpened on both edges, and the tip is either rounded or sharply pointed as described below. Swords are from 20 inches to 50 inches long and less than 1.5 inches in width.

The length is divided into three zones. The top third of the blade (A) is extremely thin and razor sharp. The top third is never used for blocking because it can be notched very easily. Instead, this sharp part is used only for attack. The middle third of the blade (B) is thicker and less sharp than the top third. This part of the blade is used for sliding, guiding away, sticking, and cutting. The bottom third of the blade (C) is very thick and



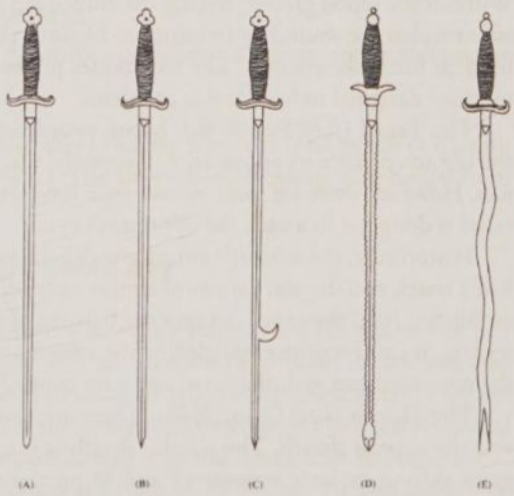
Three zones of the sword.

unsharpened and is generally used for situations when violent blocking is needed. The taiji martial artist attempts to keep his opponents in the middle and long range for proper use of his weapon.

Types of Swords. Although there are numerous kinds of swords, only five will be described here. Among these, the first two (A and B) are the most common sword types and are the designs used most often by today's practitioners. The other three types are specialized modifications of the first two. Although they can be used with most common sword techniques, there are additional special techniques made possible by their design.

A. Scholar's Sword (Wen Jian, 文劍). This sword is also called a female sword. It is long and light, with a rounded tip. It is not commonly used for war, but for self-defense and for dancing. It was also commonly carried by scholars to present an elegant appearance or was hung on a wall to decorate a room.

B. Martial Sword (Wu Jian, 武劍). This sword, also known as a male sword, is long and heavy, with a pointed tip. Because of its killing potential, it was mainly used in battle.



Five types of swords.

C. Wu Hooked Sword (Wu Gou Jian, 吳鈎劍). This sword was invented during the Wu dynasty (吳朝) (AD 222–280) and is designed for cutting an enemy's limbs, or his horse's legs, after blocking a weapon.

D. Saw Toothed Sword (Ju Chi Jian, 鋸齒劍). This sword has a serrated edge to give it greater cutting ability. The edge design probably originated when someone found that a badly nicked blade seemed to cut more viciously. The two holes in the tip of the sword resemble the eyes of a snake and make a whooshing noise when the sword is swung.

E. Snake Tongue Sword (She She Jian, 蛇舌劍). This sword has a wavy blade, which again makes for a fearful cut. The double point may have given the fighter a way to catch his opponent's weapon at long range.

The Blood Groove (*Xue Gou*, 血溝). When a sword fighter stabs his enemy, the blade is fixed in the enemy's body by the body's attempt to close the wound. It creates a suction effect on the blade. These factors make it difficult to withdraw the weapon. To solve this problem, most martial swords (wu jian, 武劍) were forged with a groove down each side of the blade, called a blood groove. In battle, the warrior is faced with a multitude of enemies, so he must be able to get the blade free as quickly as possible. Without the blood groove, freeing the embedded sword would require the swordsman to either widen the wound by twisting the blade or thrust the sword completely through the body to break the suction. The techniques presented later in this book include slashing motions designed to handle this problem.

The Tassel (*Jian Sui*, 劍穗). Many swords in use today have a tassel hanging from the hilt to enhance its appearance. Generally, this tassel has no martial usefulness for the jian. However, there are some swords with long tassels (*chang sui jian*, 長穗劍), where the tassel is designed to attack the opponent's eyes.

Historically, the scholar's sword, the dancing sword, and the decorative sword usually had a tassel, and the martial sword almost never did. The reasons for not using a tassel are as follows: first, the tassel changes the balance of the sword, making it harder to handle; second, it can become entangled in the sword arm, distracting the sword fighter; third, the opponent can grab the tassel and gain control of the sword.

The Sheath (Jian Qiao, 劍鞘). There are two types of scabbards: the scholar sheath and the martial sheath. The scholar sheath is made of wood, covered with snake or alligator skin to make it waterproof and to protect the sword from moisture. The martial sheath is made of metal to enable it to withstand more abuse; in addition, the metal sheath can be used for blocking. Sheaths should be straight and stiff, and the brackets for the hanger must be tight and not slide up and down the sheath.

Sword Structure and Technique in Relation to Geography. The swords used today are almost all based on Qing dynasty designs, so only these kinds of swords will be described here.

Northern Chinese tend to be taller than Southerners, and there are cultural differences as well, which have resulted in North/South distinctions in both the structure and techniques of the sword.

Northern characteristics of the sword

1. Swords are relatively long and narrow (the narrow blade reduces the weight). The average sword is six inches longer than arm length.
2. Sword guards face forward so the swordsman can lock the opponent's weapon.
3. Northern styles are more offensive or attack oriented, and specialize in long- and middle-range fighting.

Southern characteristics of the sword

1. Swords are short, averaging arm length, and are relatively wide and thick (to increase the weight).
2. Sword guards slant backward toward the hilt, to slide the opponent's weapon away, in preparation for an attack at close range.
3. Southern fighting styles are more defensive, specializing in short- and middle-range fighting.

The taiji sword is generally longer than other Northern swords. The length of the taiji sword selected depends upon the individual. The length should match your height from the feet to the base of the sternum.

1-4. The Sword Way

In ancient China, the way of the sword was widely respected. This was so not just because sword techniques and skills were difficult to learn. The main reason was that moral and spiritual qualities were required in order to attain the highest levels of its art. In order to build a proper foundation for the study of the sword, the martial artist had to master other short weapons, which meant he had to spend a long time in preparation. Therefore, the sword master, known in China as a (*jian ke,* 劍客), had to have willpower, endurance, and perseverance in order to get through the long and hard years of training. It is said that the sword is "the lord of a hundred arms and the king of short weapons."[7]

Because the sword is mainly a defensive weapon, it requires a strategy of calmness in action, and to achieve this quality one needs patience, calmness, and bravery. Sword

users commonly practiced meditation to acquire the calmness they needed. In addition to these qualities, which are needed to develop the required level of skill, sword students learned about ethical virtues from their masters.

The masters would develop these traits in their students by example and by telling inspiring stories from history. First, a student learned loyalty. The student was taught to be loyal to his country, his master, his parents, and his friends. True loyalty even requires the willingness to die when necessary. Loyalty with honor is the highest form of this virtue. The second trait learned was respect, which is closely related to humility. When one is humble, one can then respect the style, other martial artists, parents, and teacher. Another quality cultivated by the masters, and perhaps the most important, was righteousness. The student was taught to act only in the interests of righteousness and justice.

Having achieved these traits, the sword master is respected by the populace and will live a life committed to honor.

1-5. About Taiji Sword

Excepting only taiji spear, taiji sword is considered the highest level of *taijiquan* training. There are a few reasons for this:

1. Before anyone learns taiji sword, he must first master the basic training and criteria for bare hand taijiquan, including correct external forms, relaxed physical body, concentrated mind, proper breathing, and abundant qi circulation. Without this foundation, even if a student has learned taiji sword, his level of achievement of this art will remain on the surface. Normally, it will take at least ten years of taijiquan practice before a person approaches this level of understanding.
2. In order to reach to a deep, profound level of feeling in performing taiji sword, a student must already have a deep foundation of listening, understanding, sticking, adhering, and coiling *jin*. To reach this level of understanding, usually a student must have a few years of correct pushing hands experience. Pushing hands training is the best way to exchange feeling and sensitivity of the taiji techniques between you and your training partners. If you practice taiji sword and try to understand its martial essence, you must learn how to match the sword with a partner. If you are not able to demonstrate the required jin from bare hand training, you will not understand these jin as applied in the sword. Again, normally, it will take many years of pushing hands training to reach a deep level of understanding. If you wish to know more about taiji jin, please refer to the book *Tai Chi Theory and Martial Power*, available from YMAA Publication Center.
3. In taijiquan practice, internal *qigong* training is the foundation of internal strength, which can lead you to a deep, profound comprehension of the art. This is especially

true in taiji sword. In order to reach a proficient level of listening, understanding, sticking, adhering, coiling, and neutralizing, your sensitivity and *qi* must be able to extend from your physical body to the tip of the sword. You must practice until you feel the sword as a part of your body, natural and comfortable. To reach this level, in addition to performing bare hand taiji qigong, you should also learn taiji sword qigong. We will discuss taiji sword qigong in the next chapter.

4. Whether you practice taijiquan or taiji sword, the final goal remains the same. You should understand that taijiquan was created in a Daoist monastery, in which the final goal of spiritual cultivation was enlightenment. In order to reach this stage, you must first ponder, seek out, and comprehend the meaning of life. To reach this understanding of life, you must continue to challenge yourself and master your emotional mind. Self-mastery is a necessary prerequisite for self-understanding. When you have achieved proficient levels of taiji sword ability, your body will feel transparent (i.e., totally permeable to the energy), and you will be able to enter the state of "mind of no mind" (i.e., regulating without regulating). Every aspect of your practice, from stance to breathing to spirit, is by its nature regulated to the correct level effortlessly because of the level of skill your practice has brought. It is not easy to reach this stage.

When you learn taiji sword, you first learn the basic sword techniques, which comprise the foundation of each style. In Chinese martial arts, different styles emphasize different techniques, depending on which discipline the stylist has trained. For example, the Southern sword is relatively shorter in length than the Northern sword. Consequently, the emphasis of the sword applications for the Southern stylist is more on defense. In comparison, the Northern sword is relatively longer, and Northern sword users emphasize attacking. External styles have more linear and straightforward techniques. Such techniques must be executed externally, requiring more muscular movements. But the basic techniques of internal styles emphasize more sensitivity and qi cultivation/circulation. Therefore, sticking, adhering, coiling, and circling are the main elements in their practice. In the next chapter, basic sword techniques will be introduced.

References

1. 棍為長兵之本，刀為短兵之先。
2. 槍為長兵之王，劍為短兵之師。
3. 百日拳，千日槍，万日劍。
4. 劍走青，刀走黑。
5. 刀、猛、強之以力，劍、柔、勝之以技。
6. 刀如猛虎，劍似飛鳳，槍比游龍。
7. 百刃之君、短兵之王。

Chapter 2: Fundamental Training

2-1. Introduction

The sword is the king of the short weapons. Skilled use of the sword is built on the experience gained from working with the saber, which is called the root of the short weapons. Any martial artist who wants to master the sword should first master the saber; otherwise, it will be extremely difficult to understand both the applications of the techniques and the source of power in sword practice.

Although the saber is the root of the short weapons, its techniques and power combinations are very different from those of the sword. For example, the saber uses more muscular power. The dull edge of the saber is designed for blocking vigorously, but this action cannot be done with the sword. The sword is double edged. Using either edge to block will dull or nick the blade. With the sword, only that third of the blade nearest the hilt is designed for vigorous blocking. The sharpened part of the blade should not be allowed to make contact with the opponent's weapon. Therefore, a defensive attack, without blocking, is the best sword technique, and a sliding block, followed by an attack, is the second best. The least desirable defense is to block using the dull area of the blade. These concepts will be explained in greater detail in the following chapter.

The fighting strategy is also different between saber and sword. The saber fighter will try to keep the enemy in short and middle range in order to take advantage of the saber's vigorous blocking and attacking power. To do this, the saber fighter always uses his two hands together. One hand holds the saber while the other is used for coordination and balance, or to grasp the enemy's wrist, arm, or weapon. The sword fighter, however, tries to keep the enemy in the middle and long range in order to use the razor-sharp tip of the sword effectively. In addition, by keeping some distance from the opponent, it is easier to avoid violent attacks.

For applying power, the saber relies on muscular strength, while the sword uses both the muscles and internal power (qi) together, in order to defend against a heavy weapon or a strong attack. Because of the more refined nature of the power needed, the sword calls for more technique, more skill, and more training time.

Even though there are so many differences between the saber and the sword, the saber is still the foundation of sword practice. It builds up the stances, dodging, and the basic forward and backward movements. It also builds the muscles required for sword practice.

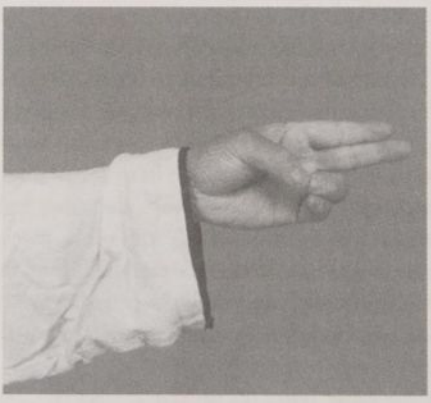
Most importantly, practicing the saber will help the student to understand the general applications and fighting strategies of short weapons.

In learning the sword, the student should first cultivate the virtues of patience and calmness, and develop a firm will. He should understand the form and application of every movement.

In the next section, the ways of holding the sword and the secret sword hand forms for qi balance will be explained. Then fundamental stances will be covered in section 2-3. Power training for the sword will be in section 2-4. Section 2-5 explains the key techniques of the sword. Finally, some fundamental practice forms and drills will be introduced in section 2-6.

2-2. Hand Grips and the Secret Sword

Mastering the sword requires learning to project power into the weapon, but if a person generates power on only one side of the body, disorders will result. To avoid this, sword practitioners hold the empty hand with the index and middle fingers extended, and the thumb folded over the other two fingers. When power is extended into the sword, it is also projected from the extended fingers of the empty hand to balance the energy. This is known as the secret sword (*jian jue*, 劍訣). It is also used for applying cavity press when appropriate.



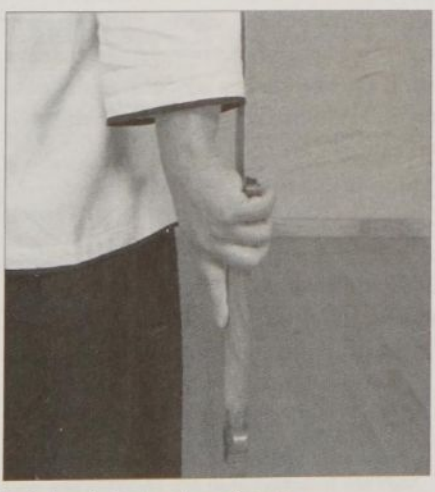
Secret sword hand form.

There is also an open hand secret sword, which is occasionally used in some styles, primarily those in which muscular strength dominates the sword application.

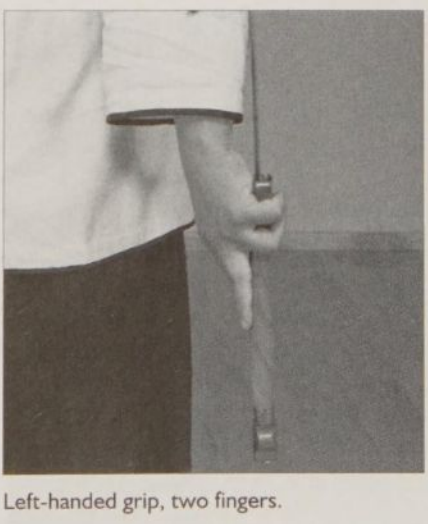


Open hand secret sword hand form.

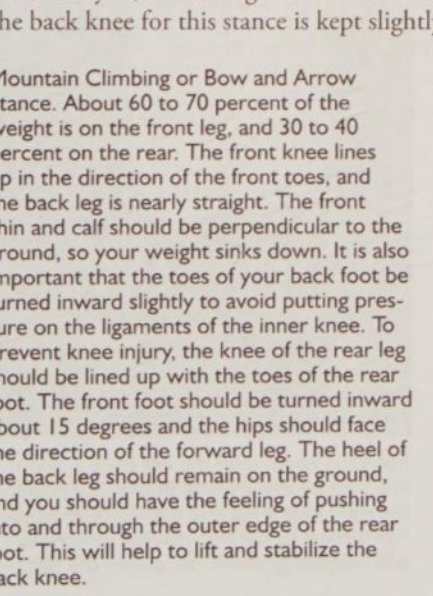
There are two basic grips used in this sword sequence: left handed and right handed. The left-handed grip is used at the beginning of this sequence, for defensive blocks and to hold the sword while the right hand is being used for cavity press. The right-handed grip is generally the grip used for wielding the sword. Sometimes a double-handed grip can be used when the fingers are too tired to hold the sword single handedly. Correct grip tightness must be maintained. If the grip is too tight, you will lose flexibility and inhibit energy flow. If the grip is too loose, you will not be able to wield the sword swiftly. A grip that is either too tight or too loose is easily disarmed. The sword should be held like an egg, neither broken nor dropped. The grip should be alive.



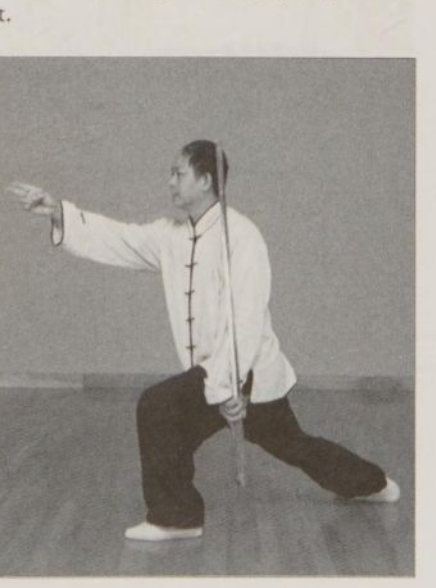
Left-handed grip, three fingers.



Left-handed grip, two fingers.



Right-handed grip.



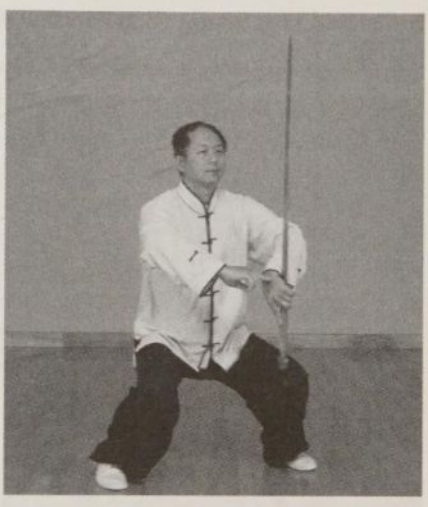
Double-handed grip.

2-3. Fundamental Stances

There are six fundamental stances in taiji sword. The student should become proficient in each one. Each style of gongfu has its own characteristic stances, and there are variations. Only taiji stances will be discussed here. It is important to understand that the basic stances are the foundation of the techniques. If the foundation is not firm, then the techniques cannot be performed properly, for they will be unstable. It is the leg forms that are important in the illustrations; the hand forms can vary for the same stance.

1. Horse Stance (Ma Bu, 馬步)

The *ma bu* stance is the most fundamental and is especially valuable for building up the strength of the knees. The beginning student should train to maintain the stance for at least five minutes, but no longer than ten. Only after you have built strong knees should you train to hold the stance for a longer time. You must build up your endurance gradually and slowly.



Horse Stance. To assume the stance, place the feet parallel, slightly beyond shoulder width apart. Bend the knees until a 90 degree angle is formed between the back part of the calf and the thigh, keeping the back straight. It is important to concentrate on directing the power of the legs straight down, as if you are standing on stilts, and not to let your weight go out to the sides, or into the knees. The knees should not bow out, and they should be lined up with the toes, which point straight ahead.

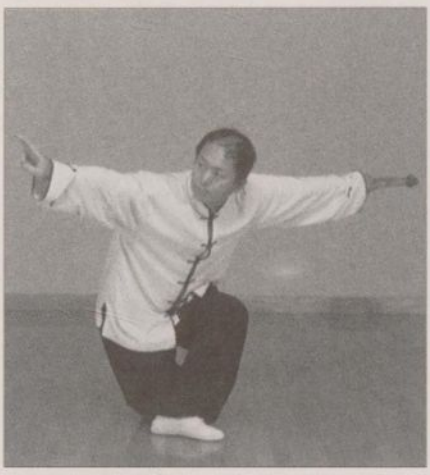
2. Mountain Climbing Stance or Bow and Arrow Stance (Deng Shan Bu or Gong Jian Bu, 蹬山步、弓箭步)

Deng shan bu or *gong jian bu* is one of the most commonly used offensive stances. Although the rear knee of this stance is described as nearly straight, in most Northern external styles, the rear leg for this stance would be held very straight. In taijiquan practice, the back knee for this stance is kept slightly bent.

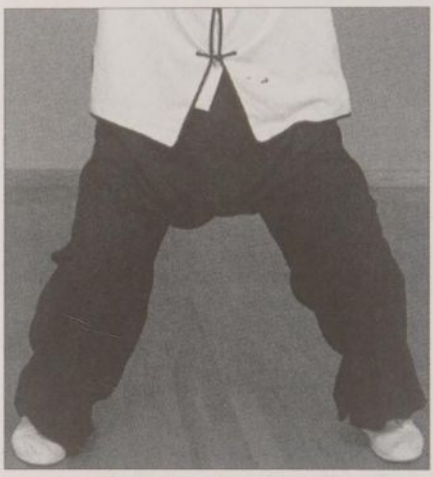
Mountain Climbing or Bow and Arrow Stance. About 60 to 70 percent of the weight is on the front leg, and 30 to 40 percent on the rear. The front knee lines up in the direction of the front toes, and the back leg is nearly straight. The front shin and calf should be perpendicular to the ground, so your weight sinks down. It is also important that the toes of your back foot be turned inward slightly to avoid putting pressure on the ligaments of the inner knee. To prevent knee injury, the knee of the rear leg should be lined up with the toes of the rear foot. The front foot should be turned inward about 15 degrees and the hips should face the direction of the forward leg. The heel of the back leg should remain on the ground, and you should have the feeling of pushing into and through the outer edge of the rear foot. This will help to lift and stabilize the back knee.

3. Crossed Legs Stance (Zuo Pan Bu, 坐盤步)

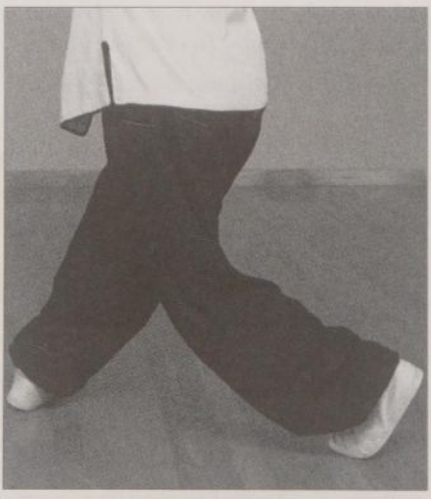
Zou pan bu can be used either for attack or defense.



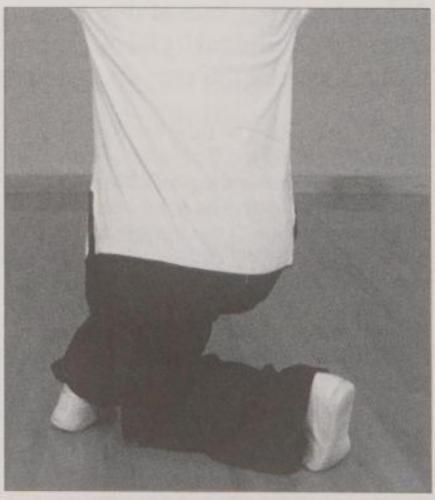
Crossed Legs Stance.



To assume this stance, first stand in the horse stance.



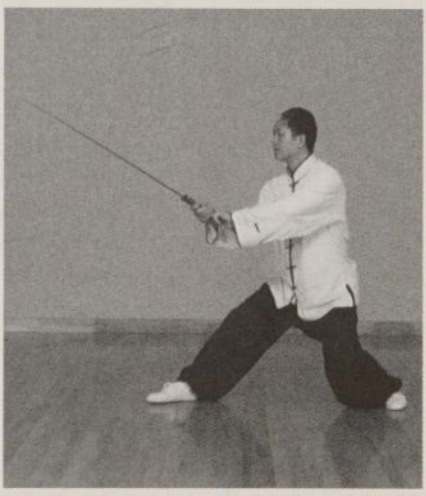
Raise the right toe while pivoting on the right heel. At the same time, turn the torso until the body is facing in the direction of the right toe. During the turn, the left foot pivots on its toes.



Bend the knees until the left knee is about one inch off the ground. In this final position, the right foot is flat and the left is on its toes. For turning to the left, reverse directions and weighting. Don't rise during the turn.

4. Four Six Stance (Si Liu Bu, 四六步)

Si liu bu is one of the most versatile stances in Chinese martial arts. From this stance, the martial artist can switch into various techniques with relative ease.



Four Six Stance. In this stance, 40 percent of the weight is on the front leg, while 60 percent is on the back leg. The knee of the front leg should be turned slightly inward and be kept slightly bent. Never straighten the knee in this stance because if a kick were to land on the locked knee, it could easily break it. The front foot should be at a 15-degree angle inward. In addition, the back knee must be flexed and turned inward toward the groin. The back knee and the toes of the back foot should line up with each other. Otherwise, damage to the knee could result.

5. Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg Stance (Jin Ji Du Li, 金雞獨立)

Jin ji du li is generally used to set up for quick leg attacks.



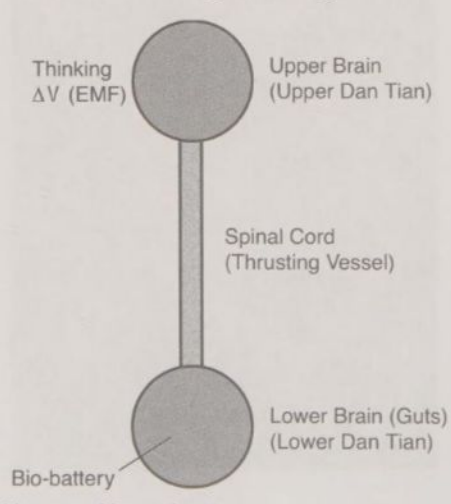
Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg Stance. To assume this stance, raise one leg until the knee is as high as possible. The toes are naturally dropped, relaxed, and comfortable.

6. False Stance (Xu Bu or Xuan Ji Bu, 虛步、玄機步)

Xu bu or *xuan ji bu*, also known as tricky stance, can be used for quick kicking.



False Stance. To assume this stance, place all the body's weight on one leg, and lightly touch the ground with the toes of the other foot. To change legs, turn the body 180 degrees while shifting the weight from the rear foot to the front foot, which becomes the rear foot. Make sure the lead leg has no weight on it.



Upper and lower brains.

2-4. Power Training

General Theory

According to Chinese martial qigong, the power is first generated from the mind. From the mind, the qi is led to the physical body to manifest it as power. Therefore, we can see that the qi is the energy, while the physical body is like the machine. A detailed explanation of qigong can be found in the YMAA book *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane* by Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming.

Furthermore, according to Dr. Michael Gershon in his book *The Second Brain*, a human being can be thought of as having two brains. One brain is in the head and the other is in the gut (digestive system). Though these two brains are separated physically, through the connection of the spinal cord (highly electrically conductive tissue, i.e., Chinese thrusting vessel, 衝脈), they actually function as one.

In this book, it is explained that the upper brain is able to think and has memory (is able to store data, utilizing electrochemical charges) while the lower brain has memory, but does not have the capability of thought. This discovery offers confirmation of the Chinese belief that the real *dan tian* (large and small intestines) is able to store qi (charges) while the upper dan tian governs thinking and directs the qi. Theoretically speaking, if the upper brain is able to think, then it should be able to generate an EMF (electromotive force), while the lower brain should have a large capacity for storing charges. In other words, the lower brain could be the human battery in which the

life force resides. Once the brain has generated an idea (EMF), the charges will immediately be directed from the lower brain, through the spinal cord and nervous system, to the desired area in order to activate the physical body for function.[1]

According to Ohm's Law in Physics,

$$\Delta V = iR$$

where ΔV is potential difference or EMF, i is current, and R is resistance.[2]

From this formula, we can see that if R is a constant, then the higher the potential or EMF, the stronger the current that is generated will be. If we assume that the resistance of our body remains constant, then the more we concentrate (higher EMF), the stronger the qi flow will be. This parallels the Chinese qigong concept that the more you concentrate, the higher your energy level. From Chinese qigong, higher levels of concentration can be trained through still meditation.

We can also examine the formula for physical power manifestation:

$$\text{Power} = \Delta V i = i^2 R$$

This means that the power generated depends on the current and the resistance. Generally, when we intend to manifest our physical strength, for example, when pushing a car, we naturally tense our physical body. Whenever the body is tensed, the resistance of the body is higher, and the energy (current) is trapped in the muscles and power can be manifested. It is the same in many of the external martial styles (or hard styles), such as Tiger and Eagle styles, which focus on building up the muscles (strong machine) and the tension (resistance) to manifest power to its highest levels.

However, the concepts and the approaches of the internal styles (or soft styles), such as Taijiquan and Liu He Ba Fa, are quite different. They teach that since a current is the energy of manifestation, and its influence on the power can be much more significant (remember a current is squared in the formula), then they should pay more attention to cultivating a stronger flow of qi. In order to have stronger qi circulation, meditation is vital since it generates EMF for moving the current. However, in order to have smooth qi circulation, physical resistance or tension must be at a minimum. Therefore, physical relaxation is the key to the internal styles.

The best and most focused manifestation of power that can be generated should come from both energy and flesh—the current and the resistance from the above example. Sacrifice either one, and power manifestation is reduced. Therefore, some soft-hard martial styles, such as White Crane and Xingyiquan, emphasize both qi (current) and tension (resistance). The way they do so is by first keeping the body as relaxed as possible, while using the concentrated mind to lead the qi to the physical body, such as the arms or legs. Once the qi is led from the lower dan tian to the limbs (right before impact), the physical body will suddenly tense up. Therefore, these styles are

called soft-hard styles, and they emphasize both internal and external manifestations of power.

From this theoretical perspective, the power generated from the soft-hard styles should be stronger, since it involves both the current and the resistance. However, it is explained in many Chinese martial documents that the power generated in external styles is dull and shallow, but the power of internal styles is sharp and penetrating. How do internal styles accomplish this? In Chinese internal martial arts, all attacks are targeted at vital acupuncture cavities, which are connected to the internal organs by the qi channels. When these cavities are struck with fast and focused power, the internal organs can be shocked. The results can be fatal. It is very difficult to accurately strike the vital cavities at the proper depth. This is why internal martial arts are considered to be the highest form of martial arts in Chinese society. It is also the reason that when a master from an external style has reached a high level, he will gradually train to become a soft-hard stylist, and finally will endeavor to become completely soft. In fact, when many masters have reached this stage, they have already become old and have lost most of their physical strength. In order to survive, changing from hard to soft is almost necessary. If you wish to know more about martial qigong training and the different types of martial power, please refer to the books *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane* and *Tai Chi Theory and Power* by this author, which are available from YMAA Publication Center.

From the above discussion, you can see that in order to have strong power manifestation, you need to develop both your physical body and your qi body. Physical strength provides an efficient and strong machine, while an abundant qi supply provides a pure and powerful energy supply for the machine. Only if you have both can your power be stronger. You will also grow and stay healthy, and your spirit can become uplifted.

In this section, we will first introduce some of the physical practices that can strengthen the muscles and tendons for sword performance. In the next section, training to strengthen the qi will be discussed.

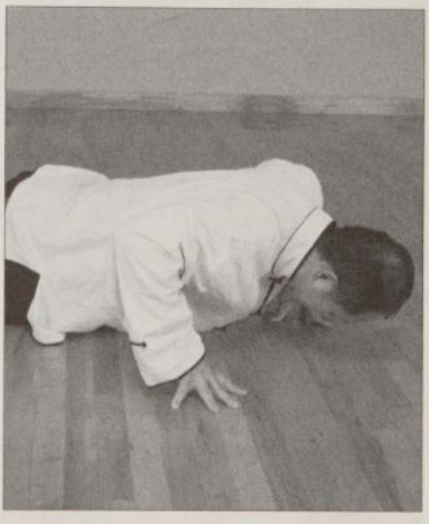
Physical Training

1. Push-Ups

Muscular power is developed by strengthening the fingers, the grip, and the arms.



The fingers are strengthened by doing push-ups on the fingertips. Work up to twenty repetitions.



Endurance is developed by holding the push-up position as long as possible. Work up to one to three minutes.

2. Bamboo Twisting



The grip is strengthened by working with bundles of bamboo rods and a training partner.



Both people turn and raise the bundle in opposite directions.



Take turns, with one person holding the bundle tightly, the other somewhat loosely, and repeat fifty times. This conditions the palms and helps to strengthen the fingers.

3. Windlass





4. Swing Training

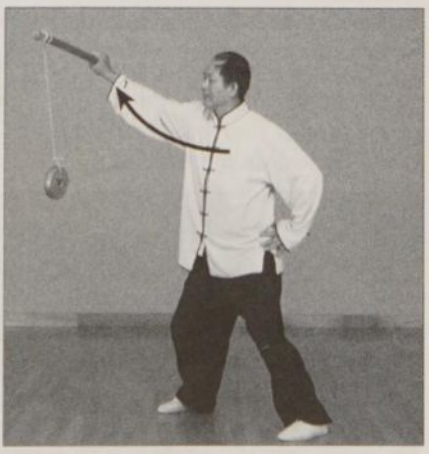
These three exercises are done using a thick, three-foot dowel with a five- to ten-pound weight suspended from one end.





Stand with the feet well apart and hold the stick like a sword. First, move the tip from side to side without letting the weight change position, and also keep the handle from moving. This trains the arm for repelling and covering.





Next, move the handle end from side to side while keeping the weight and tip of the stick stationary. This trains the arm for sliding and blocking. Finally, keep the tip of the stick and the weight stationary and move the hand in a three-foot circle, both clockwise and counterclockwise. This develops strength and suppleness in the arm. Although these are muscle-training exercises, if the student concentrates, he can generate internal energy as well.

5. Accuracy Training

The student can devise his own methods for learning to cut and thrust accurately.



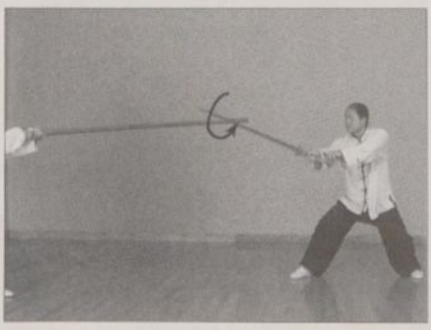
An example of a way to practice cutting is to mount two dowels with a narrow space between them. Practice sliding the tip of the sword between the dowels without touching them. The width of the space between them can be varied, and tape can be used to limit the length of the slit.

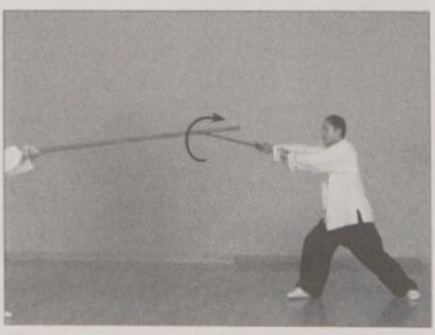


Stabbing can be practiced using a small object suspended on a long cord. Try to stab the object as it swings about.

6. Sticking and Coiling Training

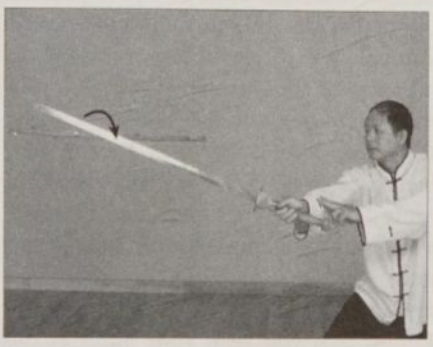
Sticking and coiling with a staff. For sticking and coiling training, first practice coiling around a staff without losing contact with it. This will help you develop the feel of the contact your sword should have in this technique. When you train, use the third of the blade nearest the sword tip.

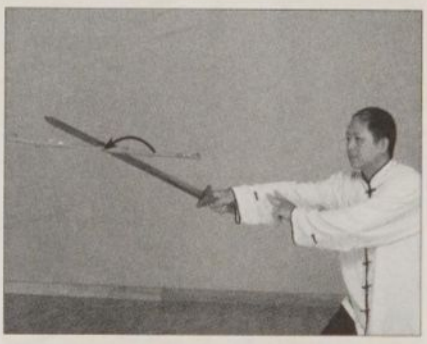




Coil around the staff without losing contact. You should practice coiling in both directions until you feel comfortable and natural. The motion of coiling must originate from the body, instead of the arms.

Sticking and coiling with a soft branch. After practicing on a staff, use a soft branch instead of a staff. In order for you to coil your sword and adhere to the branch, you must know the level of force you can use. The entire process is to train you to have the feeling of the object through the contact of your sword.





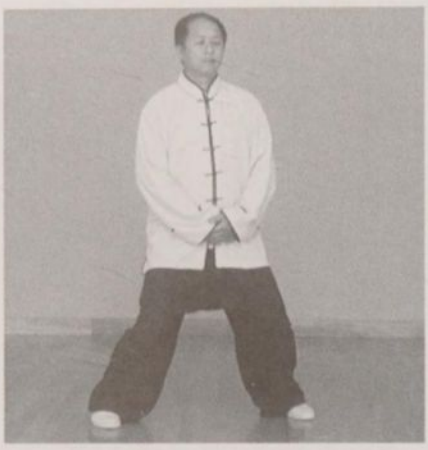
For advanced coiling training, use a soft branch instead of a staff. You should start with soft power, and go slowly. Make your sword coil around, and whenever the angle is appropriate, use the blade to cut and slide along the branch. There should not be resistance between the sword and the branch. Your sword must be like a snake coiling around a tiny branch.

Taiji Sword Qigong

As defined in China, qi is the universal energy or force. When the concept of qi is applied to the energy circulating in our bodies, our current best definition of it is bio-electricity. The word "gong" is a shortening of the word "gongfu," which is work that consumes time. Therefore, gongfu can be translated as hard study or discipline. From this, you can see that the meaning of qigong actually is the study of qi, or the discipline related to qi.

In order to use the sword effectively the student must learn to use his or her mind to direct and project the qi into the sword, balancing the flow of energy with the secret sword hand. This is extremely difficult, and it often takes a lifetime to reach a high level. In the next section, we will introduce taiji sword qigong training. This training was designed for taiji sword practice. Again, different taiji styles may have different types of qigong training. This does not matter; the basic theory remains the same. If you would like to know more about qigong and taiji qigong, please refer to the books by this author: *The Root of Chinese Qigong*; *Tai Chi Qigong*; *Tai Chi Chuan: Classical Yang Style*; and *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane*, all available from YMAA Publication Center.

1. Wuji Breathing (Wuji Hu Xi, 無極呼吸)

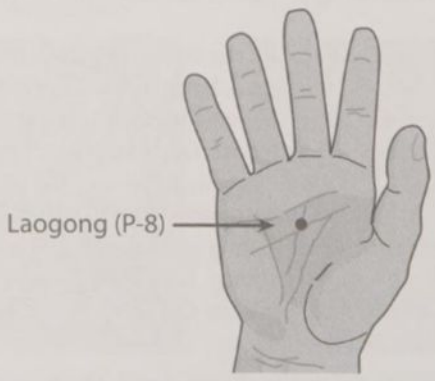


Wuji Breathing. When you practice, gently squat down and place both of your palms right on the abdominal area. Center yourself comfortably, and bring your mind to the abdominal area while starting to breathe deeply, softly, slowly, and smoothly. You can remain in this position for a few minutes as you feel the lower dan tian area grow warm.

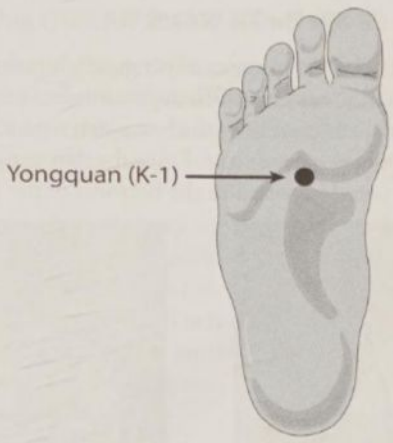
In this breathing technique, first bring your mind to your lower dan tian so you are able to calm down and feel your physical and qi bodies clearly. You should use reverse abdominal breathing: when you inhale, withdraw your abdomen and gently lift your perineum (*huiyin* cavity), and when you exhale, expand your abdomen and let your perineum drop. After you practice for about five minutes, your lower dan tian area will be warm and should feel comfortable. In this process, you are stimulating the qi at your lower dan tian level to a higher level. It is very important that you keep your mind at this center. Once your mind is away from this center, the qi will follow and will flow out of the center and diffuse through the body.

2. Yongquan Breathing (Yongquan Hu Xi, 湧泉呼吸)

There are four body cavities that are well known in Chinese medicine and qigong as gates that regulate the body's qi state. Two of these gates are *laogong* (P-8, 勞宮), located at the center of each palm and the other two are *yongquan* (K-1, 湧泉), situated on the front center of the soles of the feet.

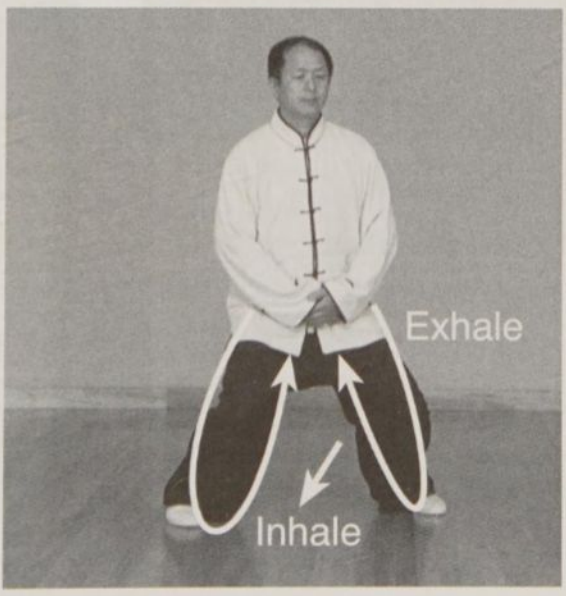


Laogong cavity (P-8).



Yongquan cavity (K-1).

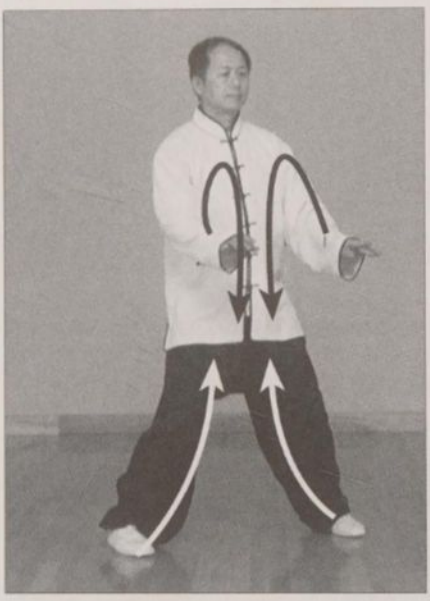
In Chinese martial arts training, learning how to lead the qi to these four gates and to keep them open is very important. When these gates are open, the qi will be regulated smoothly and efficiently. This will allow a martial artist to build up his root and to generate strong power from his hands.



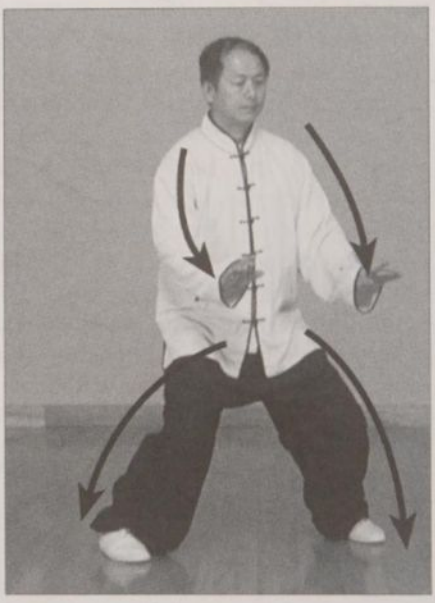
Yongquan Breathing. In this practice, after you have stored an abundance of qi in the lower dan tian, do the following: When you inhale, lead the qi from the yongquan to the lower dan tian, and when you exhale, lead the qi from the lower dan tian to the yongquan cavities. You should practice for several minutes, building up a grounding sensation at the bottoms of your feet.

3. Four Gates Breathing (Si Xin Hu Xi, 四心呼吸)

After you have completed a few minutes of yongquan breathing, add the laogong gate at the center of each palm to the process. When you inhale, use your mind to lead the qi from the laogong and yongquan cavities to the lower dan tian, and when you exhale, lead the qi to these four cavities at the same time. From the dan tian, there are two flows of qi upward to the palms and two downward to the bottoms of the feet.



Four Gates Breathing. When you practice, place your hands palms down, in front of you, with the middle finger slightly forward, to keep the laogong cavity area relaxed so the qi can circulate freely. Squat slightly. In the beginning, keep your mind at the lower dan tian, and inhale and exhale deeply.

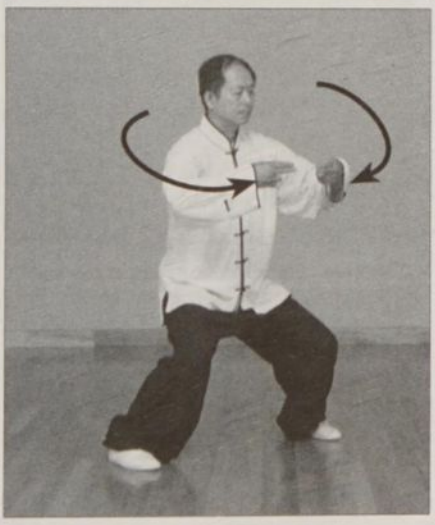


Next, squat slightly deeper when you exhale and lead the qi to the four gates. In order to lead the qi more effectively to these four gates, imagine you are both pressing your feet and pushing your palms downward. This image will help you to lead the qi. The more you can concentrate, the stronger the qi you are able to lead. Then you lead the qi back to the lower dan tian again when you inhale. This completes a breathing cycle. Perform this breathing pattern for several minutes.

4. Secret Sword Breathing (Jian Jue Hu Xi, 劍訣呼吸)

After you have become proficient at four gates breathing, you should continue performing it throughout the entire taiji sword qigong practice. Eventually, you will want to apply the same breathing technique to the taiji sword solo sequence. This breathing technique will lead you to the internal aspect of the art, instead of leaving you with only external forms.

Next, you should not only lead the qi to the four gates, but you should extend the qi into the palms, and to the index and middle fingers. Theoretically, the more strongly you are able to lead the qi out from these two fingers, the more strongly you will be able to lead the qi to the tip of the sword. When this happens, you will be able to feel the opponent's weapon clearly through your sword. Moreover, you will be able to direct the qi to the sword tip to execute the techniques.



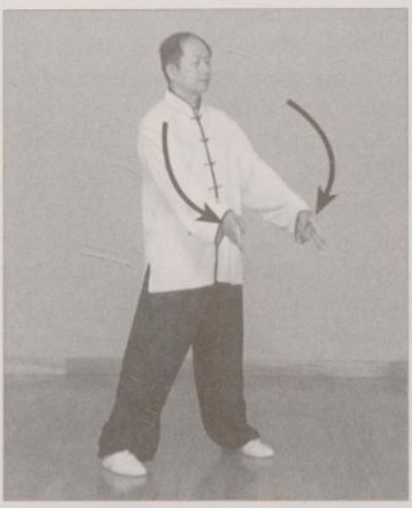
Secret Sword Breathing. There are two common practices in this piece. The first is continuing in your squat position while placing both of your hands in front of your chest. The palms face inward, and the index and middle fingers are in a gently held secret sword hand position. When you inhale, lead the qi from the extremities to the lower dan tian, and when you exhale, lead it to the feet and the two extended fingers.



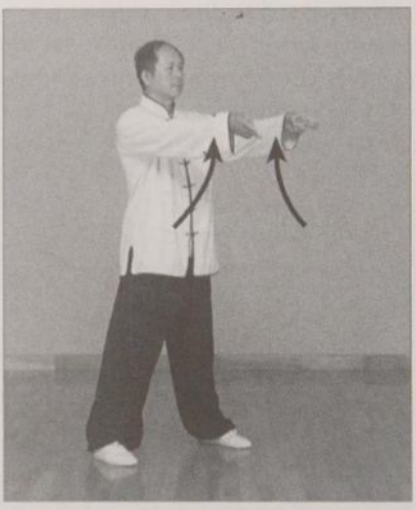
After you have practiced for six to ten breathing cycles, do the following: When you inhale, keep the same posture. When you exhale, as you are leading the qi to the fingers, also rotate your hands until the palms are facing forward and downward. Again, you should practice for six to ten breathing cycles.

5. Sink the Qi to the Lower Dan Tian (Qi Chen Dan Tian, 氣沉丹田)

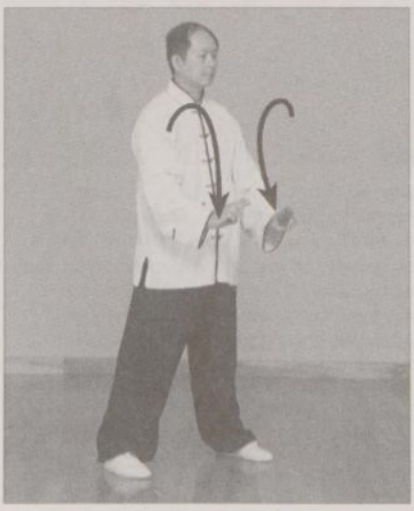
The previous four pieces are treated as a warm-up, encouraging coordination of the mind, body, and breath through concentration, relaxation, and smooth, uniform respiration. Next, we begin to add to the moving patterns.



Inhale and scoop your hands down to the abdominal area while rotating your hands until they face each other.

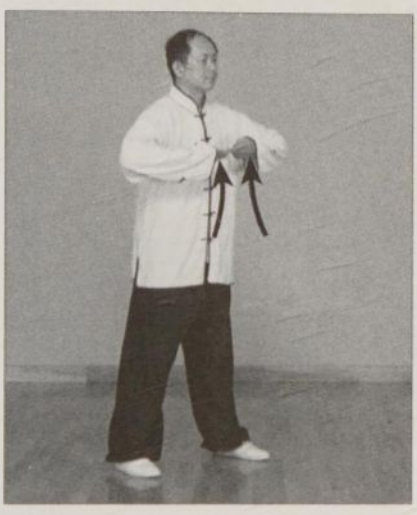


Continue your inhalation, and at the same time raise your hands to chest height. The arms are slightly bent.



Finally, exhale, rotate both of your hands until they are facing downward, and lower both of your hands to abdominal height. Repeat this up and down cycle six to ten times.

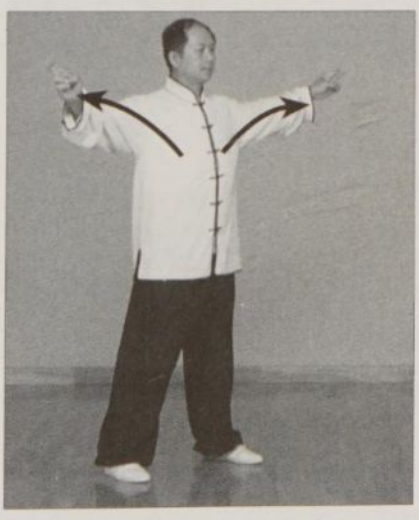
6. Left and Right Expand the Bow (Zuo You Kai Gong, 左右開弓)



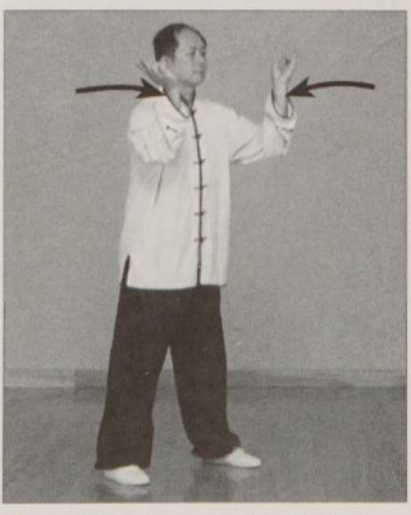
After you have returned your hands to the abdominal area, inhale and raise both hands to the chest area, with both arms aligned.



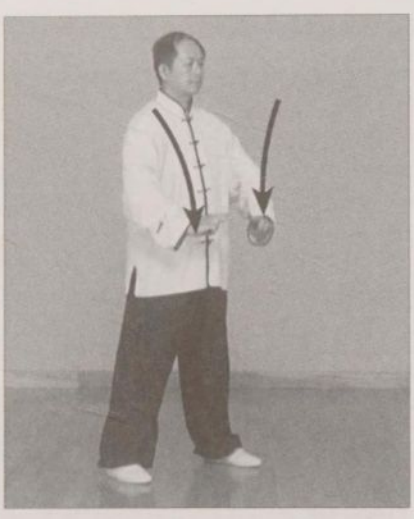
Then continue your inhalation while lowering your elbows.



Finally, exhale and extend both of your arms to the sides with palms facing forward and fingers extending sideways.



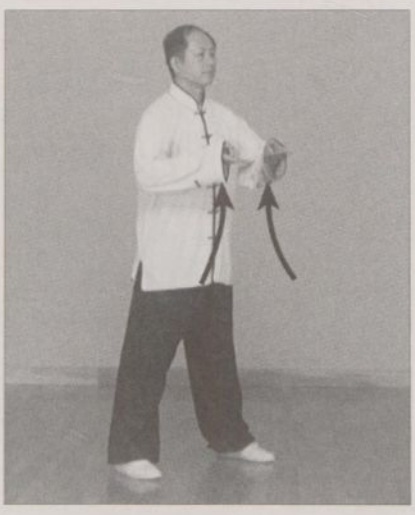
Next, inhale and bring both hands back to the chest area.



Then exhale and lower both arms to your abdominal area. Again, you should align both arms when you lower your hands. Perform six to ten repetitions.

7. Left and Right Coil and Turn (Zuo You Chan Zhuan, 左右纏轉)

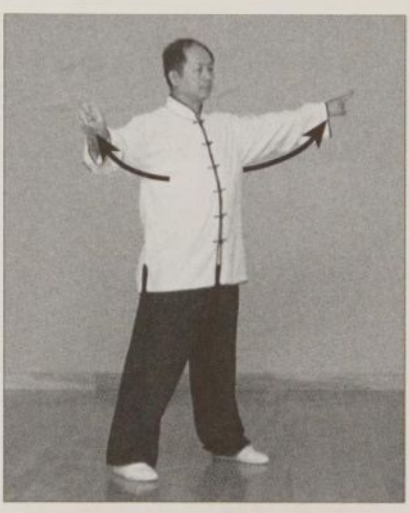
This piece is very similar to the previous one, except there is a coiling, circular motion in the pattern.



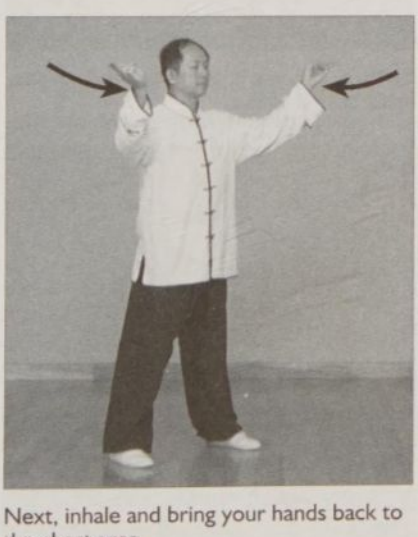
As with the last piece, first you inhale and lift up both arms to the chest area.



Continue your inhalation while circling both hands inward and then to the sides.



Finally, exhale and extend both arms sideways. However, the palms are facing downward this time.



Next, inhale and bring your hands back to the chest area.



Then exhale and bring down both hands to the abdominal area. Repeat this pattern six to ten times.

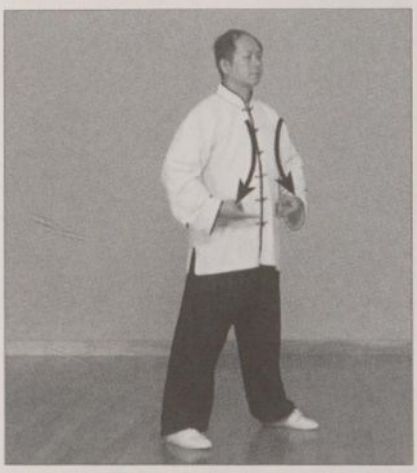
You should always remind yourself that all of the motion in taijiquan originates from the root (feet), is directed by the waist (steering wheel), and finally is manifested in the

fingers. Therefore, once you start to move, it does not matter how small a movement you make—it all originates from the body and reaches to the hands. In other words, the hands follow the body's movement, instead of the arms moving independently.

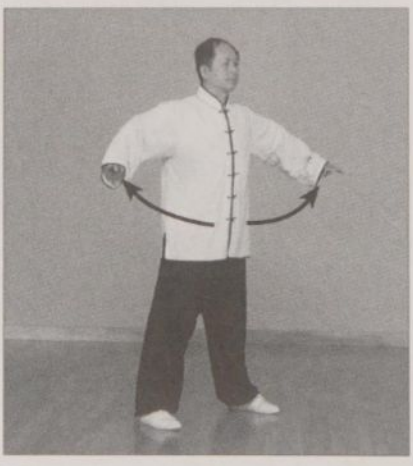
8. Arc the Arms for Embracing (Gong Bi Huan Bao, 拱臂環抱)



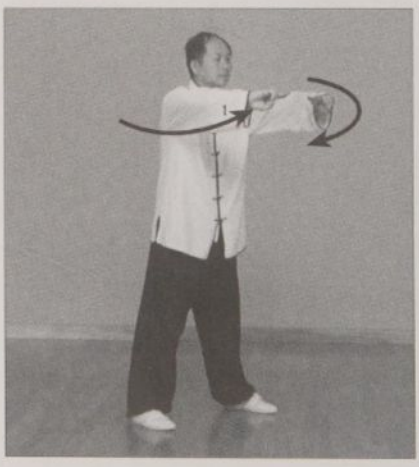
First, inhale and raise both of your hands to the chest area, with the palms facing upward.



Next, exhale and lower your hands to the sides of your waist.



Then circle and extend both arms to the sides.



Move both arms forward to the center of your chest area. The arms form a circle in front of the chest area.



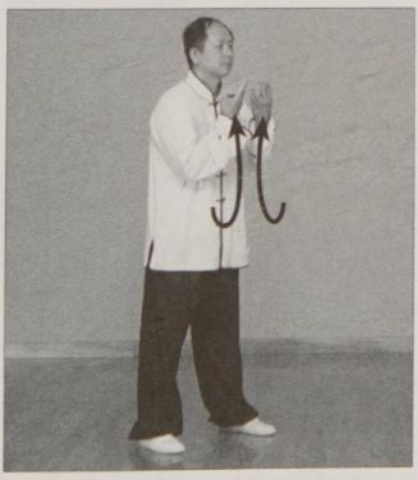
Inhale and bring both hands back to the chest area.



Then lower both hands to the abdominal area while exhaling. Repeat this pattern six to ten times.

9. Fingers on Both Hands Point Forward (Shuang Shou Qian Zhi, 雙手前指)

This piece is very similar to the previous one, except that the hands now are extending forward instead of sideways.



Inhale and raise both of your hands to the chest area, with the palms facing upward.



Next, exhale and extend both of your arms forward, with the fingers pointing forward.



Then inhale and bring both hands back to the chest area.



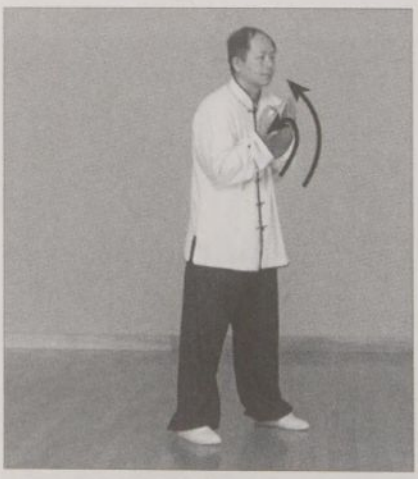
Finally, exhale and lower both hands to the abdominal area. Repeat this pattern six to ten times.

10. Forward and Backward Coil and Turn (Qian Hou Chan Zhuan, 前后纏轉)

This piece is very similar to the previous piece, except that there is an extra coiling circle right in front of the chest area.



Inhale and lift both hands to your chest area.



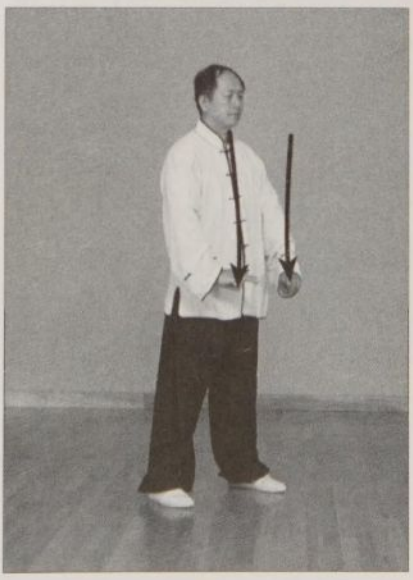
Continue your inhalation while turning your hands inward toward you, and start to turn to point forward.



Next, exhale and extend both arms forward with fingers pointing forward, palms facing downward.



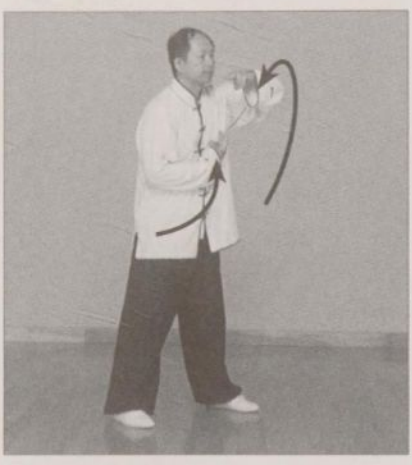
Then inhale and bring both hands back to your chest area.



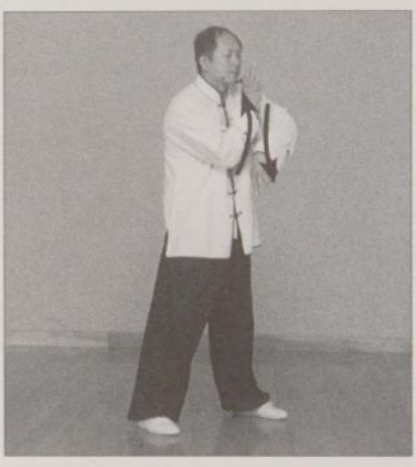
Finally, exhale and lower both hands to the abdominal area. Repeat this pattern six to ten times.

11. Upward and Downward Yin and Yang (Shang Xia Yin Yang, 上下陰陽)

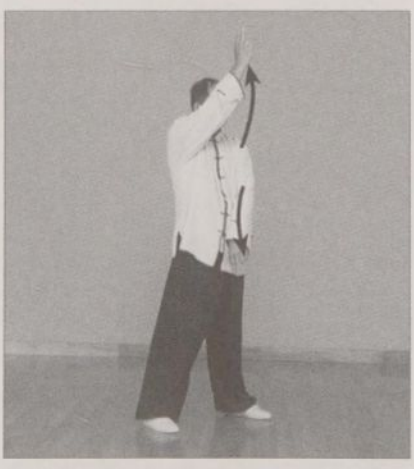
In this piece, you lead the qi upward and downward at the same time.



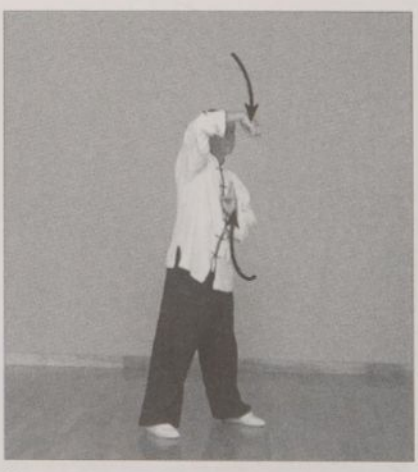
First, inhale and bring your left hand up to your face area. Start to turn your left hand downward, with its fingers pointing downward, while also bringing your right hand upward with its fingers pointing upward.



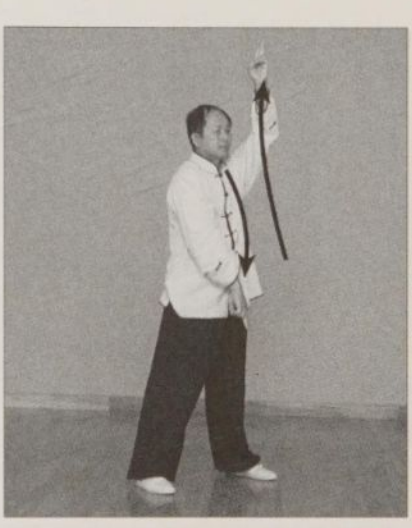
Cross both hands in front of your chest area and start to exhale.



Continue exhaling and extend both arms until they are nearly straight.

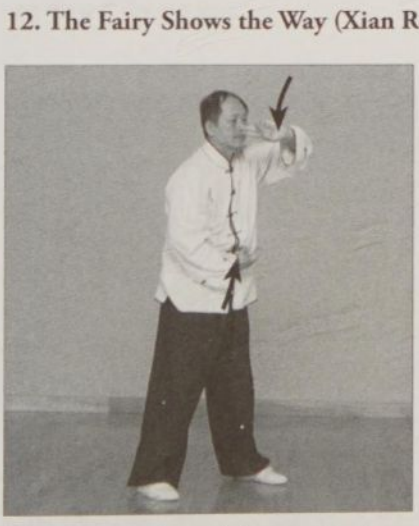


Next, inhale and bring your right hand downward with its fingers pointing downward, while the left hand rises, its fingers pointing upward.

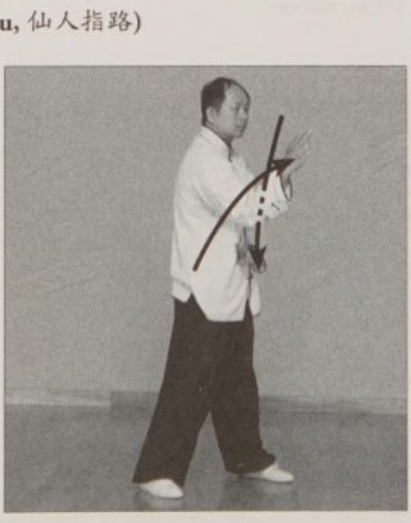


When both hands meet at the chest area, exhale and extend both arms until nearly straight. Repeat this pattern six to ten times.

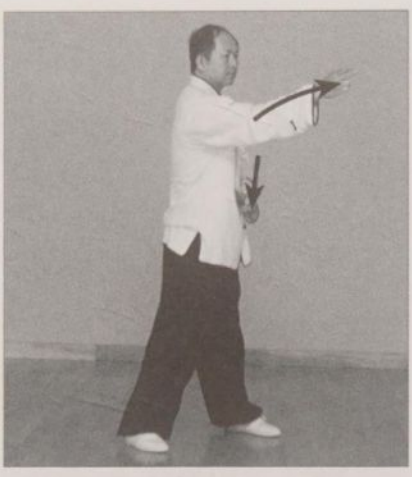
12. The Fairy Shows the Way (Xian Ren Zhi Lu, 仙人指路)



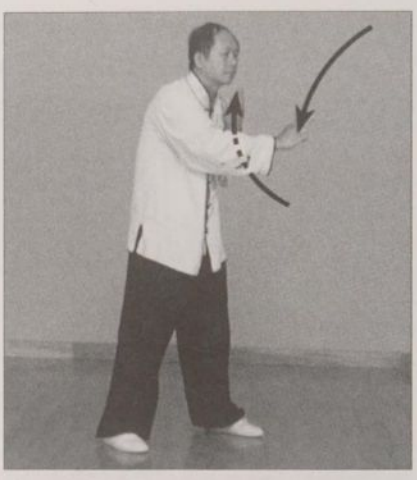
Following from the end of upward and downward yin and yang, inhale and lower the left arm down across the body until held horizontally across the abdomen, palm facing downward. At the same time raise the right hand with fingers pointing upward.



When the hands meet at the chest area, start to exhale, continue to press the left arm downward, and extend the right arm forward.



When the left hand reaches the abdominal area and the right arm extends nearly straight out, you should have completed the exhalation.



Next, inhale and move your right hand inward while lifting your left hand with fingers pointing upward.



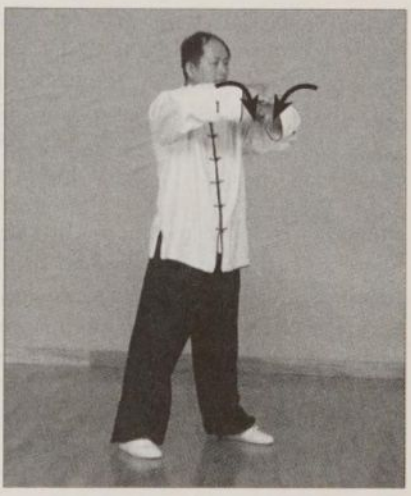
When the hands meet at the chest area, exhale and extend the left arm forward while lowering the right arm. Repeat this pattern six to ten times.



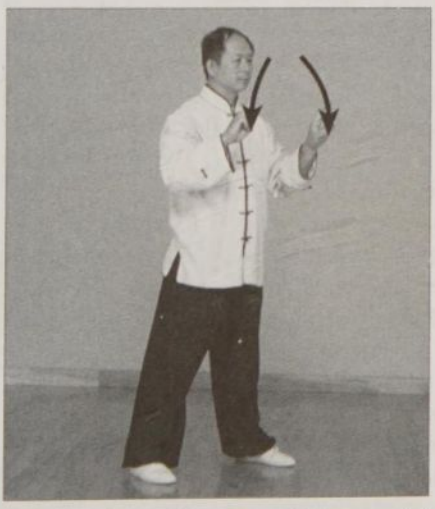
To finish this practice, inhale and bring your left hand in, and start to lift your right hand.

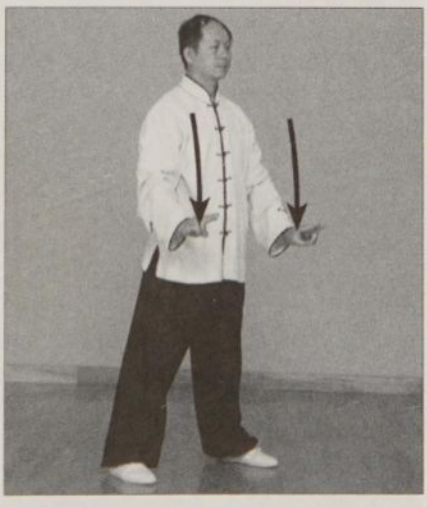


When the hands meet at the chest area, allow them to overlap with the palms facing inward, toward you.



Continue your inhalation and rotate both palms until they face downward.





Exhale and lower the arms until they reach the abdominal area.

Drop both hands and relax your fingers. Close your eyes and breathe naturally until you feel comfortable. It is normal if you feel heat on the bottoms of your feet. Simply lift and lower your heels a few times and the burning feeling will dissipate.

2-5. Key Words and Techniques

Generally speaking, due to geographical differences, Northern Chinese martial artists have developed techniques that emphasize long- and middle-range fighting, while Southern martial artists focus on firm root, and specialize in short- and middle-range fighting. Sword techniques that emerged differed according to this developmental influence. For example, the sword techniques of the Southern styles emphasize defensive techniques. Neutralizing, sticking, adhering, and coiling are often the key words or essential secrets of the practice. This is different from those of the Northern styles, in which offensive techniques receive more attention. In order to make the techniques most efficacious, the Northern sword is relatively longer than the Southern sword.

Taiji sword was developed at Wudang Mountain (武當山), which is located in Hubei Province (湖北省), near the geographic line of division, the Yangtze River (長江), between the Northern and Southern styles. It is because of this that taiji sword techniques developed there mix both Northern and Southern elements. Although the length of the taiji sword used in this region is relatively longer than the ones used in most other styles, the techniques developed still focus on neutralizing, sticking, adhering, and coiling. In one way, the style is extremely offense oriented, but in another, it is very defensive. It is because of this that taiji sword is well known as one of the most effective sword styles in Chinese martial arts history. It is also because of these unique characteristics that taiji sword is difficult to learn, and it is even more difficult to reach its highest levels of understanding and skills.

However, even though there are many different styles, the basic theory remains the same. For example, in order to make the techniques effective, internal power must be trained. Moreover, in order to protect the sword from damage (especially the one-third nearest the tip), most of the techniques that were developed are somewhat similar. Once you have mastered one style, it is fairly easy to adopt techniques from other styles and blend them into your knowledge and skills.

Before introducing the key techniques for the sword, a few things should be noted. Over the centuries of its development, many sword techniques were created. Often, due to lack of communication and secrecy, confusion in terminology is common today. The same basic technique has several different names given by different styles. Occasionally, techniques with the same name can be slightly or very much different from each other. When you start learning these key techniques, you should not restrict your mind in the

areas of terminology and narrow technical meanings. Cast your mind widely and absorb as much information as possible.

This section will introduce thirty basic sword techniques for your reference and practice. Although many of these techniques are not classified in the taiji sword basic training, the value of this knowledge is unlimited. It is wise to take advantage of the incredible availability of this knowledge in the world today. Only then can the skill and the knowledge continuously be improved. Often, an open mind is the first key to humble learning. I hope from this introduction, you can begin to grasp the essence of general sword practice.

1. Split or Chop (Pi or Kan, 劈、砍)

Split (*pi*) means to use the top third of the sword blade to chop downward, toward the opponent. It is stated in the *Great Dictionary of Chinese Wushu*: "Pi sword, blade vertical, attack by chopping downward from the top."[3, 4] A similar technique can be found as chop (*kan*), as stated in the book *The Seven Star Sword* (七星劍): "Kan sword, the sword body is chopping from sideway to forward, to the left, or to the right."[3, 5] Vertical downward chopping is classified as split or chop in many other styles.

Technically, the motion of this technique can be either vertical chop (*zheng pi*, 正劈) or diagonal chop (*xie pi*, 斜劈).





Vertical Chop.





Diagonal Chop.

2. Stab (Ci, 刺)

Stab (*ci*) means to strike with the tip of the sword in a straight thrust. It is stated in the *Great Dictionary of Chinese Wushu*: "Ci sword, stab forward with vertical blade or horizontal blade. The power reaches the tip of the sword. The arm and the sword line up as a straight line."[3, 6]

Technically, the motion of this technique can be either vertical stab (zheng li ci, 正立刺), reverse vertical stab (*fan li ci*, 反立刺), or horizontal stab (*zheng ping ci*, 正平刺), reverse horizontal stab (*fan ping ci*, 反平刺).



Vertical Stab. This technique can be performed with the sword blade vertical, with the palm facing to the left.

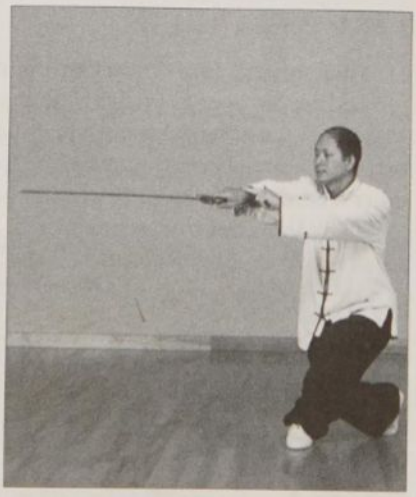




Reverse Vertical Stab. Stab can also be performed with the palm facing toward the right.



Horizontal Stab. Stab can also be performed with the sword held horizontally, palm up.



Reverse Horizontal Stab. Stab can also be performed with the palm facing down.

There is another technique that is similar to ci, called thrust (*chong*, 沖). It is stated: "Chong sword, the sword body is moving from the low to the high and straight forward. The sword tip is attacking more forward and less downward."[3, 7]





The thrust (chong) technique should be executed as a thrust forward, with the tip of the sword pointing slightly upward.

3. Slide Upward (Liao, 撩)

Slide upward (*liao*) means to use the top third of the sword to slide upward and forward to the opponent's body. It is stated in the *Great Dictionary of Chinese Wushu*: "Liao sword, use the sharp place of the sword to slide upward from bottom."[3,8] Naturally, before you can execute this technique, you must first neutralize the incoming attack with other techniques.

The motion of this technique can be either normal slide up (zheng jiao, 正撩) or reverse slide up (fan jiao, 反撩).





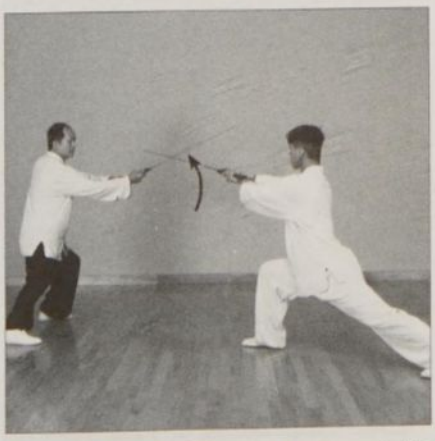
Normal Slide Up. This technique can be performed to the left.




Reverse Slide Up. This technique can also be performed to the right.

4. Shake or Sway (Yao or Pao, 摇、抛)

It is stated in the *Great Dictionary of Chinese Wushu*: "The sword body moving to the left and right in parallels is called pao."[3, 9] This means to hold the sword blade horizontally, with the palm facing up, and shake (*yao*) or sway (*pao*) the blade from side to side to block or to cut the opponent while moving either forward or backward.



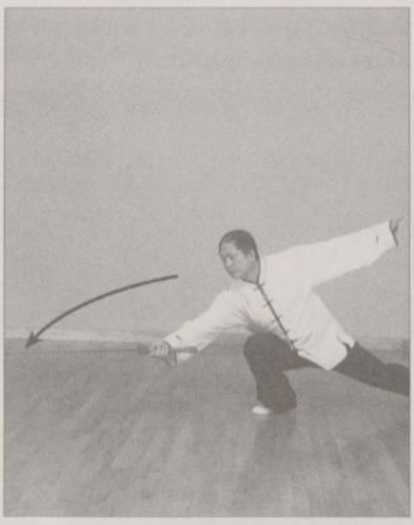

In applying this technique, you may neutralize the attack to the left, and then sway to the right to cut the opponent's throat.




You may also neutralize the attack to your right, and then sway to the left for attack.

5. Sweep (Sao, 扫)

It is said: "Horizontal sword blade, close to the ground, and attacking from left to right or from right to left is called sao sword."[3, 10] *Sao* is commonly used to attack an opponent's knees or ankles. The sweeping can be either part of the circle, or the entire circle.



Sweep, part of a circle.

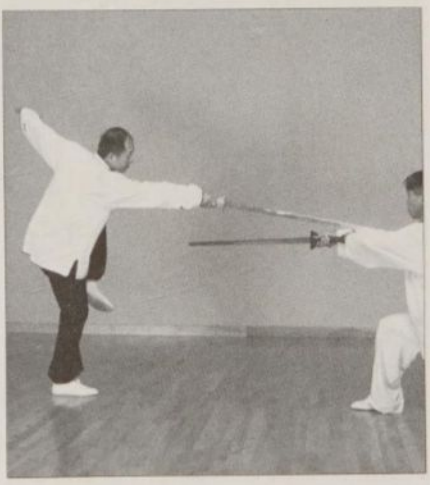


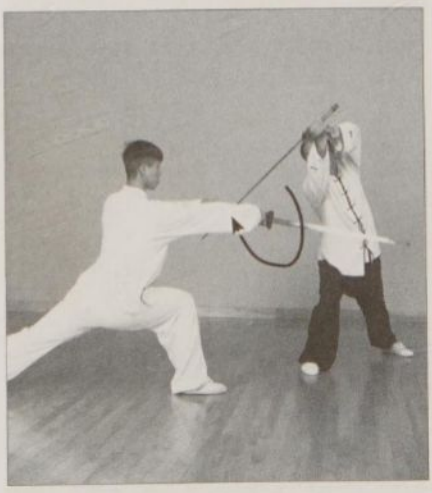
Sweep, entire circle.

6. Intercept (Jie, 截)

It is said: "Vertical sword blade, using the tip section of the sword to intercept and attack diagonally upward, downward, or backward is called jie sword."[3, 11] Technically, *jie* is a fast chop to the enemy's wrist to intercept a stab. Jie can be done either internal intercept (*nei jie,* 內截), or external intercept (*wai jie,* 外截).







Internal Intercept. If you chop the enemy's wrist internally, it is called an internal intercept.





External Intercept. If you intercept an attack from the outside, it is called an external intercept.

7. Pluck (Tiao, 挑)

It is stated: "Vertical sword blade, straight arm from the bottom upward, to pluck and attack, is called tiao sword. The arm and the sword as a straight line."[3, 12]

The motion of *tiao* can be either external pluck (*wai shang tiao,* 外上挑) or internal pluck (*nei shang tiao,* 內上挑).





For pluck (tiao), the arm and the sword align and cut upward in a vertical path.



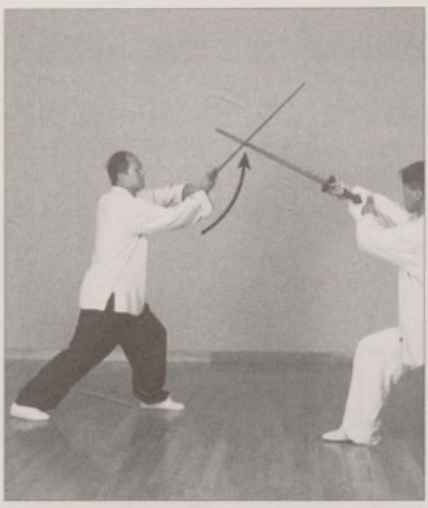


Technically, you may use tiao to attack the opponent's wrist, or to cut upward to the opponent's body.



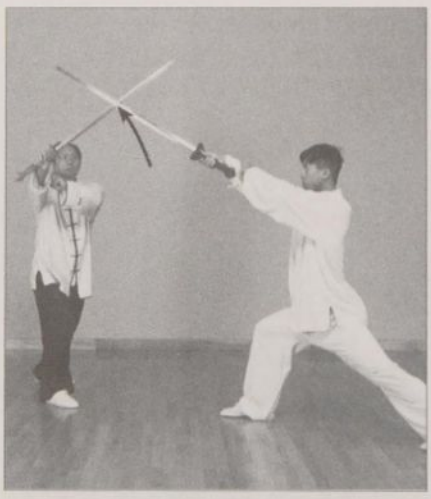


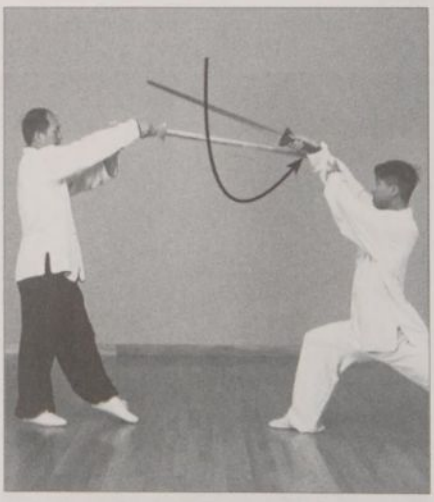
External Pluck (continued on next page).





External Pluck (continued). When you block the attack to the inside and pluck upward to the enemy's wrist from the outside of his arm, it is called an external pluck.



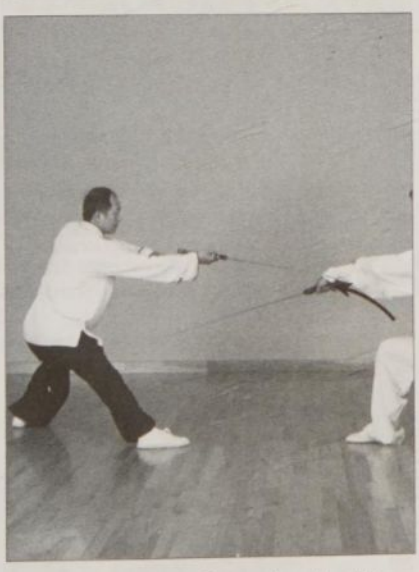


Internal Pluck. If you block the attack to the side and cut the enemy's wrist from the internal side of his arm, it is called an internal pluck.

8. Draw Back or Pull (Le, Dai, Chou, Ba, or La, 捋、帶、抽、拔、拉)

Although there are many different Chinese names for draw back or pull, the basic concepts are the same. It is stated: "Horizontal or vertical sword blade, from the front, pulling [the sword] backward, or upward and backward, is called dai. The power reaches the sword body."[3, 13] As it was also explained in the book *The Great Importances of Wudang Sword Techniques*, "Chou can be distinguished into upper chou and lower chou, two kinds. Its action all in situations that the palm holding the sword faces downward and the back of the palm faces upward. The tip of the sword points forward and aims at the opponent's upper wrist, or at the lower wrist when pulled toward the right."[3, 14]

Technically, this means to pull the sword backward. You may also use this opportunity to slide on the opponent's wrist while withdrawing. The motion of this technique can be either internal draw back (*nei le,* 內捋) or external draw back (*wai le,* 外捋).



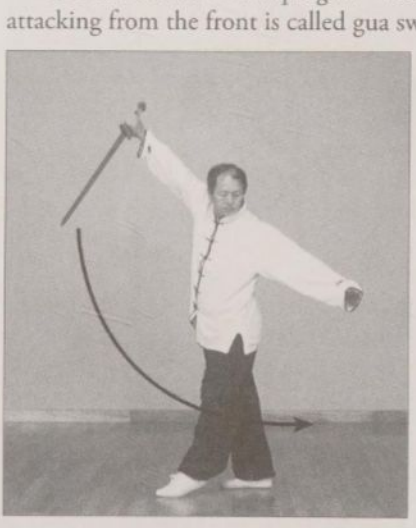
Internal Draw Back. If you draw back from the inside, it is called an internal draw back.



External Draw Back. If you draw back on the outside, it is called an external draw back.

9. Lift (Gua, 挂)

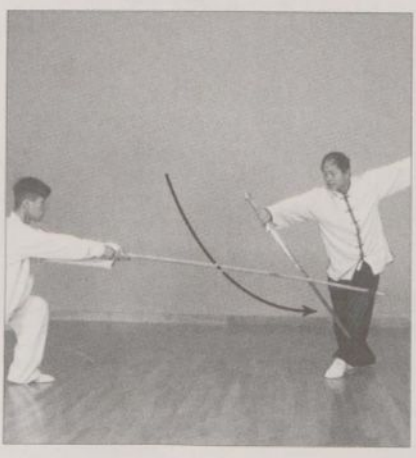
It is said for the technique *gua*: "Vertical sword blade, the sword body sliding back for attacking from the front is called gua sword."[3, 15]



Lift.



When your opponent attacks the lower part of your body, you may use gua to slide the attack backward, to neutralize the attack.





Lift (gua) can also be used to attack after blocking a long weapon, such as a spear.

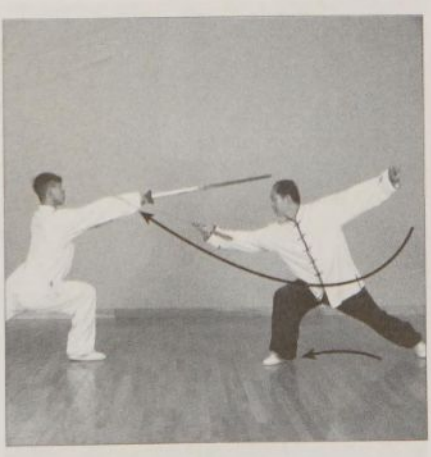
10. Expand (Huo, 豁)

Huo means to expand. Usually, the sword and the arm are in a straight line. Expand can be performed either diagonally or horizontally.





For example, when it is used against a stab, first slide block the enemy's sword to the left, and then perform the horizontal huo to cut the torso.



Against an attack from the rear, turn around to the right and use the huo to cut the enemy's sword wrist or the back of his neck.

11. Point (Dian, 點)

It is stated for the technique *dian*: "Vertical sword blade, using the lower part of the tip, suspending the wrist and pointing downward for an attack, is called dian sword."[3, 16]



Dian is a quick motion that normally aims at the opponent's wrist, neck, or temple. The power of the point originates from the jerking of the wrist, and when the tip reaches the target, the wrist is suspended.

12. Slide (Fa, 划)

Fa means to use the tip of the sword to slide to the opponent. The direction can be up to down, left to right, or front to rear.



The key to a successful slide is to keep an effective sliding angle between the sword body and the target.





For example, after you block the attack, use the tip of your sword to slide to the opponent's throat.

13. Smear (Mo, 抹、摸)

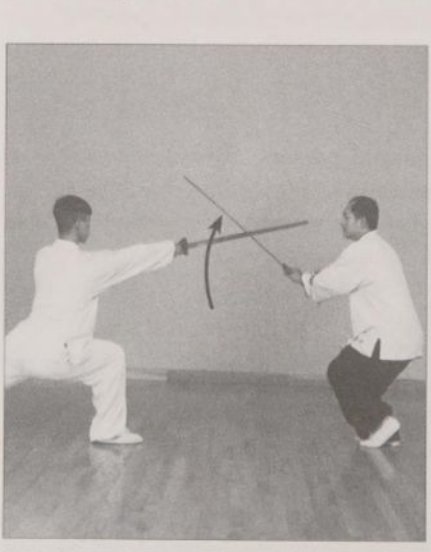
It is stated for the technique *mo*: "Horizontal sword blade, using the middle section of the sword body, to pull and slide from the front to the left [or right rear], is called mo sword."[3, 17] It is also stated: "Mo sword, the sword body horizontal, is the action in which the tip of the sword is pointing forward, and the sword blade is swaying from left to right and from right to left."[3, 18] Compared to slide, the range of attack in smear is shorter.

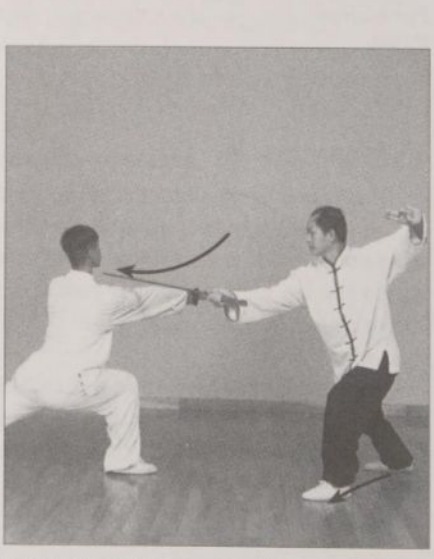
Technically, the motion of this technique can be either internal: (high internal smear, *shang nei mo,* 上內抹), (low internal smear, *xie nei mo,* 下內抹), or external: (high external smear, *shang wai mo,* 上外抹), (low external smear, *xia wai mo,* 下外抹).





High Internal Smear. If you deflect the enemy's attack from the inside and then smear the neck, it is called a high internal smear.





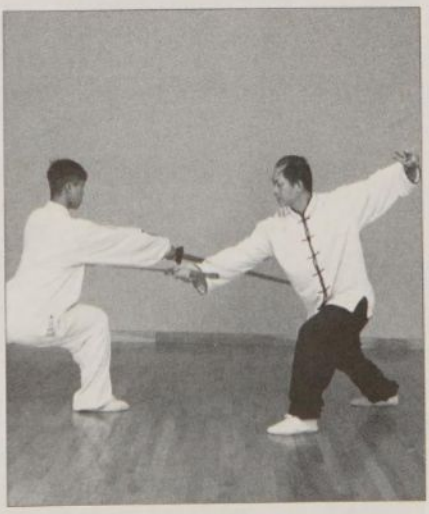
High External Smear. If you hinder the attack from the outside and then smear the neck, this is called a high external smear.





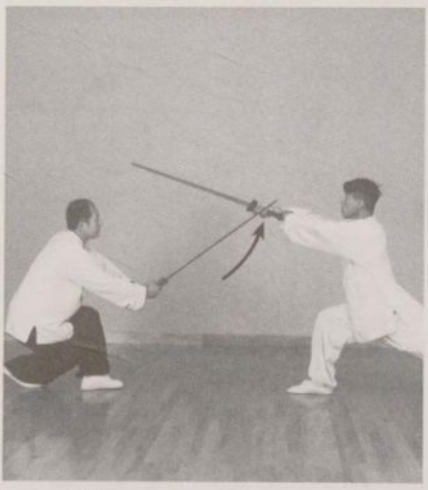
Low Internal Smear. If you deflect the enemy's low attack on the internal side and then smear the stomach, it is called a low internal smear.





Low External Smear. If you slide block the enemy's low attack on his external side, it is called a low external smear.

14. File (Cuo, 銼、錯)



Upward File.

Cuo is a technique in which you cut your opponent by thrusting the sword away from you, rather than pulling it toward you.

The motion of this technique can be upward file (*shang cuo,* 上銼), internal file (*nei cuo,* 內銼), or external file (*wai cuo,* 外銼).



Internal File. If you file from the enemy's inside, it is called an internal file.



External File. If you file the enemy's wrist from the outside, it is called an external file.

15. Entwine or Wrap (Jiao or Chan, 絞、纏)

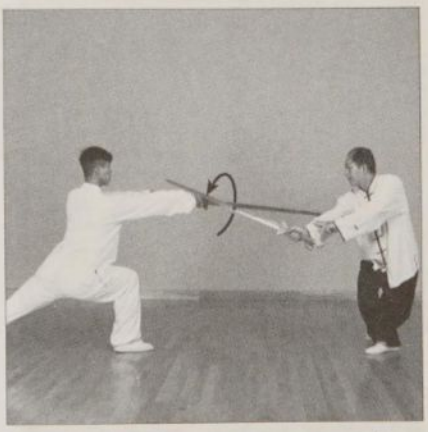
It is stated for the technique *jiao*: "Circling the sword tip is called jiao sword."[3, 19]

The motion of this technique can be either external wrap (*wei jiao,* 外絞) or internal wrap (*nei jiao,* 內絞).

This wrist chasing-wrapping-paring technique is also called paring wrist (*gua wan,* 刮腕).



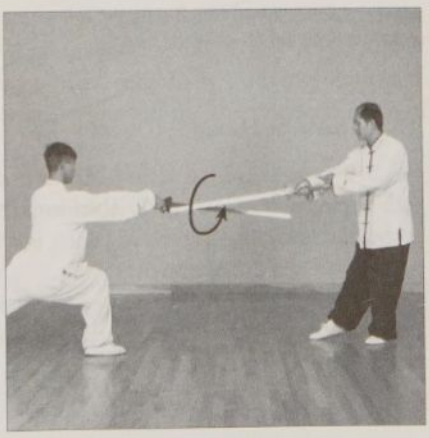
Jiao is a technique frequently used to evade a cut to your wrist, and to cut the enemy's wrist by moving the hand in a circle.



External Wrap. If you wrap your enemy's wrist from the outside (counterclockwise), it is called an external wrap.



Internal Wrap. If you wrap the enemy's wrist from the inside (clockwise), it is called an internal wrap.



The circling motion of the sword tip can also be used to wrap the opponent's sword and so neutralize the attack.

16. Bear (Tuo, 托)

It is stated: "The sword body strongly blocking upward horizontally is called tuo."[3, 20] That means *tuo* is a strong upward or diagonal block with the thick, dull end of the blade.

The motion of this technique can be either upward bear (*zheng tuo,* 正托 or *shang tuo,* 上托) or diagonal bear (*xie tuo,* 斜托).



Upward Bear. If you block straight upward, it is called an upward bear.

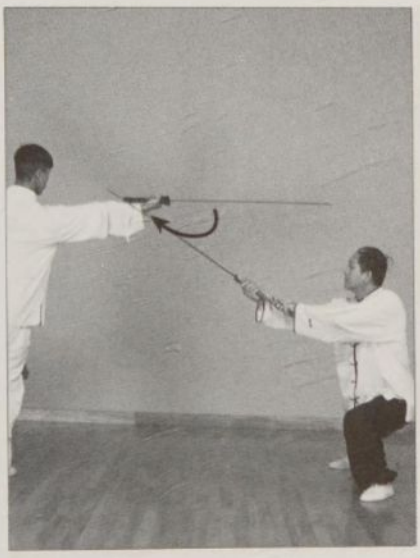


Diagonal Bear. If you block diagonally, it is called a diagonal bear.

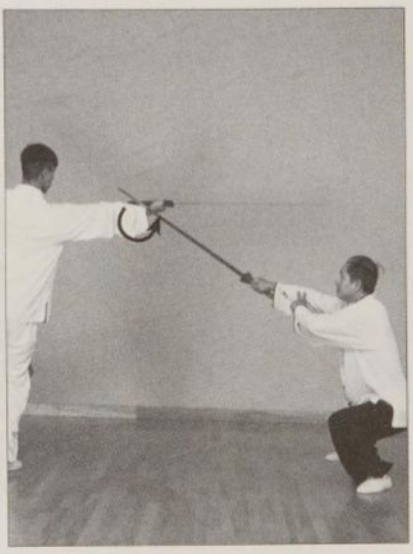
17. Impede or Hamper (Ge, 格)

In the book *The Great Importances of Wudang Sword Techniques*, it is stated for the technique *ge*: "Ge is distinguished into lower ge and flipping ge, two methods. Lower ge is the hand holding the sword facing inward, and the sword moving diagonally, from low to high, to cut the opponent's wrist.

"Flipping ge is when the opponent is close to the body, dodges his attack, and the hand holding the sword turns the palm from inward to outward, and attacks the opponent's wrist."[3, 21]



Therefore, when someone attacks, squat down to avoid the attack while using the sword to attack diagonally to his wrist.

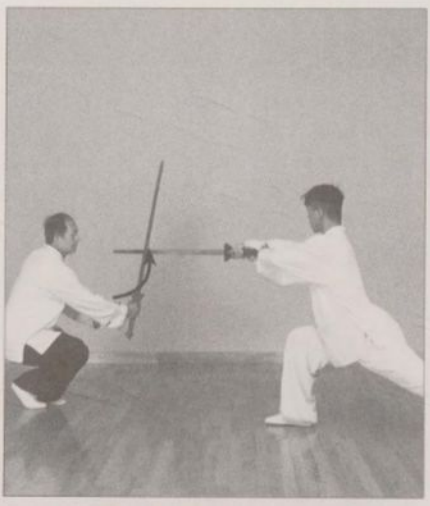


Alternatively, you may dodge to the side and attack the opponent's wrist by turning your hand outward.

18. Hinder or Obstruct (Lan, 攔)

Lan is the deflection of a stab by sliding the enemy's weapon to the side, away from your body. The *Great Dictionary of Chinese Wushu* describes another way to do lan. It says: "The sword body intercepting [an incoming attack] diagonally from high to low, is called lan."[3, 22] This means that when someone attacks you, you use the middle section of the sword to intercept downward.

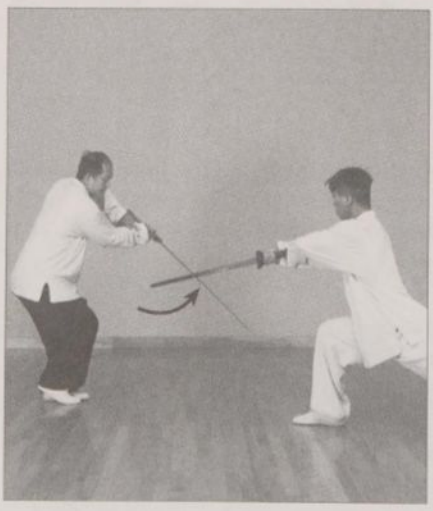
The motion of this technique can be either internal hinder (*nei zhong lan,* 內中攔), low internal hinder (*nei xia lan,* 內下攔), or external hinder (*wai zhong lan,* 外中攔), low external hinder (*wai xia lan,* 外下攔).



Internal Hinder. If you slide block from the inside, it is called an internal hinder.



External Hinder. If you slide block from the outside, it is called an external hinder.



Low Internal Hinder. If you slide block a low attack on the internal side, it is called a low internal hinder.



Low External Hinder. If you block a low attack on the external side, it is called a low external hinder.



Alternative way to do lan.

19. Cloud (Yun, 雲)

It is stated in the *Great Dictionary of Chinese Wushu*: "Horizontal sword blade, circling [the sword] above the head, or upper front of the head, is called yun sword."[3, 23] However, it is also stated that *yun* can be done with the blade held vertically.



Cloud (continued on next page).





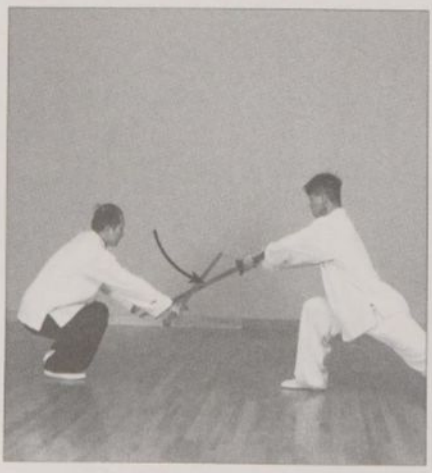


Cloud (continued). Yun is mainly a defensive move used to neutralize an attack with a circular motion of the sword, immediately following the attack.

20. Cover and Press Down (Gai and Ya, 蓋、壓)

In the book *The Great Importances of Wudang Sword Techniques*, it is stated: "Ya, the palm of the sword-holding hand facing downward, uses the sword body to press downward the opponent's sword directly."[3, 24] Technically, *ya* means to block the opponent's weapon and immobilize it with a forward and downward push.

The motion of this technique can be either internal cover (*nei gai,* 內蓋) or external cover (*wai gai,* 外蓋).



Internal Cover. If you cover from the inside, it is called an internal cover.



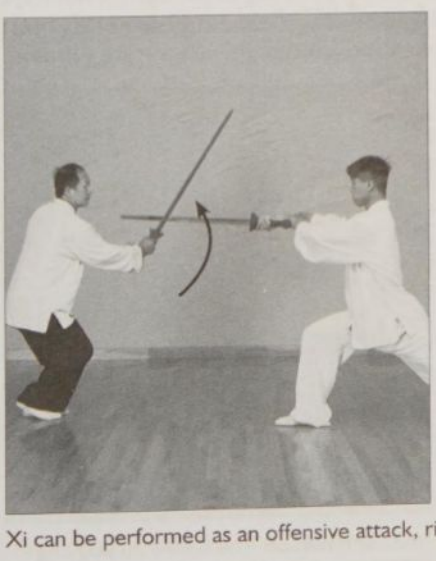
External Cover. If you cover from the outside, it is called an external cover.

21. Wash (Xi, 洗)

In the book *The Great Importances of Wudang Sword Techniques*, it is stated for the technique *xi*: "[In] xi, the hand holding the sword turns outward, so the palm faces forward. The sword slides, striking upward with vertical sword blade."[3, 25]



Wash. The sword slides, striking upward. The sword blade is vertical.

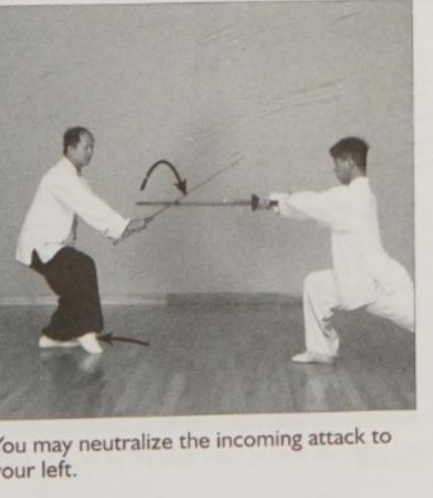




Xi can be performed as an offensive attack, right after blocking.

22. Rise (Jie or Ti, 揭、提)

Ti means to block the opponent's weapon straight up.



Ti is usually followed by straight downward chopping.

23. Embrace (Bao, 抱)

It is stated for the technique *bao*: "Right hand holding the sword [and] left hand on the side of the handle is called bao sword. The sword tip pointing to the right is sideways bao sword, the sword tip pointing upward is vertical bao sword, and the sword tip pointing forward is horizontal bao sword."[3, 26]



Sideways Embrace. The sword tip pointing to the right is sideways bao sword.

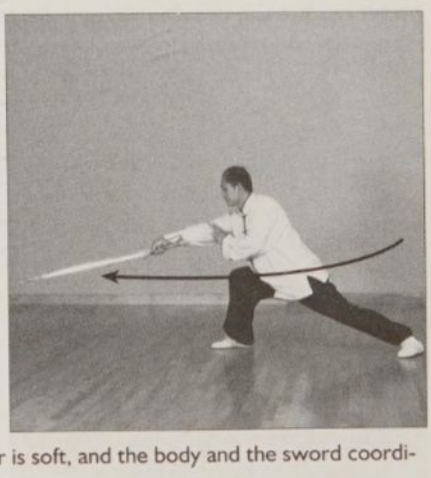


Vertical Embrace. The sword tip pointing upward is vertical bao sword.

24. Bore (Chuan, 穿)

Chuan means to turn the sword backward and bore backward to the rear side of the body.



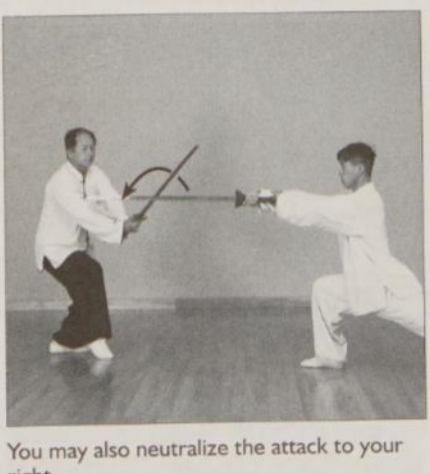


Bore. When you perform this technique, the power is soft, and the body and the sword coordinate and follow each other.

25. Bind (Shu, 束)

It is stated in the book *The Seven Star Sword* for the technique *shu*: "The sword tip pointing forward, with vertical blade, and the sword body neutralizing backward continuously, is called shu."[3, 27]

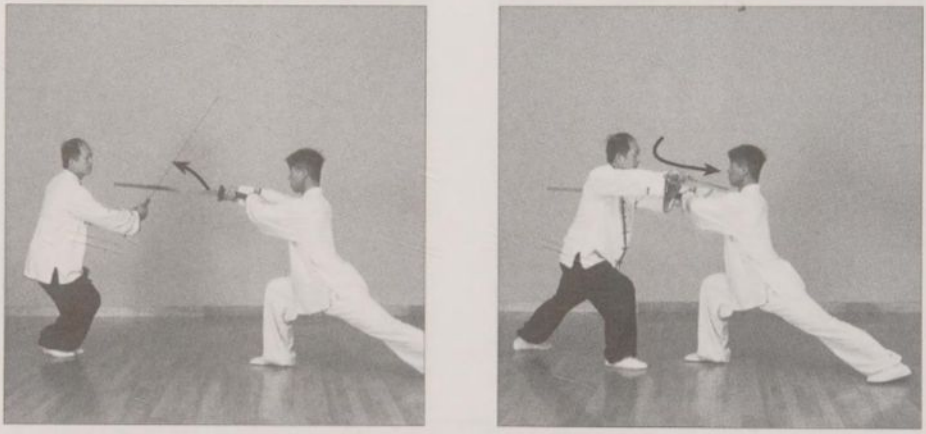
You may neutralize the incoming attack to your left.



You may also neutralize the attack to your right.

26. Cut (Zhan, 斬)

It is stated for the technique *zhan*: "Horizontal sword blade attacks sideways to the left (or right), at the height between the head and the shoulder; [this] is called zhan. The power reaches the sword body, and the arms are straight."[3, 28]



Cut. For example, after you intercept the attack, immediately step forward and use the blade to cut the opponent's throat.

27. Block (Jia, 架)

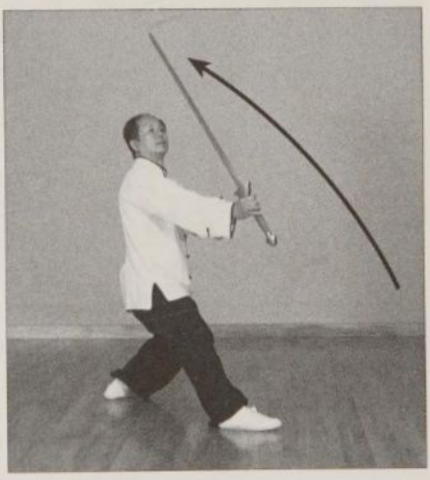
In *The Seven Star Sword,* it is stated for the technique *jia*: "Using the vertical sword blade to block upward is called jia sword."[3, 29]



Block.

28. Sink (Beng, 崩)

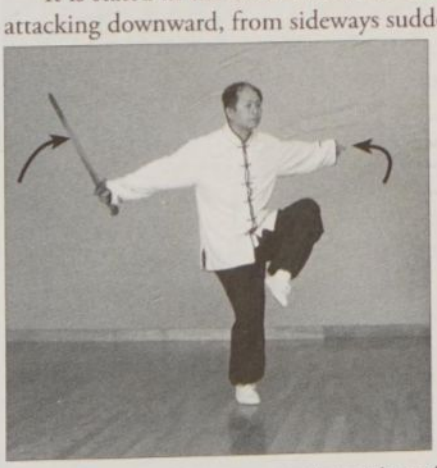
It is stated for the technique *beng*: "Vertical sword blade. Using the sword tip's sharp area to attack [the opponent] from bottom upward along the wrist is called beng sword."[4, 30]

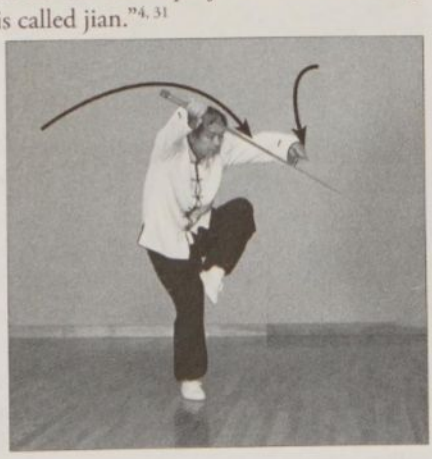


Sink.

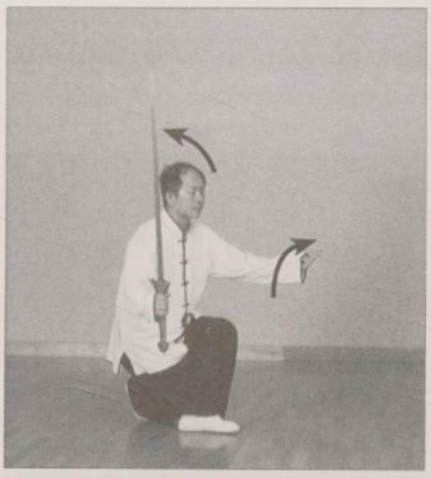
29. Clip (Jian, 剪)

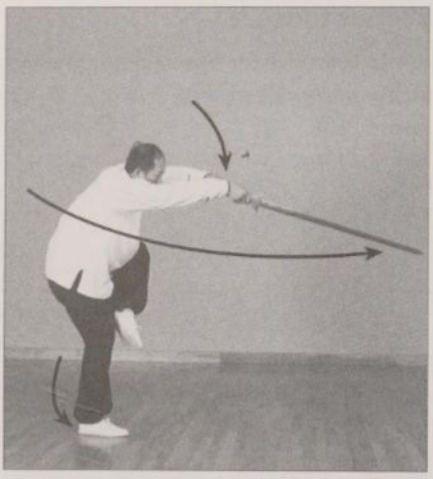
It is stated in the book *The Seven Star Sword* for the technique *jian*: "The sword tip attacking downward, from sideways suddenly, is called jian."[4, 31]





Clip. You may initiate your attack straight and forward.

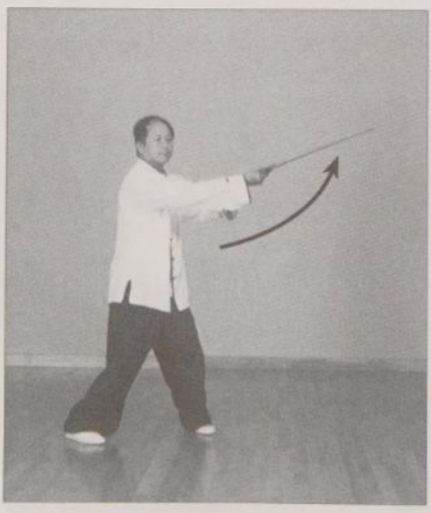


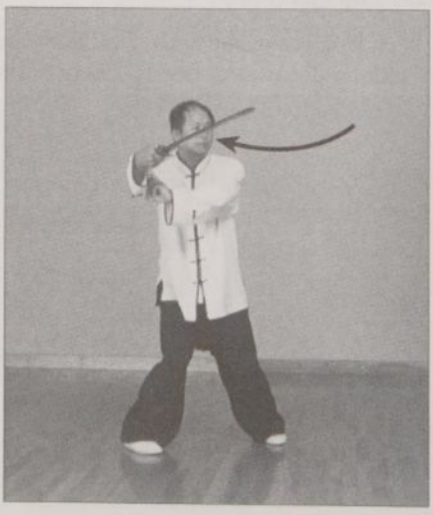


After a block, you may hop to the right and at the same time clip your sword down to attack the opponent.

30. Side Cut (Heng, 横)

It is stated for the technique *heng*: "Horizontal sword blade [is] the action using the sword tip to attack the opponent from sideways."[4, 32]





Side Cut.



You may use this technique to attack the opponent's temple.

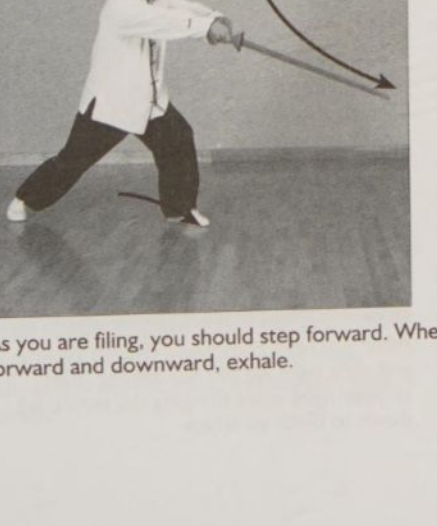
2-6. Fundamental Training

In order to understand and master the core techniques presented above, the student must establish a practice regimen. From the provided techniques, countless sword skills can be developed. In this section, I will introduce some of the routines that can be constructed from the basic techniques. Most of the following routines are adopted from the taiji sword sequence, which will be introduced in the next chapter. If you are able to practice these basic routines first, until they are natural, smooth, and skillful, then you will have accomplished half of the requirements needed for taiji sword practice.

1. Left and Right Horizontal Pull (Zuo You Ping La, 左右平拉)

The main purpose of this training is to teach a student how to control the axial center of the sword. In most of the Northern style sword techniques, including taiji sword, the third of the blade nearest the handle is considered the axial center. The one-third of the blade that includes the handle is used to generate the coiling and sticking motion, while the other two-thirds of the blade are used for neutralizing, coiling, sticking, cutting, and stabbing. Remember that the one-third near the handle of the blade is relatively dull and can be used for violent blocking. The middle third is relatively sharper. This section can be used for coiling and neutralizing. The last third, near the tip, is razor sharp and is mainly used for attacking by sliding, cutting, chopping, stabbing, etc. From this, you can see that in order to coil and neutralize the opponent's weapon, you must be very skillful

in handling the sword and controlling the location of the axial center. When this center is too close to the handle, it is dangerous to you, and if this center is too near the tip, your coiling maneuver will be limited.



In this training, hold your sword with the blade horizontal; then swing it from one side to the other while keeping the axial center steady. The swinging power is generated from the legs and is directed by the waist. When you swing to one side, inhale, and when you swing to the other side, exhale. The entire body acts as a single unit and must be as soft as a whip. You should perform at least fifty repetitions as a warm-up exercise. This exercise will help you create a firm foundation for the sticking and adhering of the sword.

2. Left Circle and Twist Sword (Zuo Xuan Jiao Jian, 左旋絞劍)

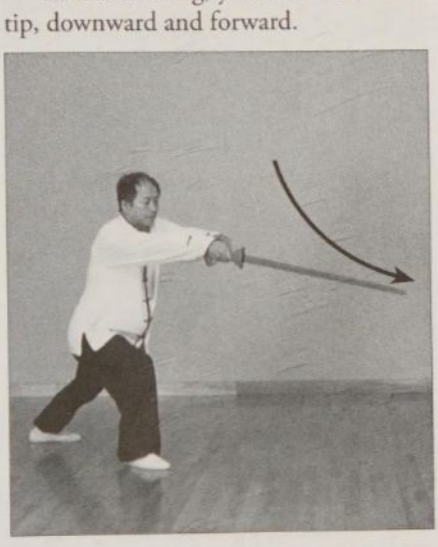


This basic training is very similar to the previous one, again teaching you how to coil the sword with a circular motion while keeping the axial center steady.

When you practice, simply inhale smoothly and naturally. You must generate the motion from your legs, govern it with your waist, and finally manifest it through the sword tip. If you are right handed, this training focuses only on counterclockwise circling or yin circling. This is because if you circle clockwise, you will enter the opponent's center area, which is dangerous and undesirable from a practical standpoint. (If you are using your left hand, yin circling moves in the clockwise direction.) Perform at least fifty repetitions as a warming-up exercise each time before you train.

3. Advance Forward File (Jin Bu Qian Cuo, 進步前銼)

In this training, you learn how to slide, or file, the last section of the blade near the tip, downward and forward.







As you are filing, you should step forward. When you lift the sword, inhale, and when you file forward and downward, exhale.

4. Left Sweep, Right Sweep (Zuo You Lan Sao, 左右攔掃)

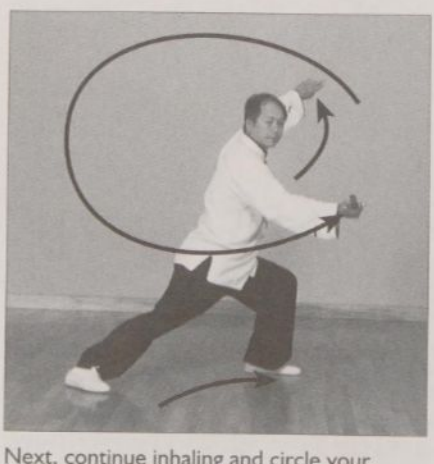
In this basic training, you first learn how to use the middle section of the sword to block an incoming attack. Then coordinating the left hand and the stepping, you cut the opponent horizontally at the waist.



When you practice, start with a right horizontal side cut, in deng shan bu.



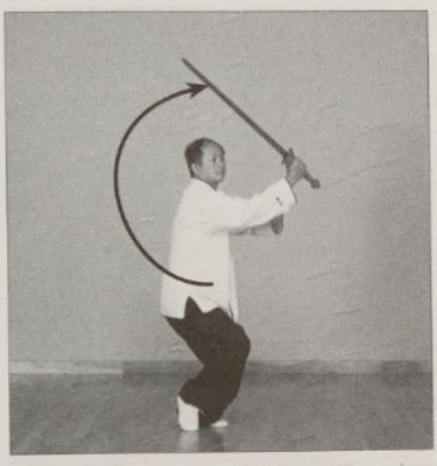
Bring your left leg in, next to the right leg and block to your left with the sword tip pointing downward. Your left hand (in secret sword hand form) comes in to support the right wrist. Start to inhale.



Next, continue inhaling and circle your sword clockwise in front of you. The left hand can be used as an upward block while stepping to your left, as you exhale and slide the sword to your left horizontally, palm up.



After you have completed the left sweep, pull your right leg to your left leg. Turn to your right while bringing the sword tip down to block an attack.



Next, circle your sword in front of you.



Step your right leg to your right while sweeping your sword to your right.

5. Little Chief Star (Xiao Kui Xing, 小魁星)

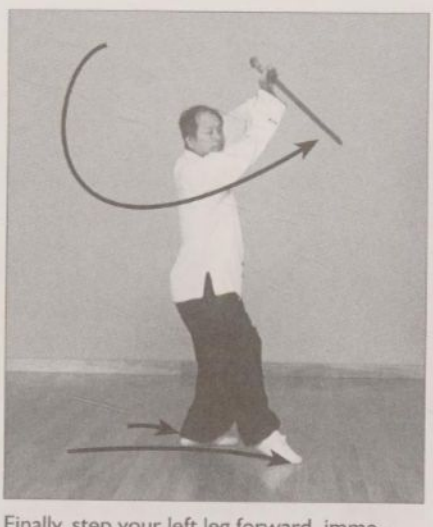
This basic training begins with neutralizing an incoming attack to the side, and then you circle your sword to slide diagonally upward to the armpit area of your opponent. In this practice, the stepping is very important. Only by choosing the correct stepping distance will you be able to perform the technique effectively.



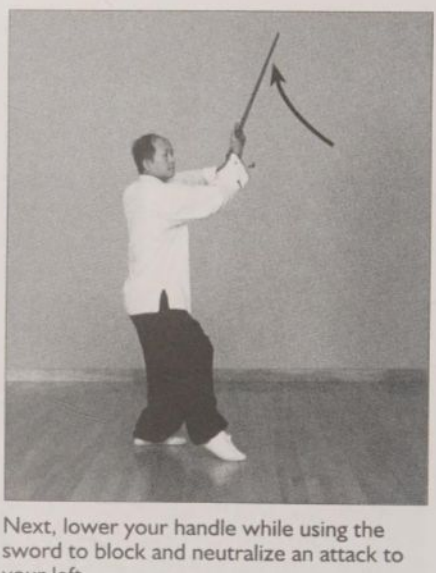
In practice, first place your sword diagonally in front of your face and stand in false stance.



Next, move your hand back and imagine using your sword to block and neutralize an incoming attack to your right. Inhale.



Finally, step your left leg forward, immediately followed by moving the right leg forward into false stance, while circling your sword back, down, and then diagonally upward to complete the right side. Exhale.



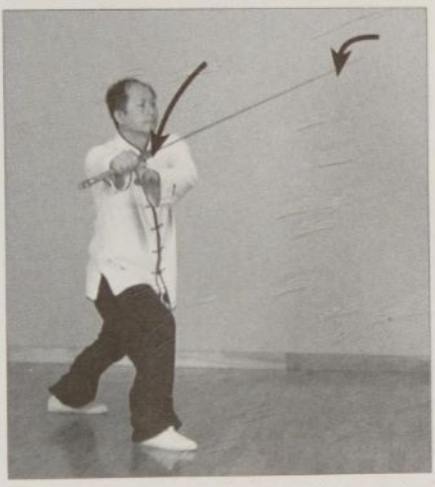
Next, lower your handle while using the sword to block and neutralize an attack to your left.



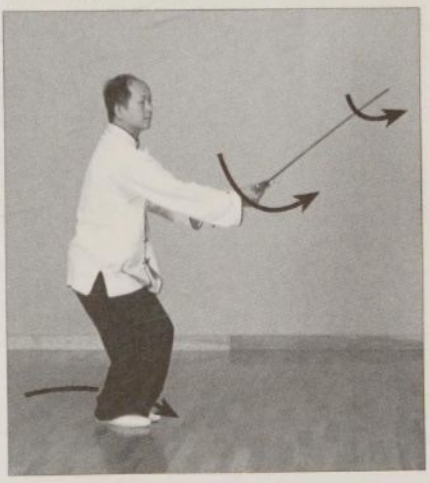
This time the right leg steps forward and the left leg follows, moving forward into false stance, while your sword circles to your back, down, and then to the right, diagonally upward.

6. Right Whirlwind (You Xuan Feng, 右旋風)

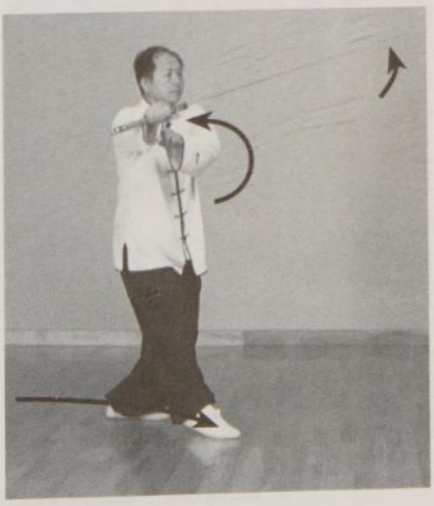
The idea of this training is to chase the opponent's wrist with the razor-sharp section of the sword, nearest the tip. In order to make the technique skillful, without risking injury to yourself, the distance between you and your opponent is crucial.



In practice, first circle the tip of the sword at about the circumference of a person's forearm and imagine you are cutting an opponent's wrist.



Now, your opponent must step back to avoid the cut; you immediately step forward while continuing to circle your sword.

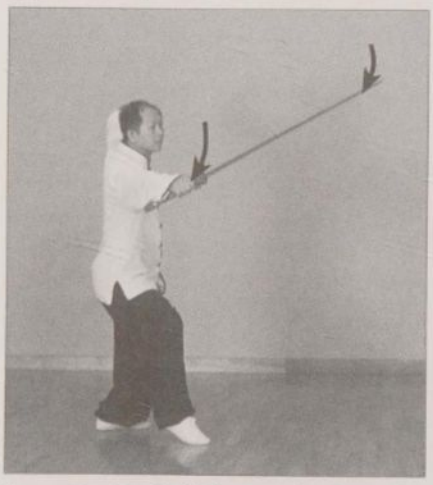


Your breathing strategy should be to inhale when you circle the sword around the wrist and to exhale when you cut the opponent's wrist. Remember, although the circular movement of the handle is big, the circle near the tip of the sword is actually quite small. Again, the entire circular motion originates from your waist.

Step the right leg forward to close the range while again using your sword to cut the opponent's wrist. You are in position to repeat the right whirlwind. To better understand the motion of the sword, you can press your weapon against a wall and move only the handle in a circle. Your wrists must be flexible to make the motion properly.

7. Left Whirlwind (Zuo Xuan Feng, 左旋風)

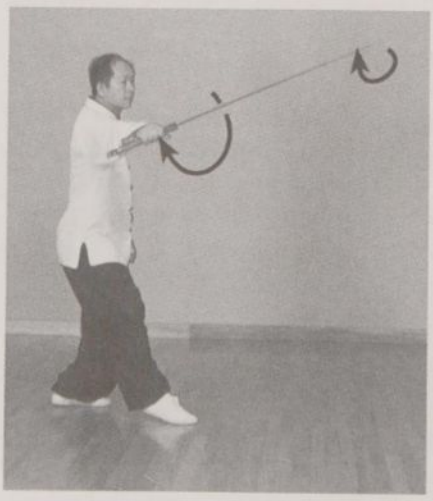
This basic training is the reverse of the right whirlwind. You step backward this time, and the circle is counterclockwise instead of clockwise. Again, the entire circular motion is governed by the waist.



In practice, first hold the sword in front of you.



Next, withdraw your right leg and bring it next to your left leg while using the sword tip to cut the opponent's wrist. (Counterclockwise circle.)



When you circle your sword, inhale, and when you cut your opponent's wrist, exhale.

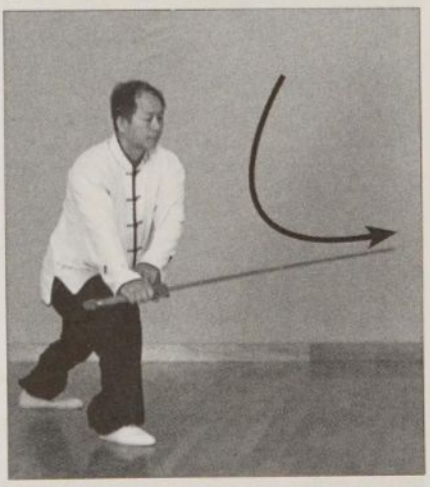
Step your left leg backward as you continue circling your sword. You will be in position to repeat the left whirlwind.

8. Part the Grass in Search of the Snake (Bo Cao Xun She, 撥草尋蛇)

This is an essential training exercise that teaches you how to stick and adhere to your opponent's sword with your sword, and how to use your sword to seal your opponent's sword.



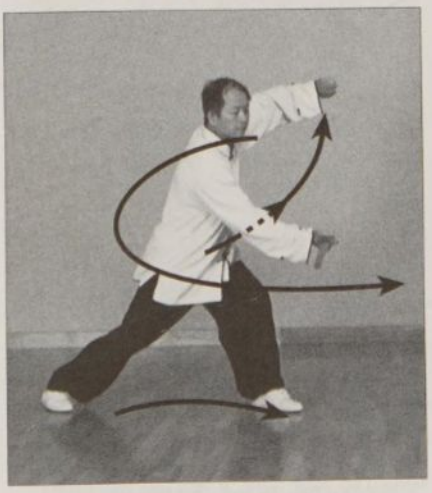
First, inhale while bringing the sword upright to intercept an attack.



Next, step your right leg forward while using the middle section of your sword to stick to the opponent's sword, pressing downward and forward as you exhale.



Then bring your sword to your right to block an attack, and inhale.



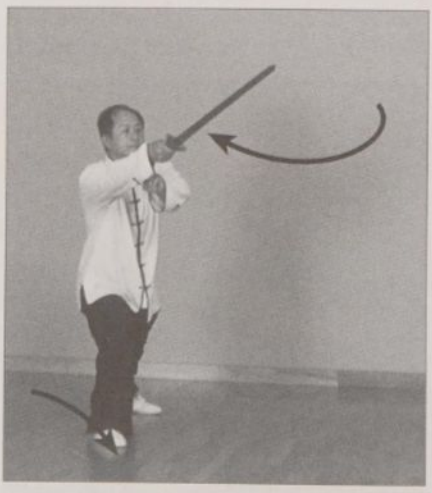
Immediately after the block, stick your sword to your opponent's sword, and press downward and forward as you exhale.



Finally, inhale again, and bring your sword upright. You are now in position to repeat the exercise.

9. The Lion Shakes Its Head (Shi Zi Yao Tou, 獅子搖頭)

In this basic training, you swing your sword from one side to the other. One side is used to block, and the other side is to attack. When you block, inhale, and when you attack, exhale. Again, pay attention to the waist control, and to the distance between you and your opponent. The back leg should be firmly in place before you complete your swing.



When you practice, start to step your right leg diagonally to the right while swinging the sword to your right. If you use this swing for a block, inhale. However, if this swing is used to attack, exhale.



Next, step your left leg diagonally forward, and then drag the right leg behind you and across the back of your body while swinging the sword to the left.



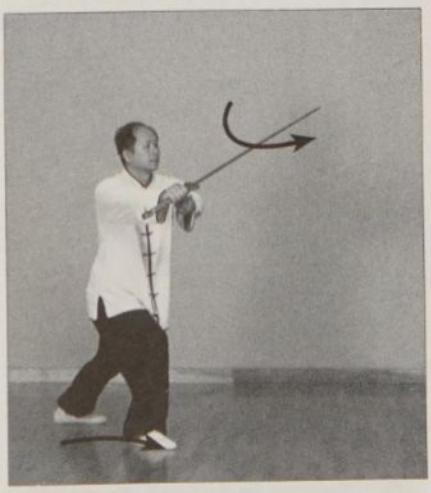
Then once again step your right leg to the right and forward, and drag the left leg behind and across while swinging the sword to the right. You are in position to repeat the exercise.

10. Clean Up Dust in the Wind (Ying Feng Dan Chen, 迎風撣塵)

This exercise is very similar to the training of part the grass in search of the snake. The only difference is this time, after intercepting an incoming attack, you stick your sword to the opponent's, and then press directly forward toward his chest area to seal his sword's mobility. Remember to block using the section closest to the hilt.



When you practice, first block with your sword to your left, with tip facing upward, and move your right leg next to your left leg as you inhale.



Immediately after blocking, stick to your opponent's sword with your sword, and press your sword forward to seal his sword right in front of his chest as you exhale.



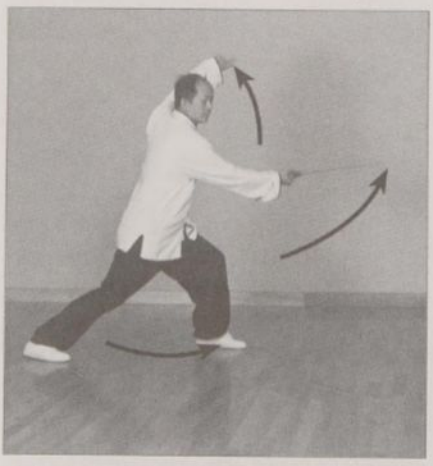
Next, turn your body to the right slightly while blocking to your right, and at the same time step your left leg forward next to your right leg as you inhale.



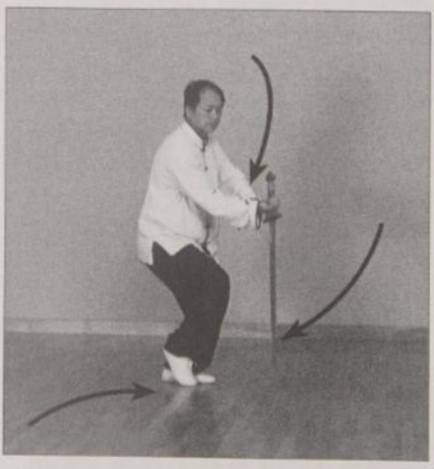
Finally, step your left leg forward while sticking to your opponent's sword with your sword, and press forward toward his chest area to seal his sword's mobility.

11. Left and Right Step over Obstacle (Zuo You Kua Lan, 左右跨欄)

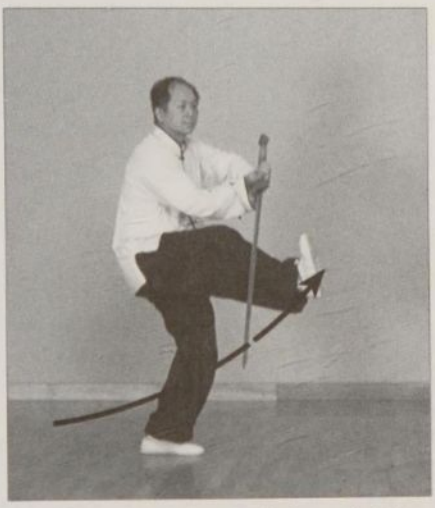
In this training, after you block the attack, use your foot to push the opponent's sword away. This action will buy you only a second, but that allows you enough time to circle your sword and immediately attack your opponent.



To do the technique, first assume a left leg forward mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). Your sword is positioned as if you have just finished the action of cutting to the left.



Next, step your right leg in beside your left leg (all your weight remains on your left leg) while blocking with your sword tip pointing downward. Start to inhale.



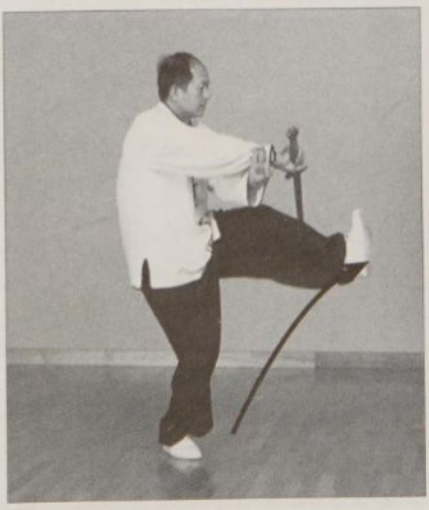
Immediately lift up your right leg and circle to your right. Continue inhalation.



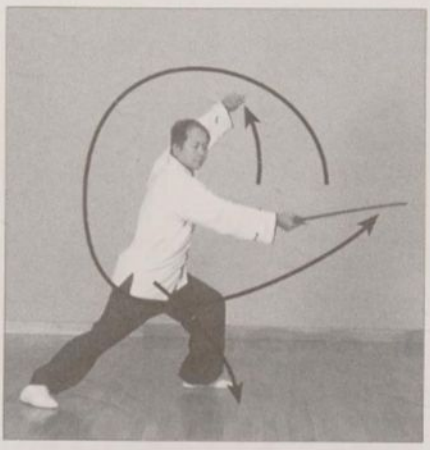
Then step your right leg down while circling your sword, and slide it to your right as you exhale.



After you finish the right side cut, pull your left leg in beside your right leg while blocking your sword to your left as you inhale.



Next, lift your left leg and circle it to your left. Start to exhale.



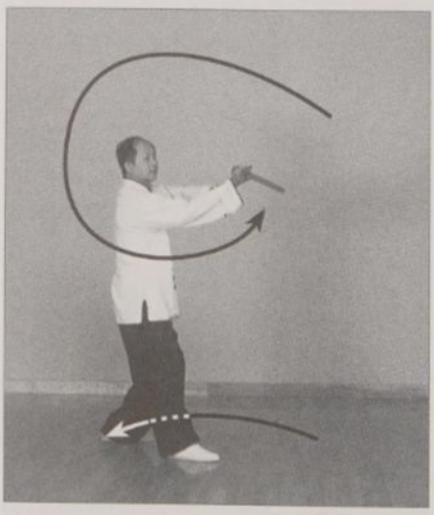
Finally, step your left leg down while circling your sword, and slide it to the left as you exhale.

12. Falling Flowers Posture (Luo Hua Shi, 落花勢)

This basic training teaches how to neutralize an incoming upper attack and immediately attack your opponent's arm, or under his armpit. When you block, inhale, and when you attack, exhale. Again, the body's movement and proper stepping are very important.



In practice, first assume that you have intercepted an attack to the upper body. Intercept upward and to the right while stepping your right leg backward as you inhale.



Next, step your left leg backward while circling the sword back, down, and then sliding up diagonally to the left as you exhale.



Then use your sword to block an attack to your left as you inhale.



Finally, circle your sword back, down, and then slide to the right diagonally while stepping your right leg backward as you exhale.

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1. *The Second Brain: The Scientific Basis of Gut Instinct and a Groundbreaking New Understanding of Nervous Disorders of the Stomach and Intestine.* Michael D. Gershon, New York: HarperCollins Publications, 1998.
2. *Fundamentals of Physics,* Holliday and Resnick, pp. 512–514. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1972.
3. *Great Dictionary of Chinese Wushu* (中國武術大辭典), People's Athletic Publications (人民體育出版社), pp. 287–292, 1990.
4. 〝立劍，由上向下劈擊。〞
5. 《七星劍》：〝劍身由側方，坡向前向左或右為砍。〞
6. 〝立劍或平劍向前直出為刺，力達劍尖，臂與劍成一直線。〞
7. 《中華新武術•劍術科》：〝劍身由下向前向上直行，劍鋒向前多，向下少，為沖。〞
8. 用劍的下刃由下向上撩擊稱撩劍。〞
9. 《中華新武術•劍術科》：〝劍身向左或右平行，為拋。〞

10. 〝平劍貼地由左向右或由右向左橫擊稱掃劍。〞
11. 〝立劍，用劍刃的前端斜面向上、向下、或向後截擊稱截劍。〞
12. 立劍，直臂由下向上挑擊稱挑劍。臂與劍成一直線。〞
13. 〝平劍或立劍由前向側後或側後上方抽回為帶，力達劍身。〞
14. 《武當劍法大要》：〝抽，分上抽、下抽兩法。其式均系持劍手手心朝下，手背朝上，劍尖朝前方，對準敵腕之上或下部，往右抽拉。〞
15. 〝立劍，劍身由前向後挂擊稱挂劍。〞
16. 〝立劍，用劍尖下刃，由上向下懸腕點擊稱點劍。〞
17. 〝平劍，用劍身中部由前向左後〔右後〕平腰拉帶稱抹劍。〞
18. 〝撲劍，劍身橫平，劍尖朝前，劍鋒向左右平擺的動作。〞
19. 〝劍尖划圈稱絞劍。〞
20. 《中華新武術•劍術科》：〝劍身由下猛向上橫行，為托。〞
21. 黃元秀《武當劍法大要》釋：〝格，分下格、翻格二法。下格是持劍手手心向內，劍由斜下向斜上格敵腕。翻格是敵近身時閃開其鋒，持劍手由手心向內內旋成手心向外，使劍由下向敵腕翻格。〞
22. 《中華新武術•劍術科》：〝劍身由上向下向左或右斜截，為攔。〞
23. 〝平劍，在頭頂或頭前上方平圓環繞稱雲劍。〞
24. 黃元秀《武當劍法大要》釋：〝壓，持劍手手心向下，使劍身直向下壓敵劍。〞
25. 黃元秀《武當劍法大要》釋：〝壓，持劍手手心向下，使劍身直向下壓敵劍。〞
26. 〝右手握劍，左手附于劍柄一側稱抱劍。劍尖朝右為橫抱劍；劍尖朝上為立抱劍；劍尖朝前為平抱劍。〞
27. 《七星劍》：〝劍鋒向前，劍刃向上，劍身連續斜向後帶，為束。〞
28. 〝平劍向左〔右〕橫出，高度在頭與肩之間為斬，力達劍身，臂伸直。〞
29. 〝立劍橫向上格架稱架劍。〞
30. 〝立劍，用劍尖上刃由下向上沿腕崩擊稱崩劍。〞
31. 《七星劍》：〝劍鋒由側突向下擊，為剪。〞
32. 〝平劍，用劍尖橫擊對方的動作。〞

Chapter 3: Taiji Sword and Its Applications

3-1. Introduction

Taijiquan has developed for more than a thousand years, and over that time, various styles have been created. There are many taiji sword sequences in existence. Nevertheless, all of these sequences have grown out of the same taiji theoretical roots. Therefore, every movement has its martial meaning and essential feeling. If these are not manifested, the purpose of the movement will not be there, and the meaning of the entire practice will be missing.

Normally, developing this deep feeling of the art will take more than ten years of constant practice. Once this feeling has been comprehended, you can grasp the keys to the techniques. Only then can the art be developed further. There is a well-known story about how Zhang, San-feng taught taiji sword to one of his students.

After a student completed his three years of taiji sword study with Master Zhang, he was so happy and could perform every movement in exactly the same way as Master Zhang had taught him.

Then Master Zhang asked him to leave and practice for three years, and then come to see him. The student left. After three years of hard practice, the student came to see Master Zhang. However, he was sad and ashamed to meet Master Zhang. He bowed his head and felt so sorry. He said: "Master Zhang, after three years of practice, I am now very sad. The more I have practiced, the more I have lost the feeling I had three years ago. Now, I feel about a third of the forms are different from what you taught me originally."

Master Zhang looked at him and said: "No good! No good! Go home and practice another three years and then come to see me." The student left in sorrow and sadness. He practiced harder and harder for the next three years. Then he came to see Master Zhang again. However, he felt even worse than the first time he came back. He looked at Master Zhang very disappointedly. He said: "Master Zhang! I don't know why. The more I have practiced, the worse it has become. Now, two-thirds of the forms feel different from what you taught me."

Master Zhang again looked at him and said: "No good! No good! Go home again and practice another three years and then come to see me." The student left very, very sad. This time, he practiced even harder than before. He put all his mind into understanding and feeling every movement of the forms he learned. After three years, again he returned

to see Master Zhang. This time, his face turned pale and he dared not look at Master Zhang's face directly. He said: "Master Zhang! I am sorry. I am a failure. I have failed you and myself. I feel now not even one form has the same feeling as you taught me."

When Master heard this, he laughed loudly and very happily. He looked at the student and said: "Great! You have done well. Now, the techniques you have learned are yours and not mine anymore."

From this story, you can see that the mentality of the arts is creative. If the great composer Beethoven had never learned to create, but had just copied his teacher, then he would not have become so great. It is the same with the great painter Picasso. If he had not known how to be creative, but had allowed himself to be confined by convention, he would never have become such a genius. Therefore, you can see that art is alive, and not dead. However, if you have not learned enough techniques, and have not reached a deep level of understanding, then when you start to create, you will lose the correct path, and the art will be flawed. It is said in Chinese martial arts society: "Shifu leads you into the door; cultivation depends on oneself."[1]

When you learn any art, you should understand the mentality of learning is to feel and to gain the essence of the art. Only if your heart can learn the essence of the art will you gain access to its roots. Once connected to this root, you will be able to grow and become creative.

There is another very well-known story about Confucius learning how to play a piece of music for an ancient musical instrument (*gu zheng*, 古箏). Confucius was learning this piece of music from his teacher, Shi Xiang Zi (師襄子). After he finished his learning, he practiced the music for just ten days, yet he was able to perform the music skillfully. His teacher was very happy and asked him: "Are you ready for the second piece?" To Shi Xiang Zi's surprise, Confucius replied: "No!" When Shi Xiang Zi asked him why not, Confucius answered: "Though I am able to play this piece skillfully, I still cannot put my whole feeling into the music and manifest my feeling through it. Therefore, I prefer to practice for a longer period of time." He practiced this piece of music for several years, until he was able to impart his feelings into the tones of the music. His teacher was very happy about this.

Again, he asked Confucius: "Now, are you ready for the second piece?" Again, the answer was no. His teacher asked: "Why still no, since you are now able to manifest your feelings into the music?" Confucius replied: "Though I am able to play this music with feeling, I still don't know the feelings of the composer. When the composer wrote this piece, he put his emotions deeply into it. I must continue my practice until I am able to know the composer's feelings." Again, his teacher left Confucius alone for his own practice.

Three years later, Confucius came to see Shi Xiang Zi and said: "Dear teacher, now I am ready for the new piece." His teacher was very curious and asked: "Does

this mean you have learned the feelings of the composer?" Confucius said: "From the music, I can tell he is a six-foot-tall man. Moreover, he is a person who has such a wide-open mind, and such generosity, that he is able to ponder the entire heaven and earth." Shi Xiang Zi was so shocked and said: "Amazing, that you can figure this out from the music. You are completely correct. This piece is called 'Wen Wang Cao' (文王操) and was composed by King Wen of Zhou (周文王), whose mind was so wide and profound, and he was even six feet tall." According to Chinese history, King Wen of Zhou was six feet tall, and he was the one who interpreted the *Book of Changes* (易經).

From this story, you can see that when you are performing taijiquan, you are searching for the original motivation of the creator, and trying to achieve the same feeling as the creator. Only then will you touch the root of the forms. We should know that all of the arts are created from the deep spiritual feeling of the creator. When we learn taijiquan, since we are beginners in the art, we must follow the knowledge and experiences accumulated by the ancestors. Only after you have mastered all of the forms and techniques passed down to us—like a musician who practices for many years—can you start to blend your own concept and understanding into the art. When this happens, you are creating a new style of art, which derives from an understanding of the past and is focused through your mind into the present. Therefore, the creative art is alive and developed from deep, profound internal feeling.

From the above stories, you can see that any pursuit requires a great deal of practice and effort for you to reach a high level of accomplishment. It is this effort that makes it gongfu, i.e., energy-time (功夫).

In the next section, I will introduce a traditional taiji sword sequence. In order to help you grasp the essence of each movement, examples of applications are given. (Remember, there are other possible applications. I show only examples.) By practicing with the correct feeling of the forms, you will establish a firm root for learning this or any other sword sequence of any internal martial style.

3-2. Yang Style Taiji Sword Sequence and Applications

Due to the structure of the narrow-blade sword and the techniques emphasized by taiji stylists, there are only a few effective methods for using the sword: slide, sting or stab, deflect cut (sliding and cutting in the same motion), slash, or chop. Most of the motions are done with fluidity and extreme speed. But to properly use each movement of the sword, the stylist must be capable of smooth locomotion. Without the correct use of the legs, each motion of the sword can be wasted. In fact, the ultimate goal of the taiji swordsman is to successfully attack by never touching the weapon of the opponent through using deceptively quick steps.

Just as in practicing a taiji bare hand sequence, you must learn to coordinate all the forms with deep breathing. The order of the breaths will be in the description of the sequence. The sword forms must be done slowly in order to get the fullness of this elegant and ancient weapon sequence. With patience and practice, the practitioner can make the taiji sword sequence a useful and beautiful series of techniques for health and defense.

The taiji sword sequence is also an advanced taiji qigong set. After you have learned the entire sequence, sometimes you should practice the entire sequence or even a section of it without holding a sword in your hand. When there is no sword in your hand, physically it is easier to balance, and it is also easier for your mind to lead the qi to both arms more evenly and harmoniously. Simply apply the qigong training concepts with the mind, qi, and the body's coordination. Soon you will realize that it is as enjoyable as practicing with the sword in your hand.

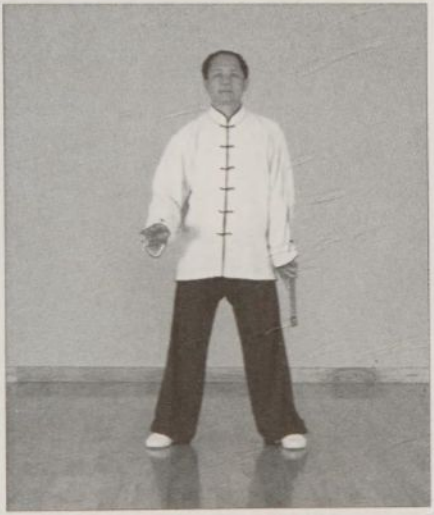
For the purposes of indicating the direction of movement, Chinese martial books use a compass system. The direction a person faces at the beginning of the sequence is designated N or north for the duration of the sequence. The designation does not necessarily correspond to the actual geographic direction the individual faces. From this orientation, the right side becomes E or east, the left side W or west, and the back side S or south.

The directional symbol that appears in parentheses at the beginning of a caption indicates the direction toward which the pattern will move. For example:

- In #1, beginning, the direction you are facing is north. The (N) means your pattern will move north.
- In #2, step forward and close with sword, the direction you are facing is north. The (N) means your pattern will move north.
- In #3, fairy shows the way, the direction you are facing is north; however, the (W) means that your pattern will move you to the W or west facing position.
- In #4, the pattern continues in the W direction and then in the N direction.

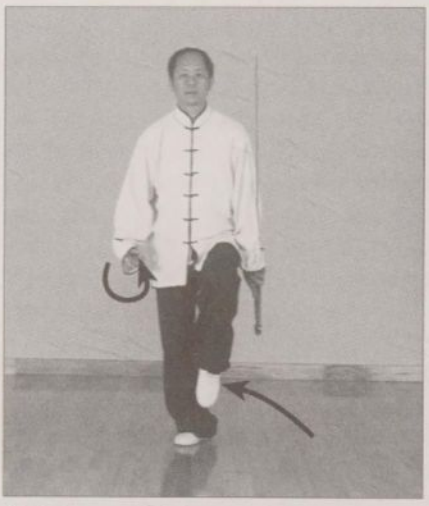
Yang's Taiji Sword Sequence

1. Beginning (Qi Shi, 起勢)



(N) The sword is held at the left side and the right palm faces down. The hand form of the right palm is just like that of bare hand taijiquan; the middle finger is slightly forward, while the pinkie and the thumb are held slightly backward. Keep your mind calm, and inhale and exhale deeply several times. This is a wuji state. Keep your mind at your center of gravity (i.e., real dan tian).

2. Step Forward and Close with Sword (Shang Bu He Jian Shi, 上步合劍勢)



(N) Raise your left knee and turn your right palm to face forward. Begin to inhale.



(N) Step forward with your left leg. Raise your right hand to the side and form it into the secret sword hand. Complete inhalation.

This movement is a salutation; therefore, there are no applications.

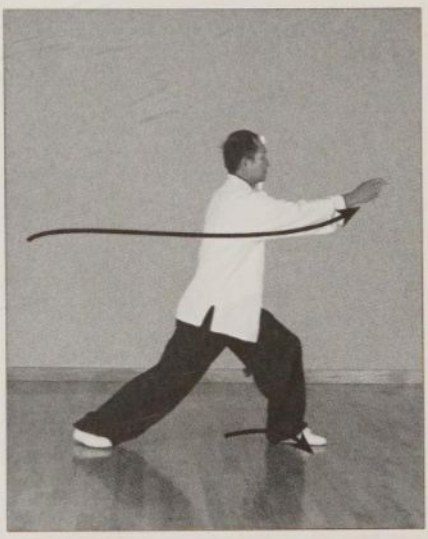


(N) Bring your right leg forward into horse stance (ma bu). Move your right hand to your left wrist while bringing your left arm, with the sword, to the front of your body. Exhale.

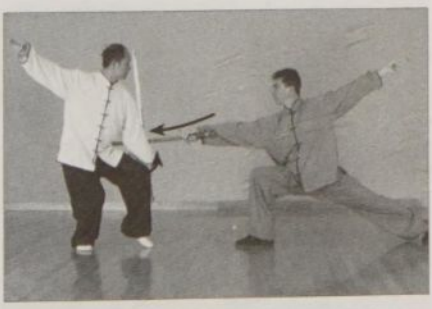
3. The Fairy Shows the Way—1 (Xian Ren Zhi Lu—1, 仙人指路一)



(W) Turn your body to W while changing to false stance (xu bu). Swing the sword across your body and raise your right hand. Inhale.



(W) Step the left leg forward into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). Continue to move your right hand (secret sword hand) to the chest area and then forward, with fingers pointing forward. Exhale.

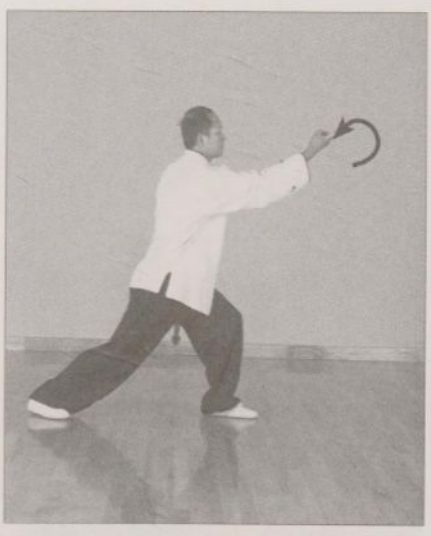


Application: As an opponent attempts to stab the abdomen, you slide away the attacker's weapon.



Application: After sliding the opponent's sword away, you attack the opponent's throat with the secret sword hand.

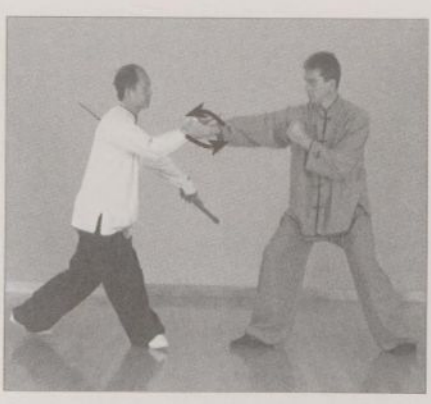
4. Three Rings Envelop the Moon (San Huan Tao Yue, 三環套月)



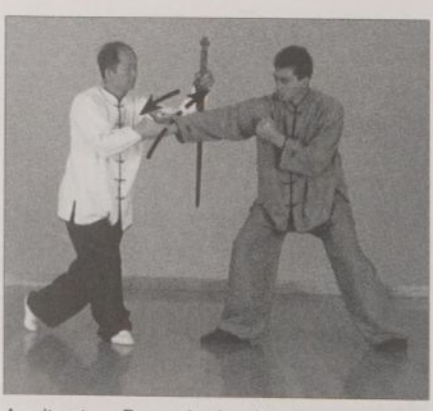
(W) Make a small clockwise circle with your right hand. Begin to inhale.



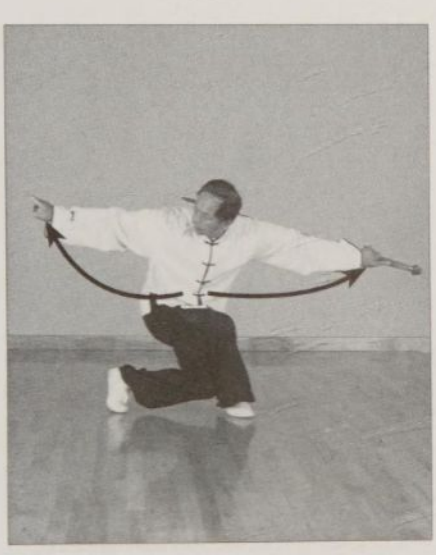
(W) Step forward with your right leg into crossed legs stance (zuo pan bu). Swing the sword to the front with the handle pointed up. Bring your right hand to your chest area. Complete inhalation.



Application: This technique is used to block a punch or to reverse the situation when the wrist is grabbed.



Application: From the last block, use your sword to push or to cut the opponent's forearm.



(N) Continue to bring the sword to the front of your body and then open both of your hands to the sides. The upper body turns to face N and the face looks E. Exhale.

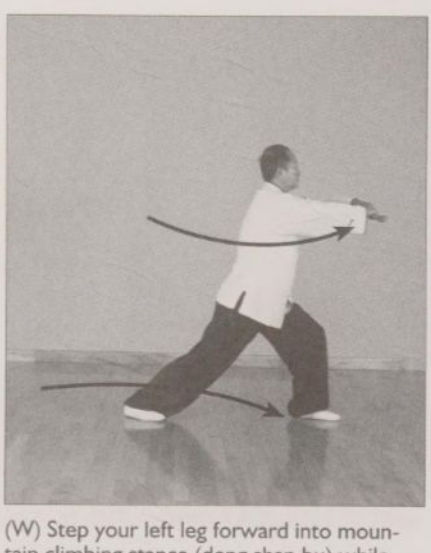


Application: After blocking the forearm, attack the opponent's chin with the handle of the sword.



Application: Your right hand (secret sword hand) can be used to attack an opponent who attacks you from behind.

5. Big Chief Star (Da Kui Xing, 大魁星)



(W) Step your left leg forward into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while moving your right hand to the handle of the sword. Inhale.



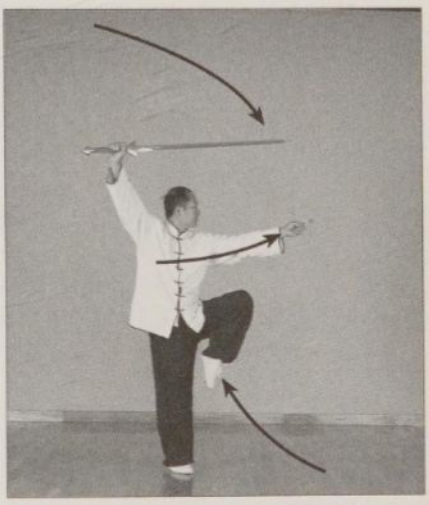
(NE) Switch the sword to your right hand and then turn NE while sliding the sword to knee level, palm down. The left hand stays in touch with your right wrist. Exhale.



Application: You dodge the attack and cut the enemy's knee.



(NE) Raise the sword while beginning to draw your left leg up. Inhale.



(W) Raise your left knee into the golden rooster stands on one leg stance (jin ji du li) while pointing the sword forward and the left secret sword hand to the opponent's third eye, which refers to the middle of the forehead. Exhale.



Application: The left hand can be used to block or intercept an attack. The left leg can be used for kicking immediately after the block.

6. The Swallow Dips Its Beak in the Water (Yan Zi Chao Shui, 燕子抄水)



(SW) Step your left leg down and shift into four six stance (si liu bu), and at the same time move the sword to the right-hand side above the head. Inhale. This motion can be used as a block to deflect the opponent's sword to the side first, before your attack to his head.



(SW) Shift the stance forward into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) and slide the sword upward. Your left hand touches your right wrist. Exhale.

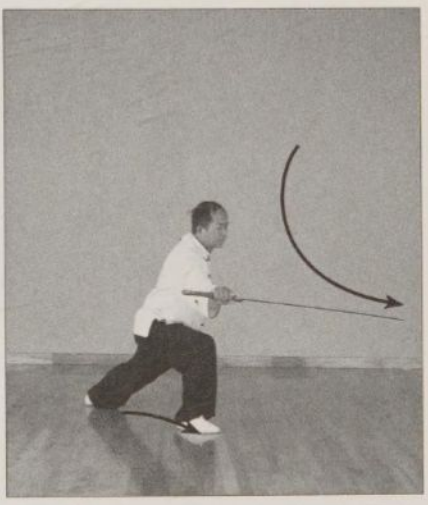


Application: As the opponent stabs forward, you move to the side and slide your sword across the neck of the attacker. This is not a hacking motion, but a forward slide.

7. Left Sweep, Right Sweep (Zuo You Lan Sao, 左右攔掃)



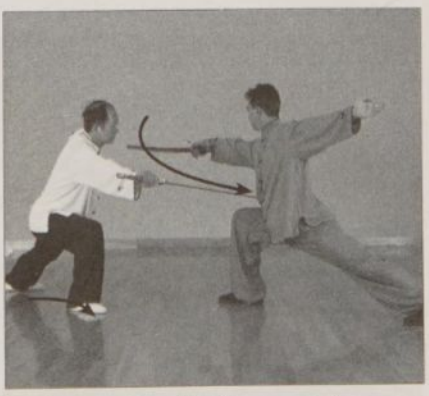
(NW) Move your right leg in to the side of your left leg, shifting into false stance (xu bu) while circling your sword counterclockwise in front of your right side. Inhale.



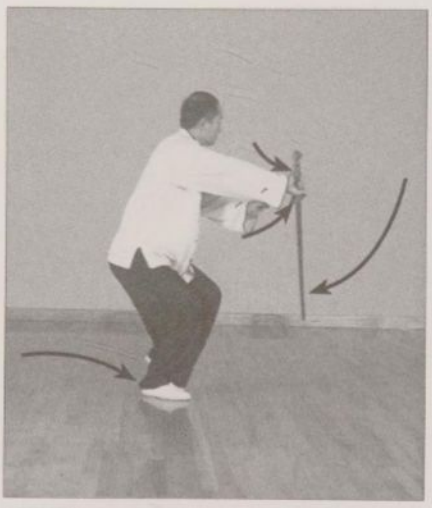
(NW) Step your right leg down to the NW while sliding the sword forward and to the right. The stance is mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). Exhale.



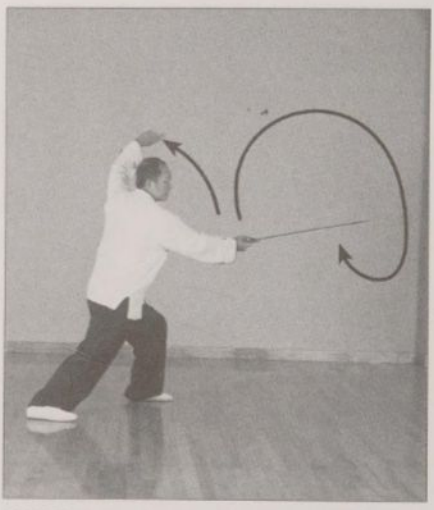
Application: You intercept and slide away an attack to the upper body with the lower third of the sword.



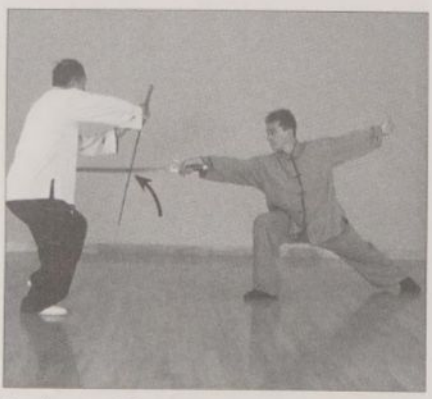
Application: After blocking an attack to your upper body, you move in to cut the attacker's waist.



(SW) Bring your left leg in to the side of your right leg, shifting into false stance (xu bu) while moving the sword to the left with the tip pointing downward. Inhale.



(SW) Step your left leg down to SW and shift into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while blocking with your left hand moving it upward, and circling your sword clockwise and then sliding it to your left. Exhale.

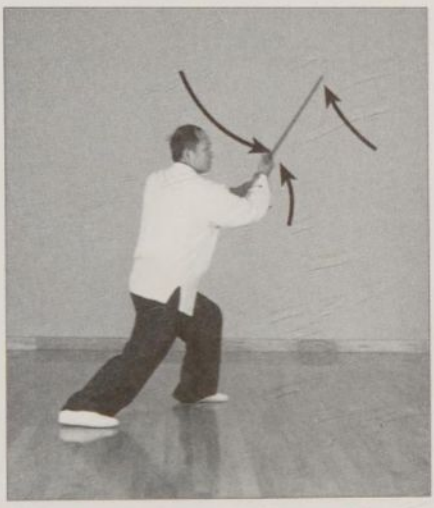


Application: You intercept the opponent's attack by sliding his sword to your left.

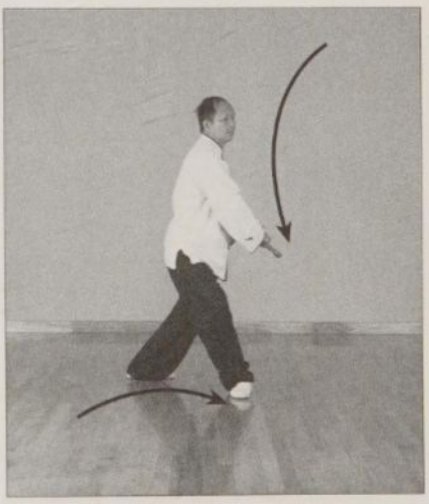


Application: After intercepting the opponent's attack, use your left hand to grab or to push away his wrist while circling your sword to your right and then slide your sword across your opponent's waist.

8. Little Chief Star (Xiao Kui Xing, 小魁星)



(NW) Raise your sword up to your left while looking to your right. Inhale.



(NW) Step forward with your right leg while swinging the sword back. Start to exhale.



Application: Slide the attack upward with the lower third of your sword.

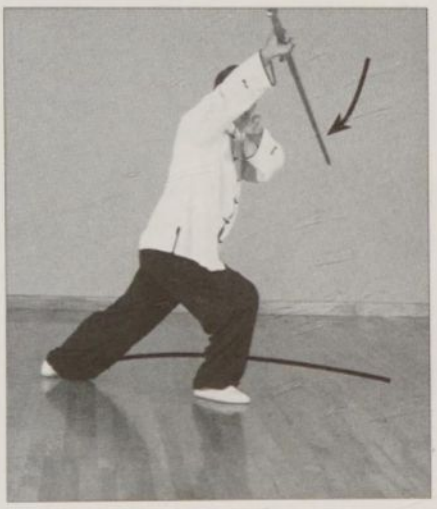


(NW) Continue to swing the sword downward, then forward, and upward while bringing your left leg forward into false stance (xu bu). Complete exhalation.

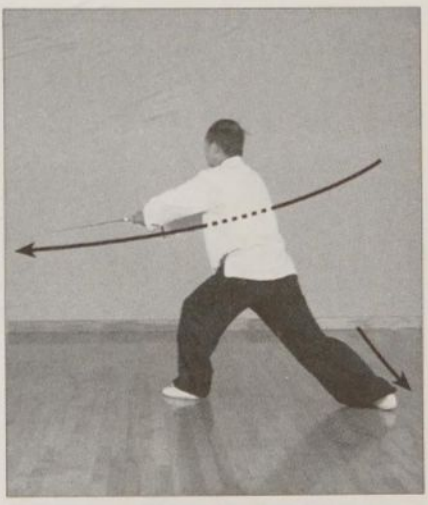


Application: After blocking, bring your left leg forward while sliding up into the opponent's arm or armpit area.

9. The Yellow Bee Enters the Hole (Huang Feng Ru Dong, 黃蜂入洞)



(NW) Step back with your left leg. Inhale.



(SE) Turn your body 180 degrees counter-clockwise, shifting into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while stabbing the sword forward and low. Exhale.



Application: As the opponent begins a high attack, you stab low quickly.

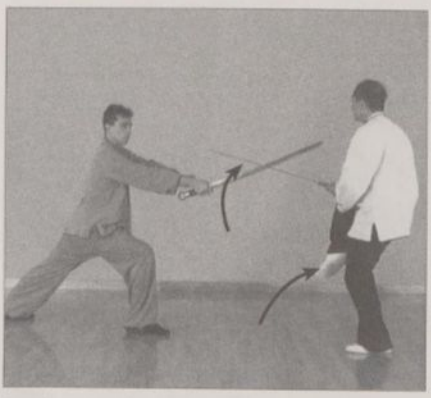
10. The Spirit Cat Catches the Mouse (Ling Mao Bu Shu, 靈貓捕鼠)



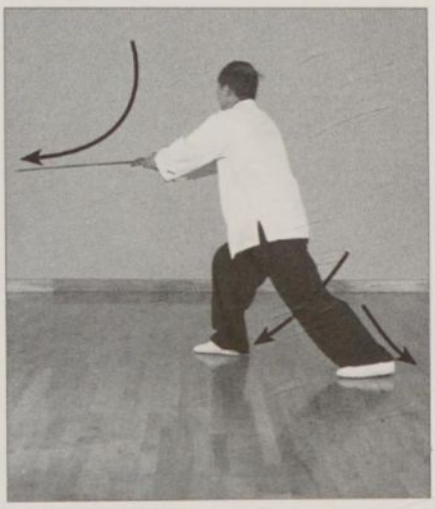
(SE) Move your right leg up while raising the sword, tip up. Begin to inhale.



(SE) Step down with your right leg and use it to propel a jump forward. While in the air, move the sword in a circular motion: forward, up, and back. Complete inhalation.



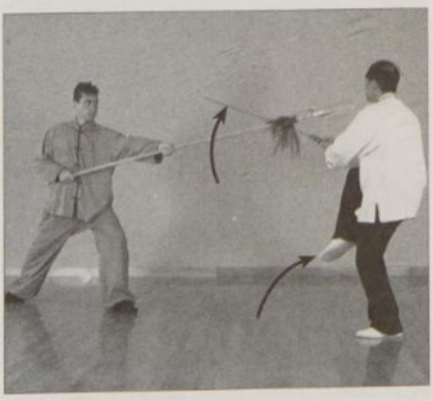
Application: As the attacker stabs, slide your sword upward to block his sword to your right.



(SE) Land in mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu), right leg forward. As the landing is made, stab the sword forward and low. Exhale.



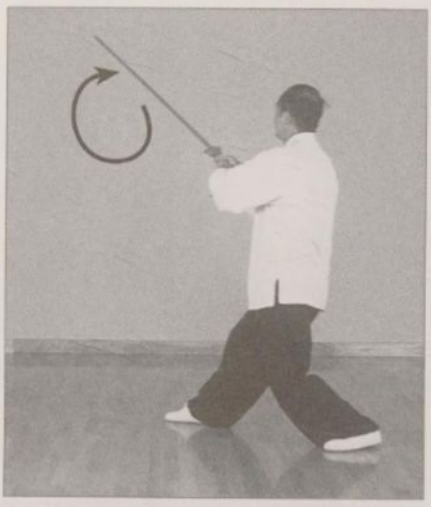
Application: After blocking, immediately stab your opponent.



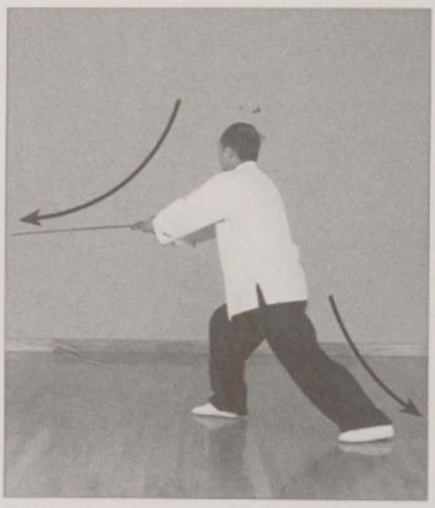


If your opponent has a long weapon, you will have to jump forward with the intercept in order to reach his body.

11. The Dragonfly Touches the Water (Qing Ting Tian Shui, 蜻蜓點水)



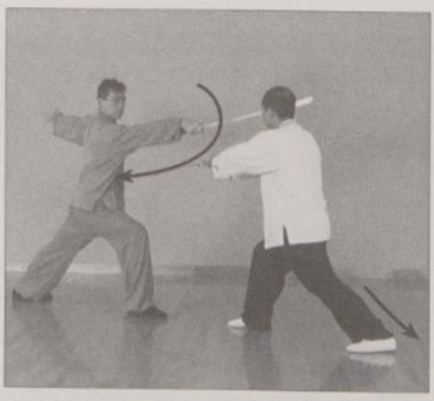
(SE) Sit back into four six stance (si liu bu) and raise the sword in a circular upward motion. Inhale.



(SE) Stab your sword forward and low while shifting your stance to mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). Exhale.



Application: When your opponent attacks your upper body, sit back to avoid the attack while sliding his weapon to your right.

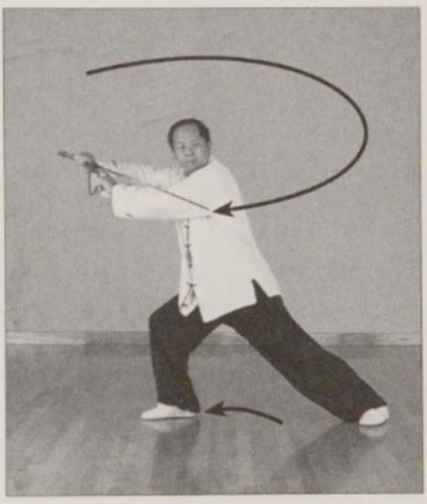


Application: Immediately after the block, stab your opponent's waist.

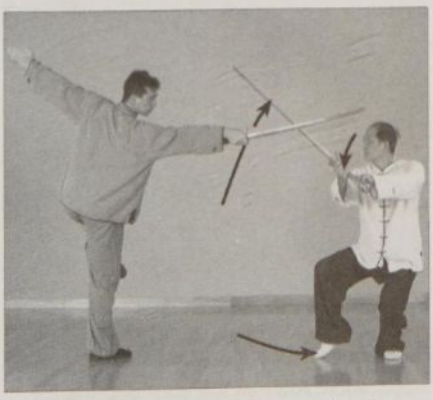
12. The Swallow Enters the Nest (Yan Zi Ru Chao, 燕子入巢)



(N) Slide your right leg back so the front of your body is facing directly N while looking to the E. The stance is false stance (xu bu). At the same time that your leg is sliding, turn the sword so your palm faces in and the sword points E. Inhale.



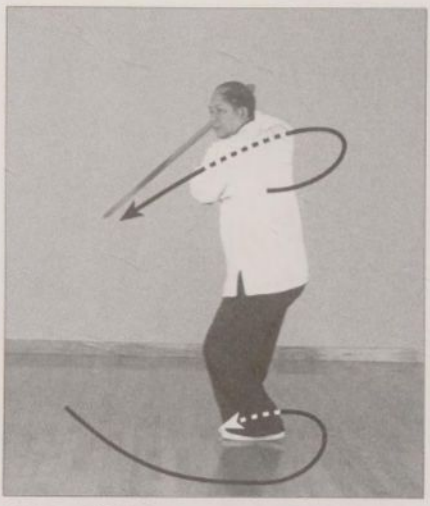
(E) Shift into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while circling the sword up, back, and then forward. Look N. Exhale.



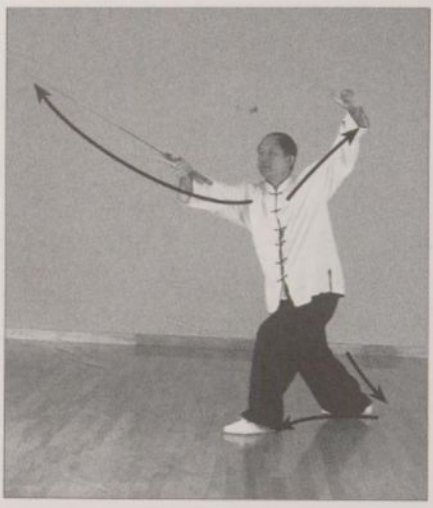
Application: As the opponent attacks, the defender steps back into false stance (xu bu) and slides the attacker's sword to the side. The block is made with the lower third of your sword.



Application: After intercepting your opponent's attack and leading it away, step forward and cut his throat.



(E) Spin 360 degrees counterclockwise on your left leg while keeping the sword pointing downward diagonally. Inhale.



(NE) Step your left leg to face NE and slide the sword upward. The stance is mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). Exhale.



Application: This technique is used against attacks from a long weapon such as a staff or spear. As the opponent stings with his weapon, you slide the attack away by whirling around. The lower edge of the sword guides the weapon away as the turn is made.



Application: After sliding your opponent's weapon away, you step with your left leg and cut the opponent's neck.

13. The Phoenix Spreads Its Wings (Feng Huang Shuang Zhan Chi, 鳳凰雙展翅)



(SE) Turn 90 degrees clockwise, shifting into horse stance (ma bu) while bringing your left hand to the sword. Inhale.

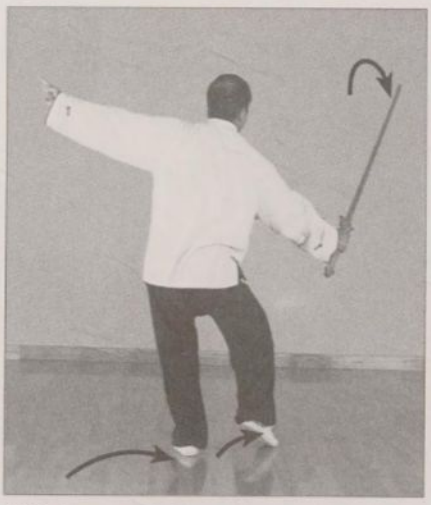


(SW) Turn clockwise another 90 degrees, shifting into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while swinging the sword up to your right, palm up. Your left hand opens to the rear. Exhale.

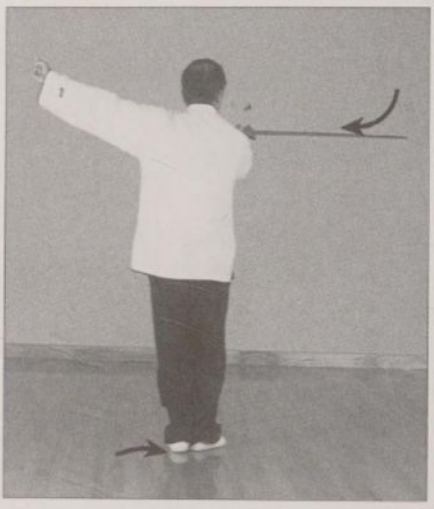


Application: You dodge an attack and swing the sword up into the opponent's back.

14. Right Whirlwind (You Xuan Feng, 右旋風)



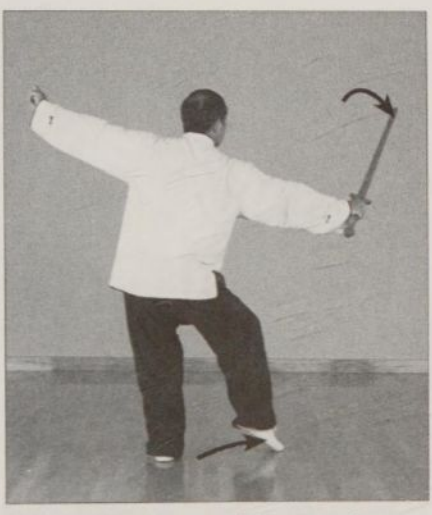
(SW) Step your left leg half a step forward and lift your right heel up into false stance (xu bu). While shifting the stance, make a small clockwise circle with the handle of the sword while the tip of the sword makes a smaller circle the size of the wrist. Inhale and exhale.



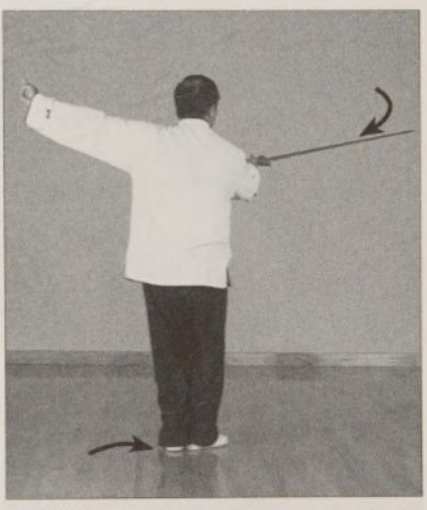
(SW) Bring your legs together as you continue to move the tip of the blade in a small circle. Inhale.



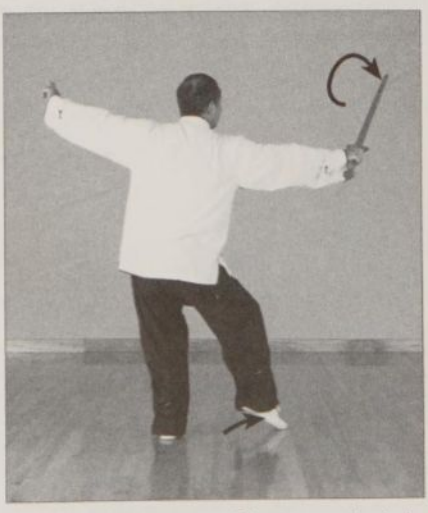
Application: As the opponent stabs, the defender steps to the side and circles his sword over the attacker's wrist. As the blade circles, the defender cuts into the opponent's wrist.



(SW) Shift the stance to false stance (xu bu) and complete the small circling motion. Exhale.

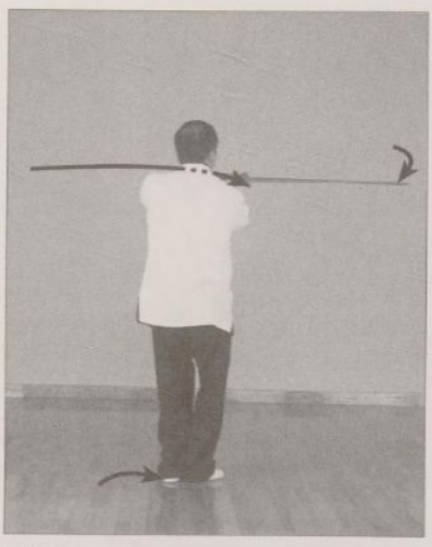


(SW) Bring your legs together and begin the circling sword motion again. Inhale.

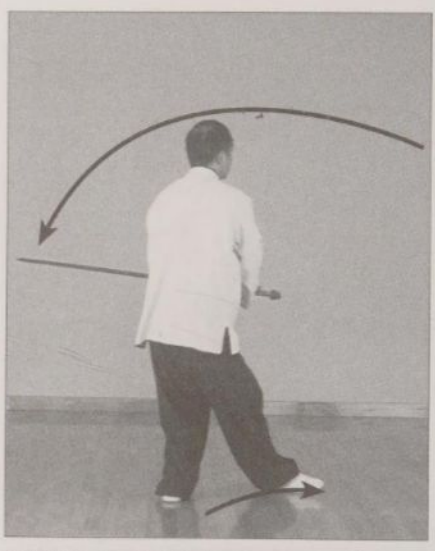


(SW) Shift the stance to false stance (xu bu) and complete the circling motion. Exhale.

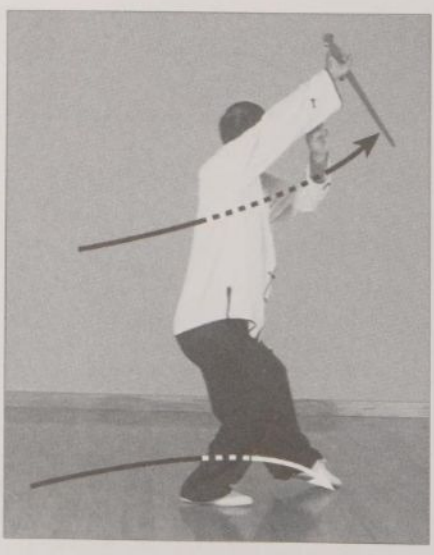
15. Little Chief Star (Xiao Kui Xing, 小魁星)



(SW) From the previous form, step your left leg forward while bringing both of your hands together in front of the upper chest. Start to inhale.



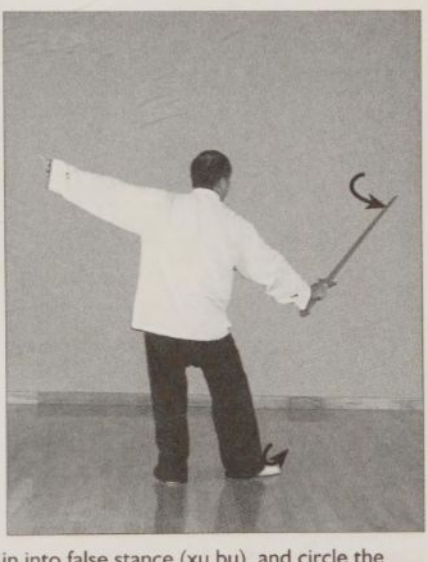
(SW) Step your right leg forward while circling the sword upward, then to the left rear. Complete the inhalation.



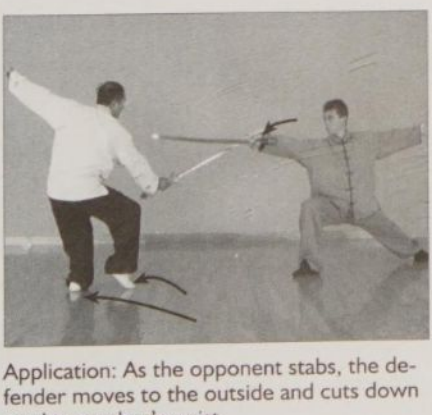
(SW) Step your left leg forward into false stance (xu bu) while sliding the sword upward diagonally. Exhale.

16. Left Whirlwind (Zuo Xuan Feng, 左旋風)

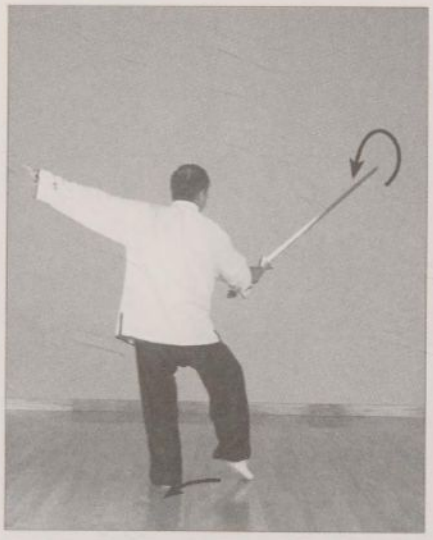


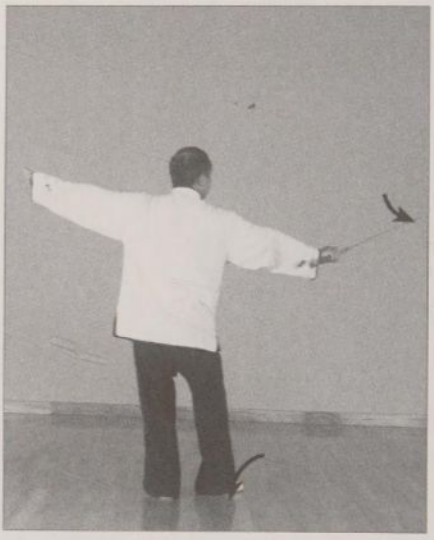


(SW) Step your left leg back and drag your right leg in into false stance (xu bu), and circle the handle of the sword in a counterclockwise motion while the tip of the sword makes a small circle the size of the wrist. This is the same type of motion as in right whirlwind, except that the sword moves counterclockwise. Inhale and exhale.

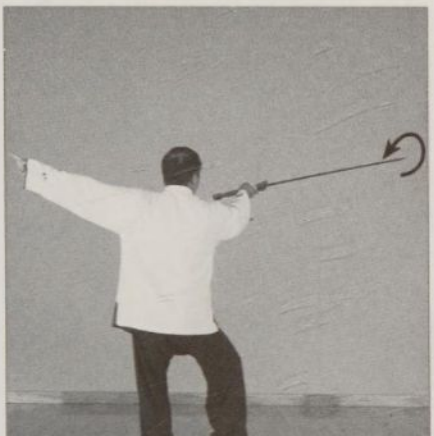


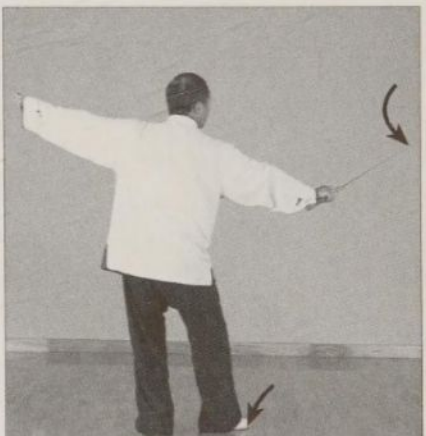
Application: As the opponent stabs, the defender moves to the outside and cuts down on the attacker's wrist.

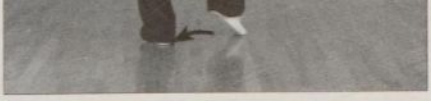


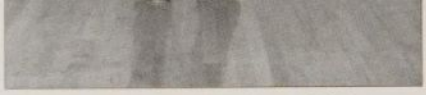


(SW) Set the right foot down and move backward with your left leg. Draw your right leg into false stance (xu bu). As your legs are moving, the sword repeats the counterclockwise circular motion. Inhale and exhale.



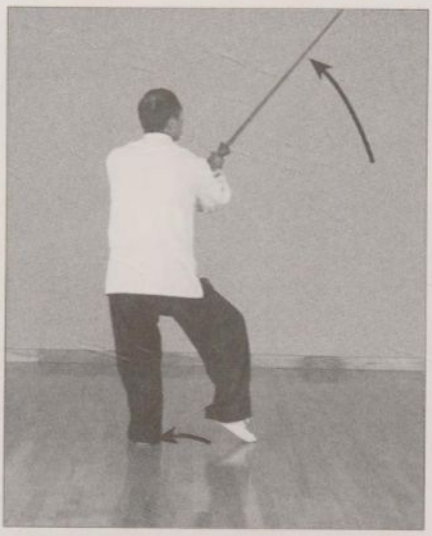




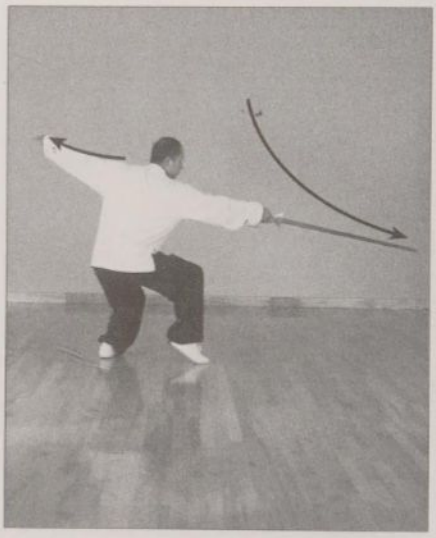


(SW) (Repeat left whirlwind.) Set the right foot down and move backward with your left leg. Right leg draws into false stance (xu bu). As your legs are moving, the sword repeats the counterclockwise circular motion. Inhale and exhale.

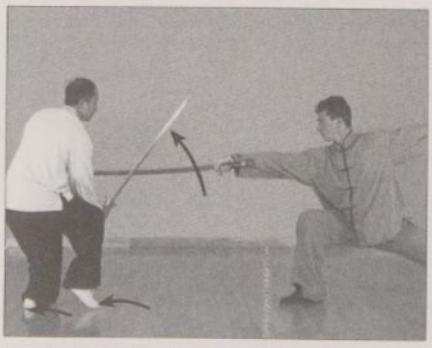
17. Waiting for a Fish (Deng Yu Shi, 等魚勢)



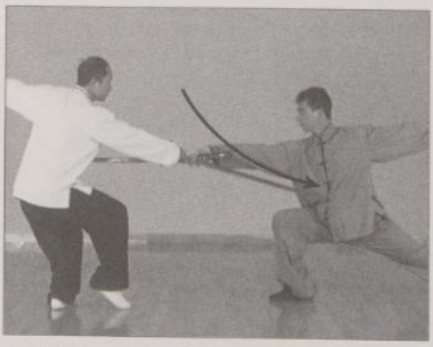
(W) In the previous move, you were stepping back with your left leg. Bring the sword upward and to the left while drawing in your right leg into false stance (xu bu). Your left hand touches the right wrist. The sword is pointing W. Inhale.



(W) Stab the sword forward and downward. The left hand extends back. Exhale.



Application: The defender slides the opponent's sword to his left.

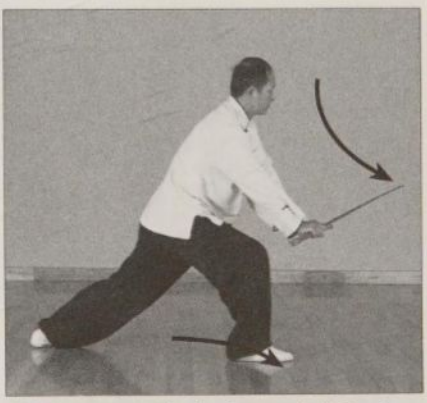


Application: After blocking, the defender stabs the opponent in the belly.

18. Part the Grass in Search of the Snake (Bo Cao Xun She, 撥草尋蛇)



(W) Raise the sword tip up so the flat part of the blade faces the front of the body. Inhale.



(W) Step your right leg forward shifting into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). As the weight shifts, slide the sword forward at a level slightly above the knees. Exhale.

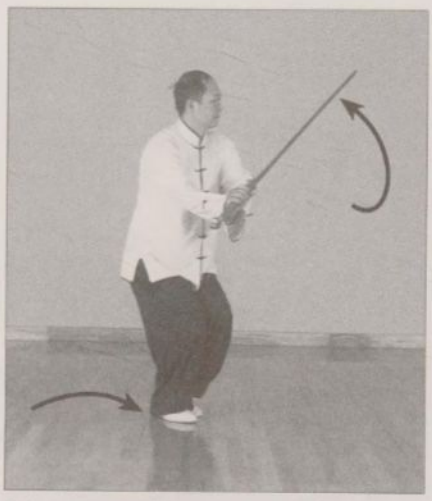


Application: The defender uses the lower part of the sword to guide away an attack.

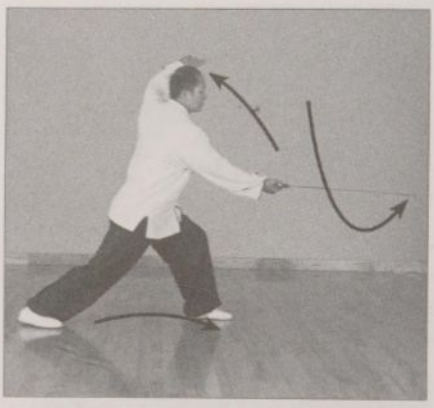




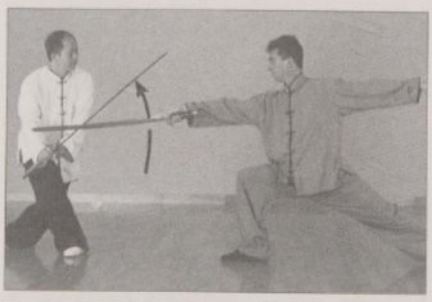
Application: The defender steps forward while using his sword to seal and press down the opponent's sword. This will allow the defender to use the left hand to attack.



(W) Move your left leg to the side of the right leg while blocking with your sword to your right. Inhale.



(W) Step the left leg forward into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while sealing and pressing down with the sword. Extend your left hand to your left. Exhale.



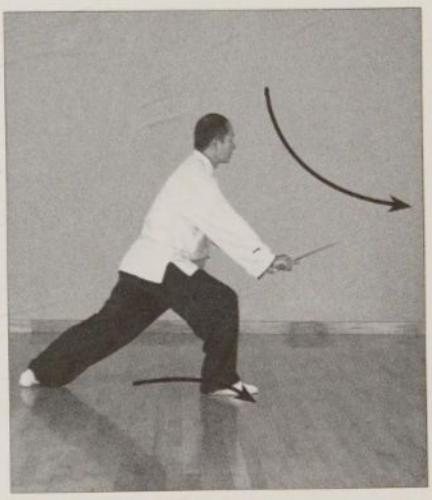
Application: The defender blocks and leads the attack to his right.





Application: The defender presses the opponent's sword downward and forward to seal the opponent's sword and immediately uses the left secret sword to attack his throat.



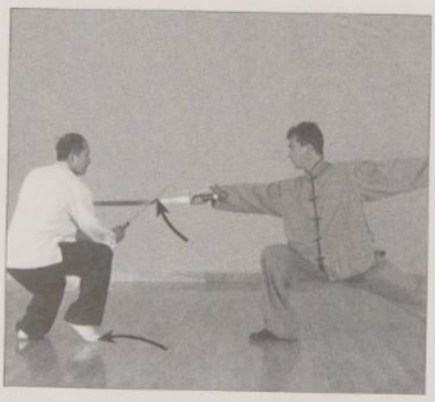


(W) Repeat the block to the left, seal down, and step right, shifting into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu).

19. Hold the Moon against the Chest (Huai Zhong Bao Yue, 懷中抱月)

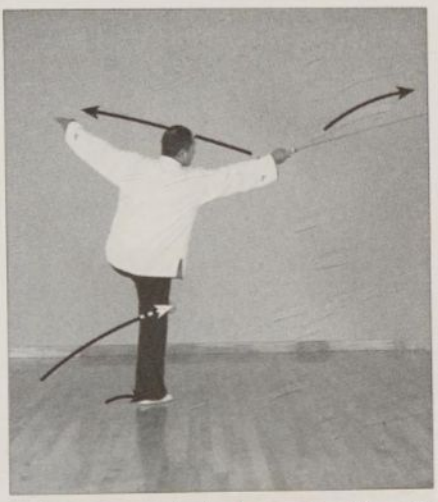


(W) Draw your right leg back into false stance (xu bu) while turning and raising the sword up and to the left. Inhale.



Application: The defender blocks to his left.

20. Send the Bird to the Woods (Song Niao Shang Lin, 送鳥上林)



(W) Step your right leg forward and lift your left knee into golden rooster stands on one leg stance (jin ji du li) while spreading the sword and left arm to the sides. Exhale.

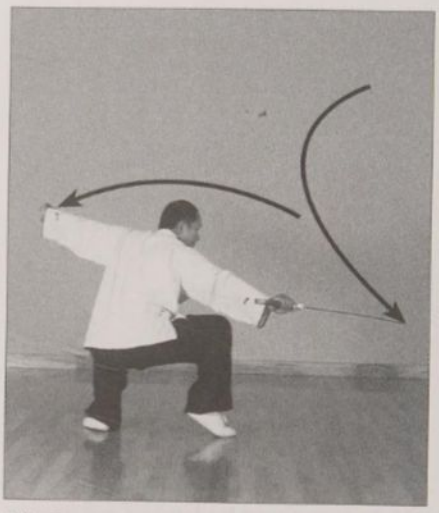


Application: After the block in the previous movement, the defender attacks the neck with a sideways motion of the sword.

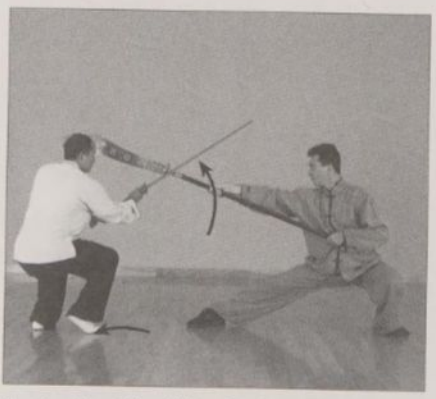
21. The Black Dragon Waves Its Tail (Wu Long Bai Wei, 烏龍擺尾)



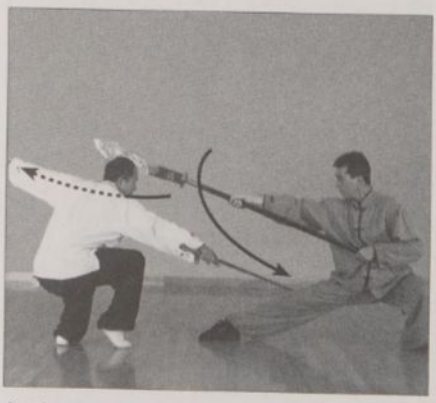
(W) Set your left leg down and draw your right leg back into false stance (xu bu), thigh parallel to the ground. At the same time, bring the sword to the upper chest area. Inhale.



(W) Cut across and low with the sword. The right palm faces down and the left hand extends back. Exhale.



Application: The defender draws in his right leg while using his sword to block an attack.

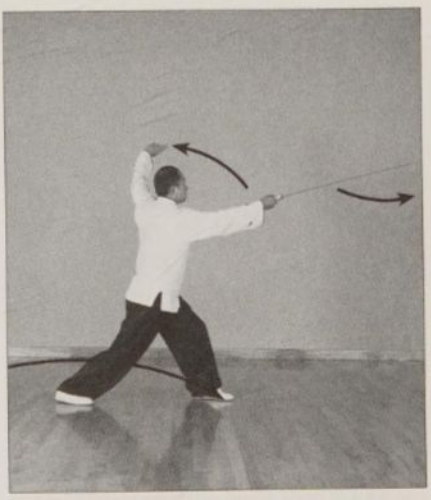


Application: After blocking, the defender cuts the opponent's leg.

22. The Wind Blows the Lotus Leaf (Feng Juan He Ye, 風捲荷葉)



(W) Turn your body to the right, shifting into crossed legs stance (zuo pan bu) while blocking with your sword to your right and up. Inhale.



(W) Step forward with your left leg shifting into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while sliding the sword forward and up. Exhale.



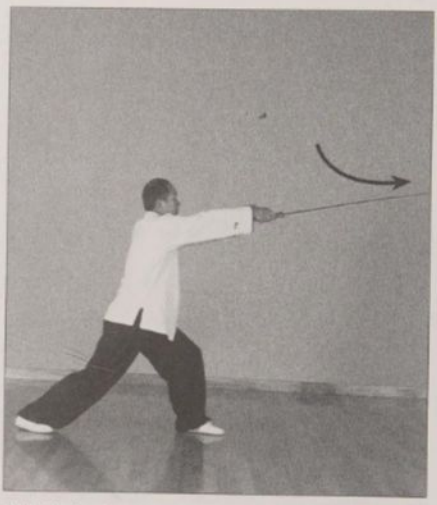
Application: The defender turns and guides away a high attack.



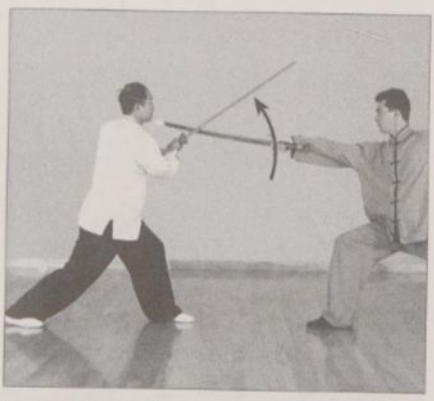
Application: The defender steps in to attack the neck of the opponent after guiding the sword away.



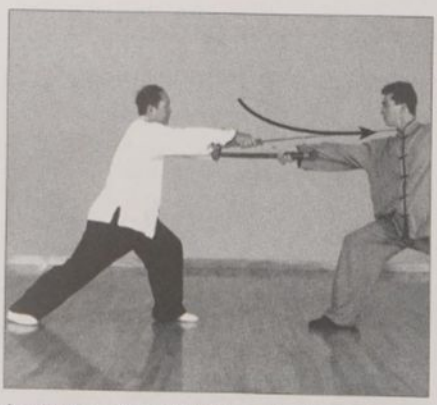
(W) Move the sword inward to the left side. The left hand touches the right wrist. Inhale.



(W) Slide the sword out, palms facing down. Exhale.



Application: As the opponent attacks, the defender guides the attack away with the bottom third of his sword.



Application: After blocking, the defender slashes the neck of the opponent.

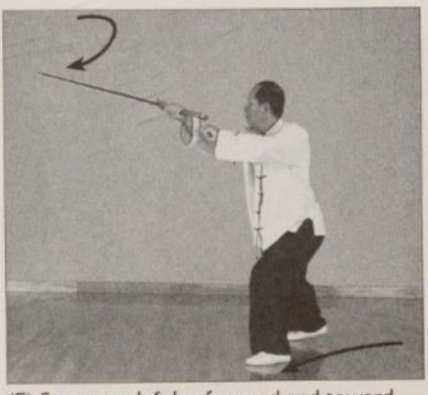
23. The Lion Shakes Its Head (Shi Zi Yao Tou, 獅子搖頭)



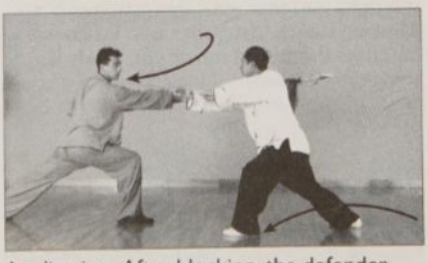
(E) Turn clockwise 180 degrees to face E while swinging the sword across the body. Inhale.



Application: When an opponent stabs, the defender pushes the attacker's weapon to the side with the lower edge of his sword.



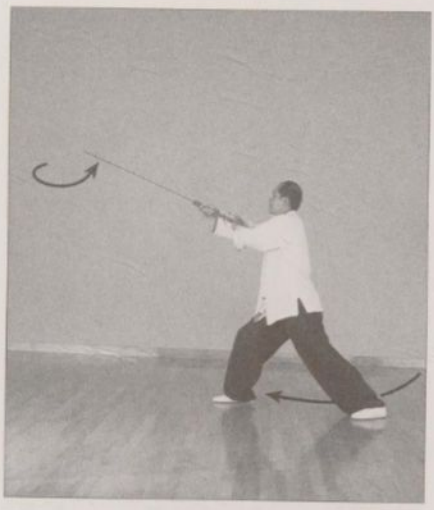
(E) Step your left leg forward and toward the left side. Move your right leg slightly to the left so the legs align in mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). While in the process of moving the body, slash the sword across and in front of your body, using the wrists. Exhale and then inhale.



Application: After blocking, the defender steps to the side and slashes the opponent's throat with the sword by using a whipping action created by the wrists. This is coordinated with the exhalation.



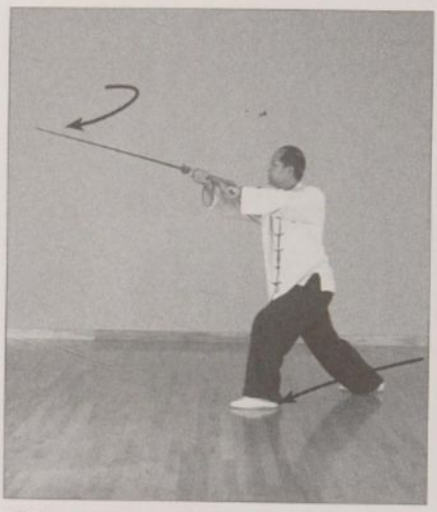
Application: When the slice at the throat is finished, the defender can begin another block, but from an inside position. This is coordinated with the inhalation.



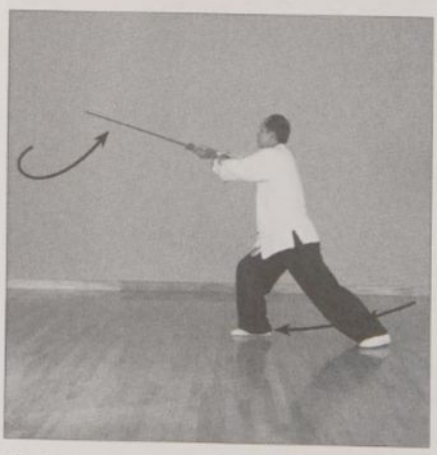
(E) Step your right leg forward and toward the right side. Move your left leg slightly to the right, and align your feet into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). While moving, slash the sword across your body by using only the wrists. Inhale.



Application: Once the opponent's sword is neutralized, the defender slashes the attacker's throat.



(E) Once again, step your left leg forward and toward the left side. Move your right leg slightly to the left to align the feet into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). While in the process of moving the body, slash the sword across and in front of your body, using the wrists. Exhale and then inhale.



(E) Once again, step your right leg forward and toward the right side. Move your left leg slightly to the right and align your feet into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). While moving, slash the sword across your body by using only the wrists. Inhale.

24. The Tiger Holds Its Head (Hu Bao Tou, 虎抱頭)



(E) Slide your sword from the right to the front. Exhale.



(E) Draw the sword in and shift into false stance (xu bu). Inhale.



Application: The defender withdraws his sword to his left, using it to block an attack.

25. The Wild Horse Jumps the Stream (Ye Ma Tiao Jian, 野馬跳澗)



(E) Step down with the right leg and use it to propel a jump forward while lifting the blade in a circling motion. Start to exhale.



(E) Land into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while stabbing the sword forward and low. Complete exhalation.



Application: After the block, the defender jumps into closer range and stabs the opponent with the sword.

26. Turn Body and Rein In the Horse (Fan Shen Le Ma, 翻身勒馬)



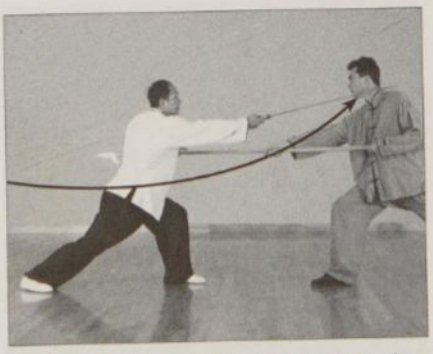
(W) Turn counterclockwise 180 degrees to face W, shifting into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while swinging your left hand across your body. Inhale.



(W) Swing the sword all the way around to the left hand. Exhale.

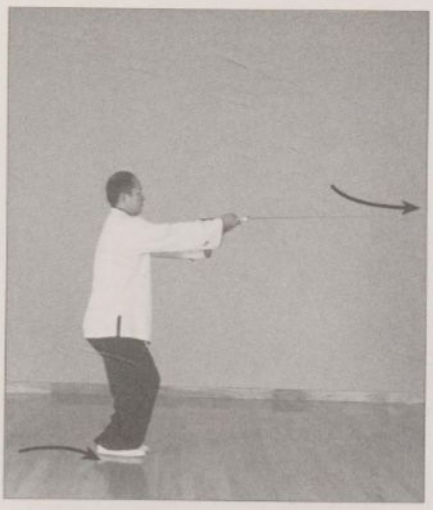


Application: As an opponent attacks with a long weapon, the defender pushes it to the side and grabs it.



Application: Following the interception, the defender cuts the attacker's neck.

27. Compass (Zhi Nan Zhen, 指南針)



(W) Step forward with your left leg and bring your right leg in next to it, and stab forward while squatting. Exhale.

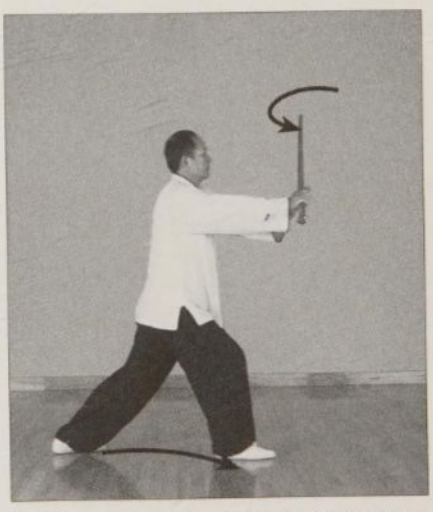


Application: Once the wrist has been cut, the defender moves in to stab the throat.

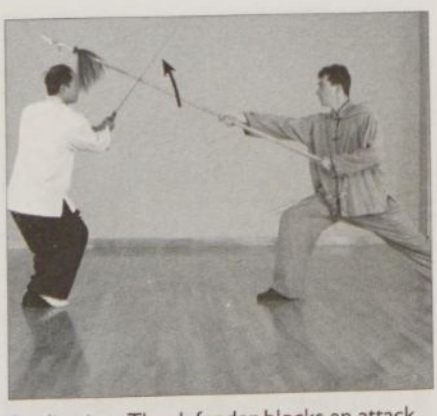
28. Clean Up Dust in the Wind (Ying Feng Dan Chen, 迎風撣塵)



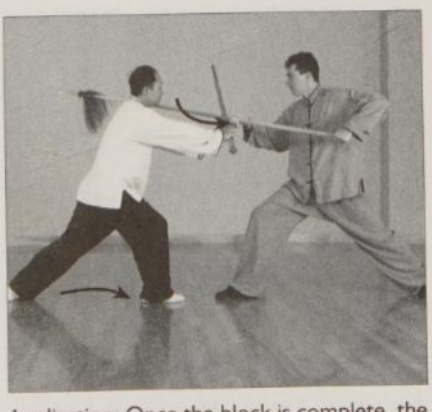
(W) Turn your body slightly to your left while lifting your sword to your left. Right palm faces inward. Inhale.



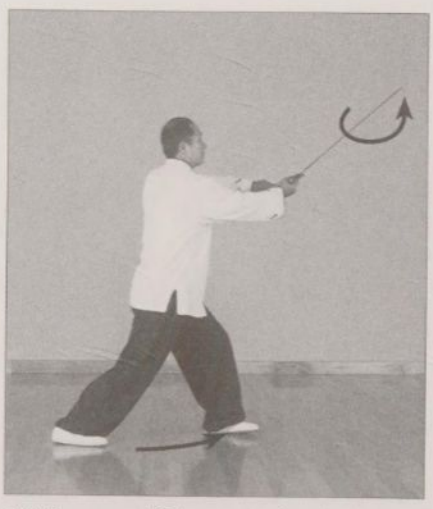
(W) Step your right leg forward into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while pushing the sword forward from your chest. Exhale.



Application: The defender blocks an attack with the lower third of his sword.



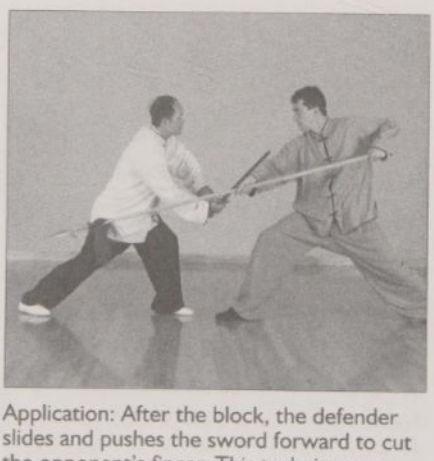
Application: Once the block is complete, the defender slides in and strikes the opponent's fingers with the lower edge of the sword. The defender hits, rather than cuts, the opponent. This technique is also commonly used to seal the opponent's weapon.



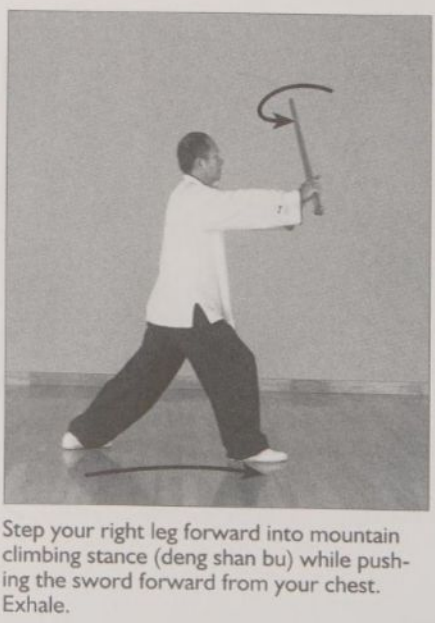
(W) Step your left leg out and push the sword forward from your chest. The stance is mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). Exhale.



(W) (Repeat left block and seal.) Bring your right leg in, next to your left, while lifting your sword to your left. Right palm faces inward. Inhale.

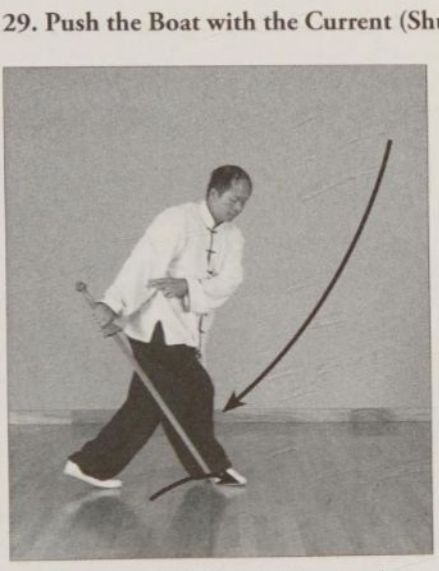


Application: After the block, the defender slides and pushes the sword forward to cut the opponent's finger. This technique can also be used to seal the opponent's weapon.



Step your right leg forward into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) while pushing the sword forward from your chest. Exhale.

29. Push the Boat with the Current (Shun Shui Tui Zhou, 順水推舟)



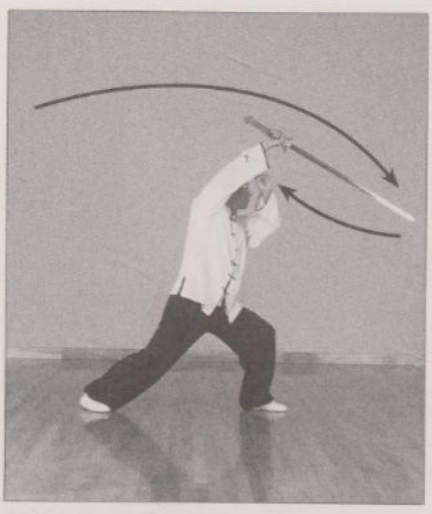
(W) Move your right leg a half step to the left so it crosses your left leg. At the same time, slide the sword downward and along the right side of the body. Start to inhale.



(W) Step your left leg forward into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu), and open your left arm while swinging the sword back and up. Complete inhalation.



Application: The defender slides away an attack to his lower body.

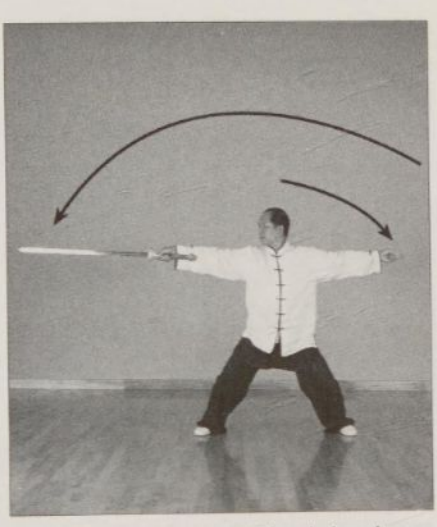


(W) Move the tip of the sword forward while moving your left hand to the right wrist area. Exhale.



Application: Once the low attack is guided away, the defender steps in to stab the opponent from the top. The left hand is used to seal the opponent's right arm.

30. The Shooting Star Chasing the Moon (Liu Xing Gan Yue, 流星趕月)

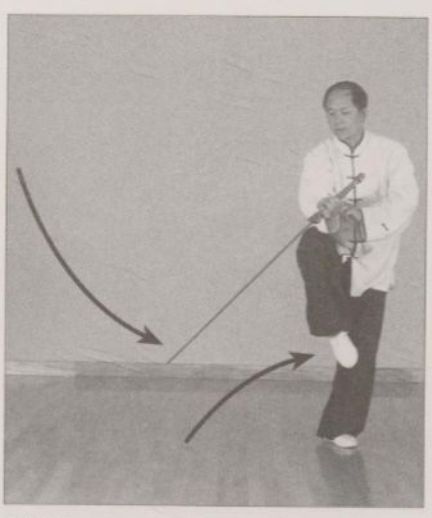


(N) Shift into horse stance (ma bu) and swing the sword over the head and down to shoulder level. The sword points E. Inhale and exhale.

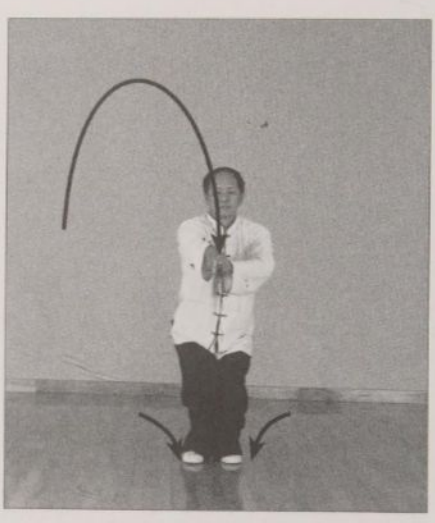


Application: The defender dodges an attack and then cuts the hand of the opponent.

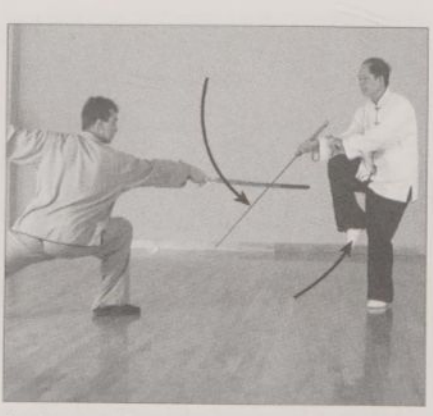
31. The Bird Flying over the Waterfall (Tian Niao Fei Pu, 天鳥飛瀑)



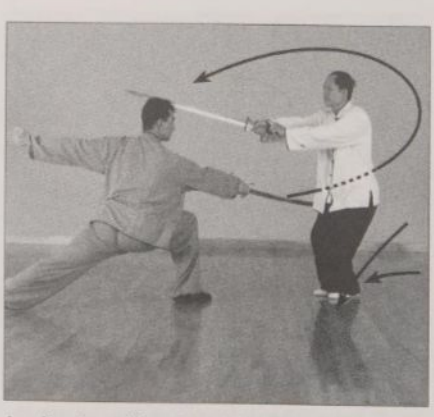
(N) Raise your right knee and swing the sword down along the right side of the leg. Inhale.



(N) Step forward with your right leg and immediately follow with your left leg while swinging the sword up and then down. Exhale.

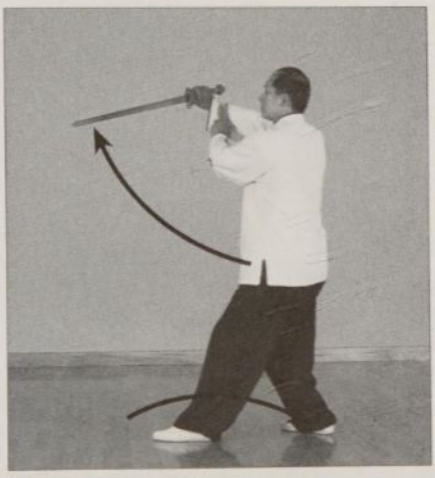


Application: The defender slides away a low attack.

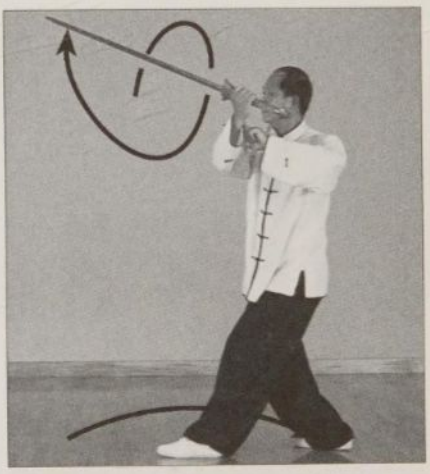


Application: After the defender slides away the attack, he chops the sword down onto the opponent's head.

32. Raise the Screen (Tiao Lian Shi, 挑簾勢)



(E) Bring your right leg back and turn so your body faces E. While moving back, slide the sword upward to point E. Inhale.



(E) Circle the tip of the sword clockwise and slide the sword edge upward and to the left. Exhale.

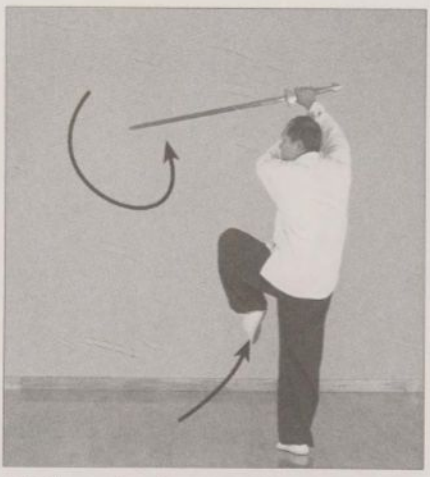


Application: The defender steps the right leg back while sliding away a high attack.





Application: After blocking, the defender circles the sword to the other side of the opponent's weapon and slides up the opponent's wrist. This movement can also be used as a block that slides an attack to the left.



(E) Change the direction of the circle to counterclockwise. Circle to the left, down, and then up while lifting the left leg into the golden rooster stands on one leg stance (jin ji du li). (From the beginning of this posture until this movement, the sword has made a figure eight in front of the upper chest area.) Inhale and then exhale.



Application: After blocking, the defender circles the sword to the right side of the opponent's weapon and slides upward to his fingers.



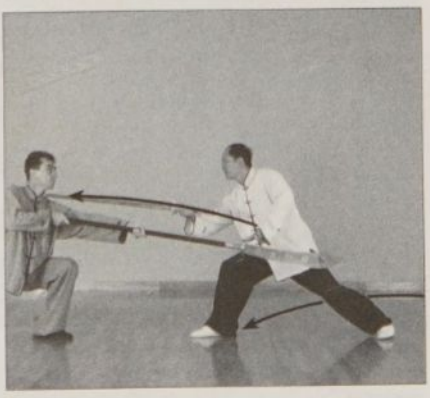
(E) Step down with your left leg and turn it out into a crossed legs stance (zuo pan bu). At the same time, swing the sword down and toward W. The left hand touches the right wrist. Inhale.



(E) Bring your right leg forward into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) and slide the sword up and straight ahead. The right palm faces upward and the left hand extends backward. Exhale.



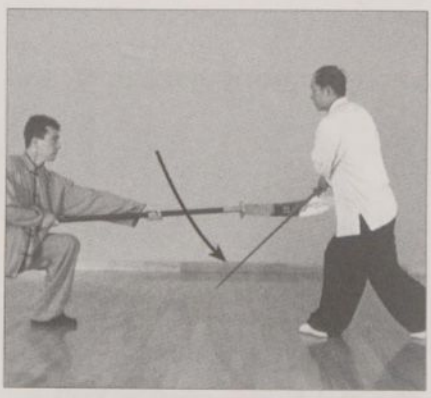
Application: The defender slides away an attack.



Application: The defender slides the sword up and then forward to stab the opponent's throat.

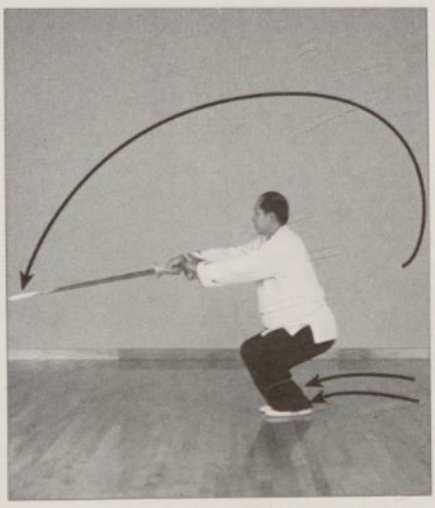


(E) Turn your body to your right and slide the sword down and back while turning the blade until the right palm faces your body. Inhale.

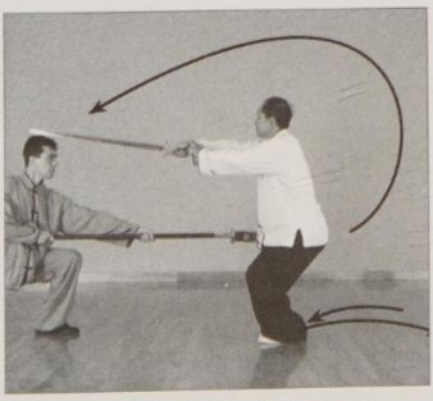


Application: As the opponent attacks the lower body, the defender guides away his weapon.

34. The Swallow Picks Up Mud with Its Beak (Yan Zi Xian Ni, 燕子啣泥)

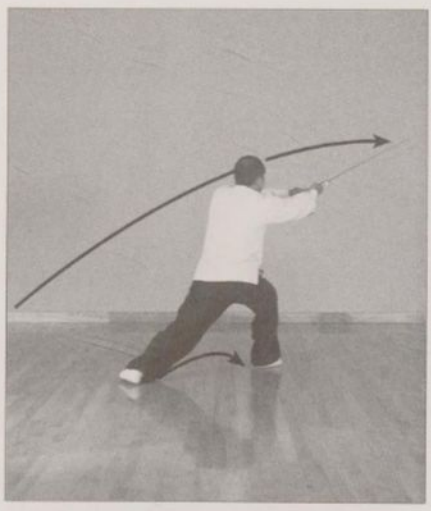


(E) Swing the sword up and forward while stepping straight ahead with your left leg. Next, bring your right leg forward so both legs are together. Squat down. Exhale.



Application: After the block, the defender steps forward to counterattack over the top.

35. The Roc Spreads Its Wings (Da Peng Zhan Chi, 大鵬展翅)

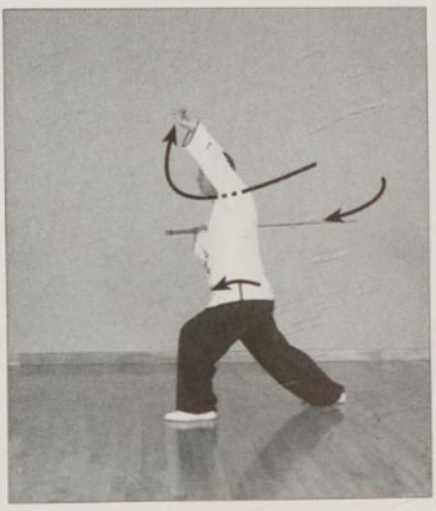


(SW) Move your right leg back and turn the body clockwise to the SW, shifting into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu). Swing the sword diagonally upward while keeping your left hand on the right wrist. Inhale and exhale.

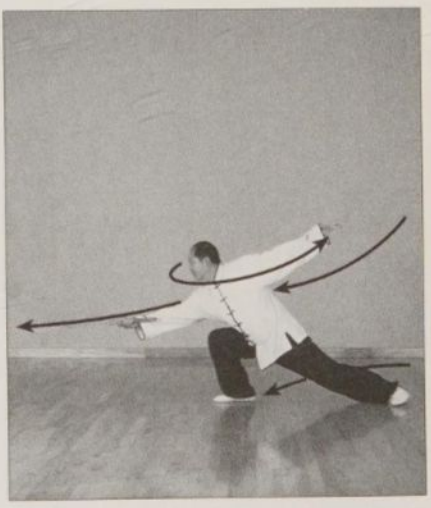


Application: The defender dodges an attack and then cuts the opponent's wrist.

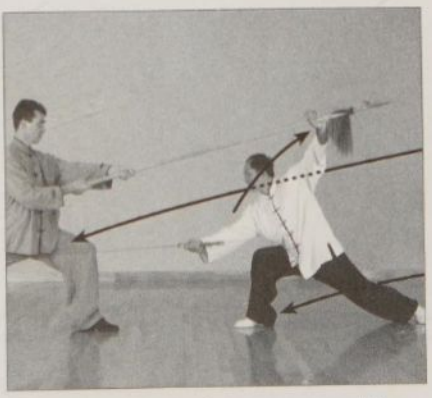
36. Pick Up the Moon from the Sea Bottom (Hai Di Lao Yue, 海底撈月)



(E) Turn the body counterclockwise to face E while swinging your left hand in front of your face. The sword stays behind. Inhale.



(E) Move your right leg forward into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) and swing the sword down at knee level; your upper body leans forward. The left hand extends up and back. Exhale.



Application: This is a long-range attack by the defender. After pushing the rod away, the defender leans forward to cut the opponent's knee. The left hand can grab the opponent's long weapon to prevent him from executing further attacks while the defender cuts his opponent's knee.

37. Hold the Moon against the Chest (Huai Zhong Bao Yue, 懷中抱月)



(N) Pull the right leg into false stance (xu bu) while drawing the sword back to your chest area. The body faces N while the sword is pointing to the E. Inhale.



Application: The defender slides away an attack to his face with the middle section of his sword.

38. The Night Demon Gauges the Depth of the Sea (Ye Cha Tan Hai, 夜叉探海)



(N) Step your right leg half a step to the right, and raise your left knee and slide downward toward N. Your upper body leans forward slightly and your left hand extends back. Exhale.



Application: After sliding away the attack, the defender steps to the opponent's left side while cutting down to the opponent's wrist.

39. The Rhino Looks at the Moon (Xi Niu Wang Yue, 犀牛望月)



(NW) Step your left leg down and face NW while blocking upward with your sword, right palm facing inward. Begin to inhale.



Application: The defender uses his sword to intercept an attack.

40. Shoot the Geese (She Yan Shi, 射雁勢)

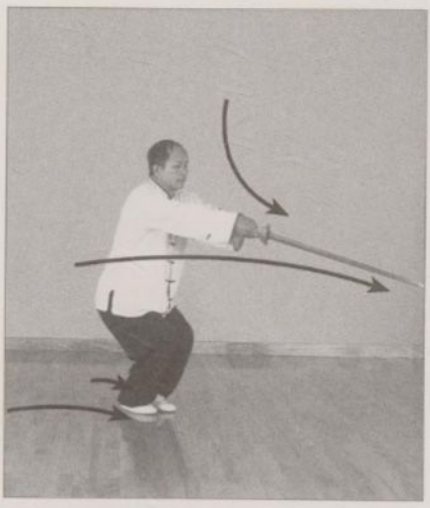


(NW) Step your right leg half a step forward and immediately step your left leg into false stance (xu bu). While you are stepping, circle your sword down to your right side, beside the right knee, and extend your left secret sword hand forward. Complete inhalation.



Application: After the defender has intercepted an attack, he steps forward and uses his left hand to attack the opponent's chest. If the opponent steps back to avoid the attack, the defender can use the next movement to step forward and stab his opponent's lower body.

41. The Blue Dragon Waves Its Claws (Qing Long Tan Zhua, 青龍探爪)



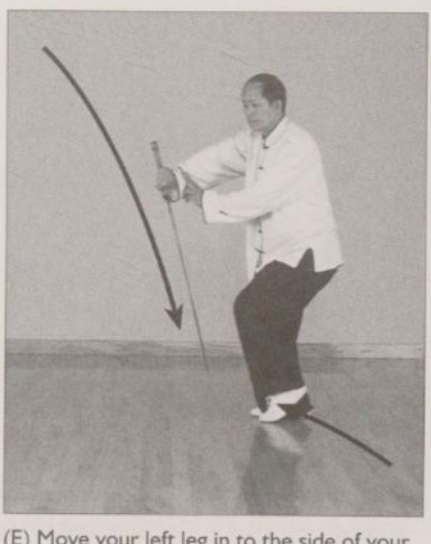
(NW) Step your left leg half a step forward and immediately step your right leg to the side of the left leg while also stabbing your sword forward and slightly downward. Exhale.

42. The Phoenix Spreads Its Wings (Feng Huang Shuang Zhan Chi, 鳳凰雙展翅)

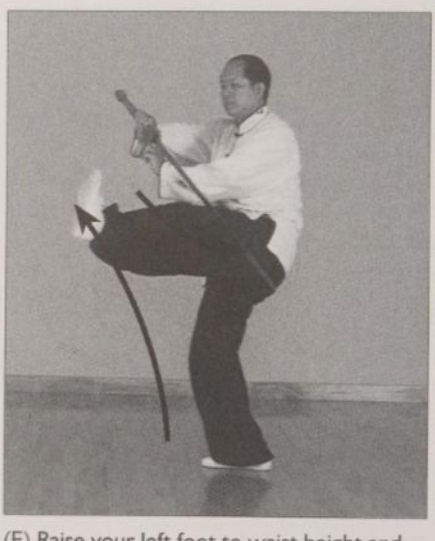


(SE) Step the right leg back and turn your body clockwise 180 degrees while swinging your sword diagonally upward. Inhale and exhale.

43. Left and Right Step over Obstacle (Zuo You Kua Lan, 左右跨欄)



(E) Move your left leg in to the side of your right leg while moving the sword tip down to your left. Start to inhale.



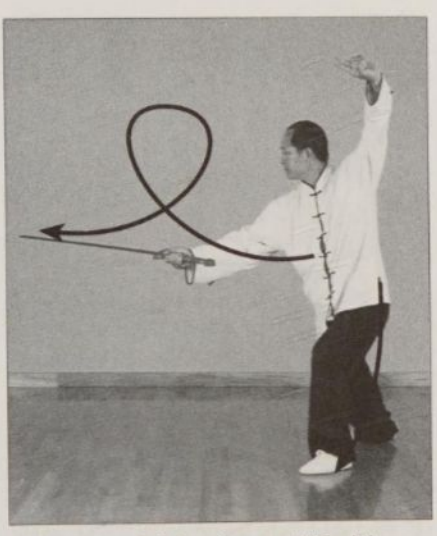
(E) Raise your left foot to waist height and then push it to the left. Complete inhalation.



Application: The defender uses the lower part of the sword to guide away an attack.



Application: After blocking, the defender uses the side of his left foot to push the opponent's weapon away.



(E) Step your left leg down to NE while circling your sword and then horizontally sliding it to the left, palm up. Exhale.



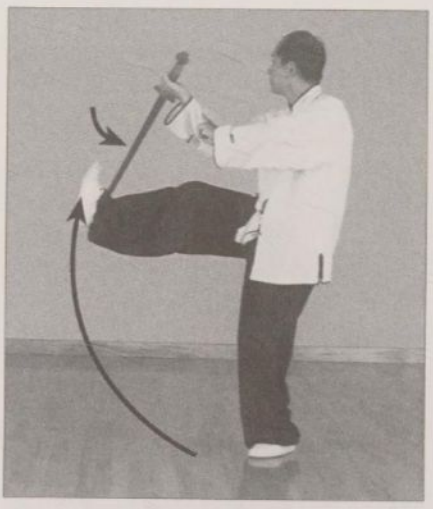
(E) Move your right leg in to the side of the left leg while blocking to the right. Start to inhale.



Application: The defender steps his left foot down and uses his sword to cut the opponent's waist.



Application: The defender moves his right leg in while using the sword to block to his right.



(E) Lift your right leg and use the side of your right foot to push to the right. Complete inhalation.



(E) Step your right leg down to the SE while circling your sword counterclockwise and then sliding to the right, palm down. Exhale.



Application: The defender uses the side of his right foot to push the opponent's weapon to his right.



Application: The defender steps his right leg down and slices the right side of the opponent's waist.

44. Shoot the Geese (She Yan Shi, 射雁勢)



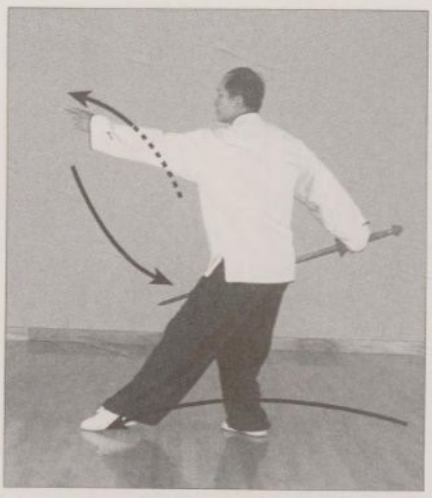
(E) Shift your weight to your left foot while bringing your sword to the left of your upper chest. Inhale.



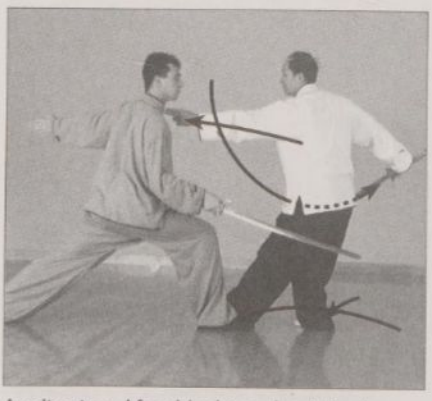
(E) Step your right leg E while circling your sword downward. Exhale.



Application: The defender blocks to his left.

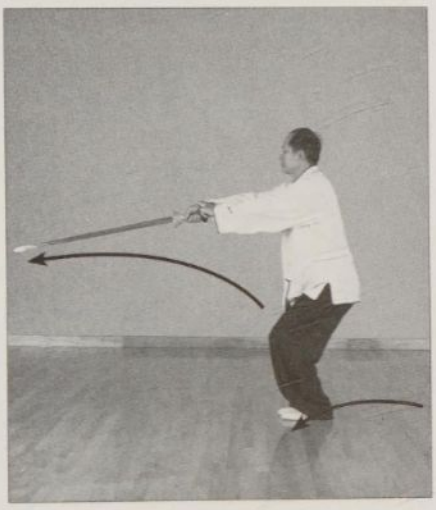


(E) Step your left leg forward into false stance (xu bu). Continue circling your sword to your right side while extending your left-hand secret sword forward. Inhale.



Application: After blocking, the defender steps forward and uses his left-hand secret sword to attack the opponent's throat.

45. The White Ape Offers Fruit (Bai Yuan Xian Guo, 白猿獻果)



(E) Step your left leg forward and bring your right leg in next to your left leg while extending your sword forward. Exhale.

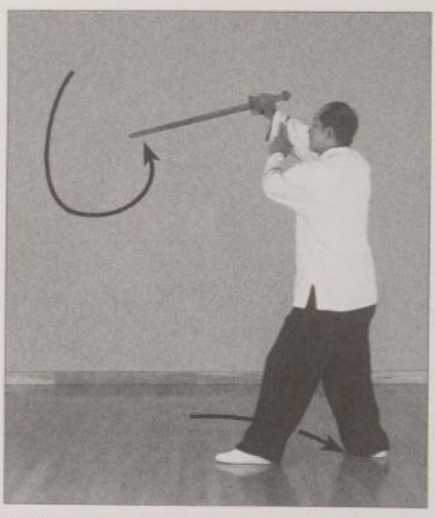


Application: If the opponent steps back to avoid the attack in the previous technique, the defender immediately steps his right leg forward and stabs the opponent's stomach.

46. Falling Flowers Posture (Luo Hua Shi, 落花勢)



(E) Turn your body to your left while circling the tip of your sword upward. Inhale.



(E) Step your right leg backward while circling the tip of the sword upward and to the right. Exhale.



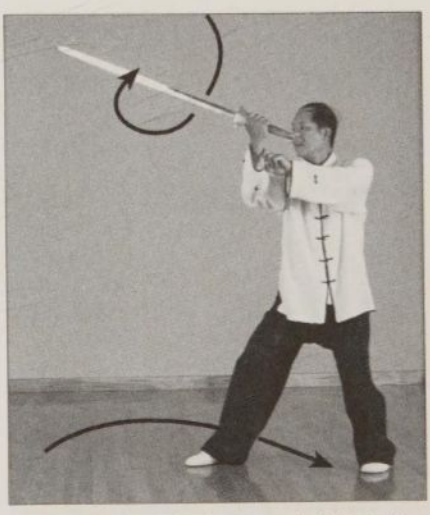
Application: The defender circles his sword up to his left to intercept an attack.



Application: After blocking, the defender circles the sword down and then diagonally up to the right to cut the right side of the opponent's upper chest.



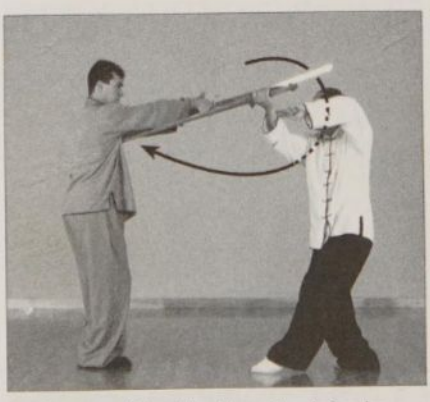
(E) Continue to circle the tip of your sword upward to the right. Inhale.



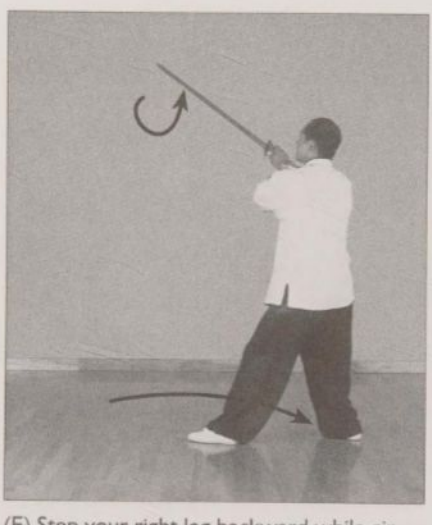
(E) Step your left leg backward while circling the tip of the sword upward and to your left. Exhale.



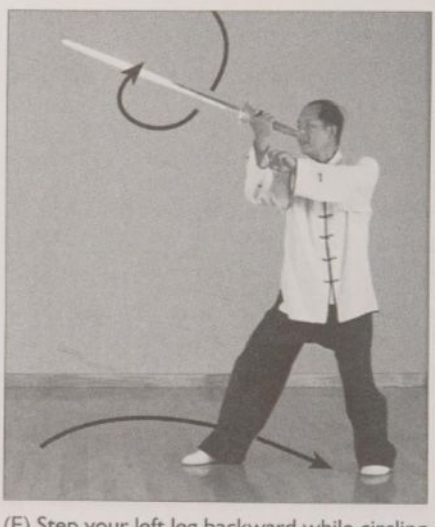
Application: The defender blocks with his sword, up and to the right, to intercept an attack.



Application: After blocking, the defender circles the sword up and diagonally to his left to cut the opponent's underarm area.

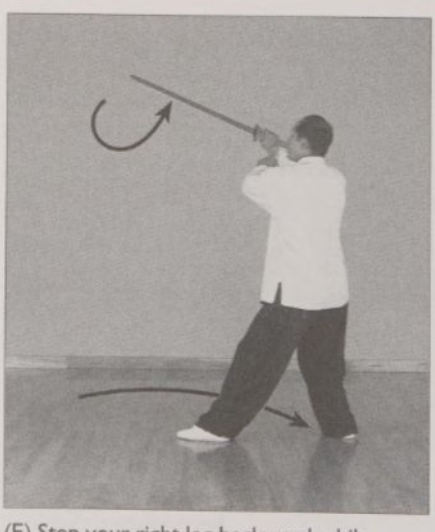


(E) Step your right leg backward while circling the tip of the sword upward and to the right. Inhale and exhale.



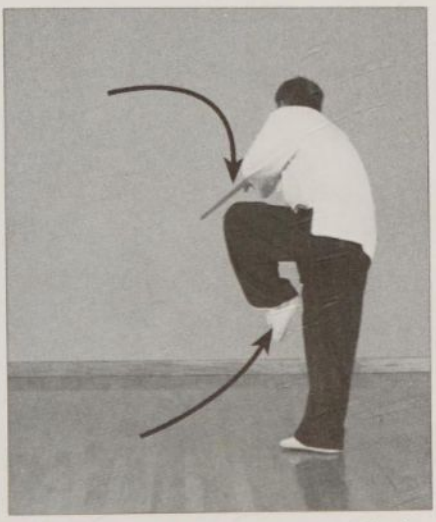
(E) Step your left leg backward while circling the tip of the sword upward and to your left. Exhale.

(In total, there are five backward steppings and two and one half figure-eight tip circlings at face height.)

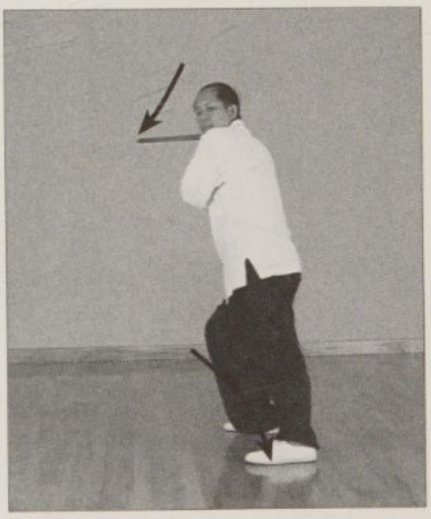


(E) Step your right leg backward while circling the tip of the sword upward and to the right. Inhale.

47. The Fair Lady Weaves with the Shuttle (Yu Nu Chuan Suo, 玉女穿梭)



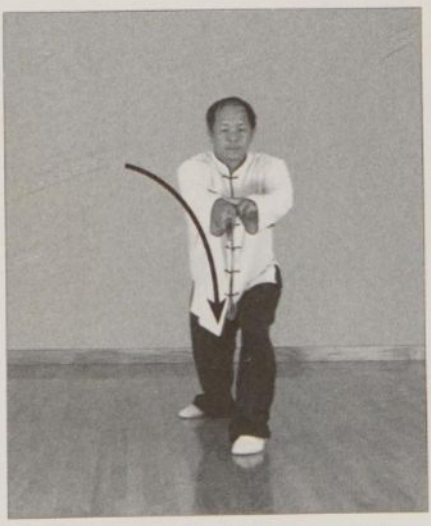
(S) Raise your left knee and turn your body S while swinging the sword downward. Exhale.



(S) Set your left leg down and turn N. Turn the sword in so the blade points N. Inhale.

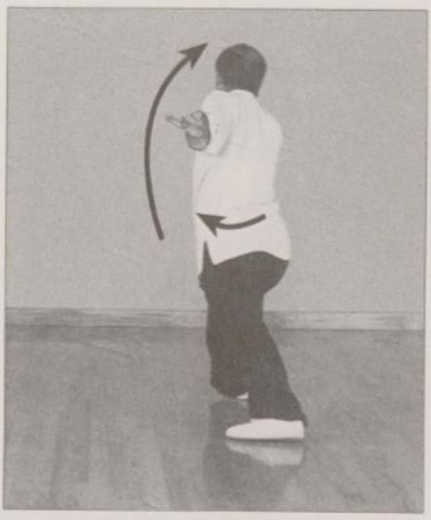


Application: The defender uses the sword to chop down on the opponent's wrist.

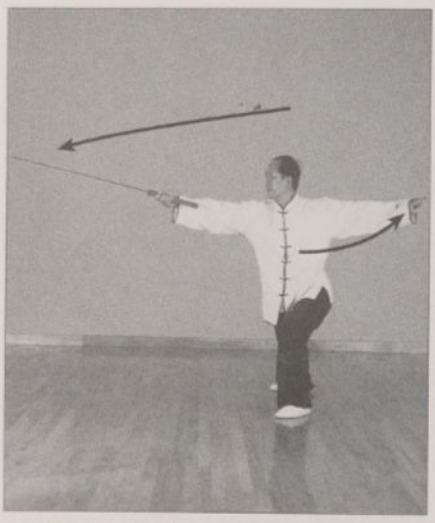


(N) Shift to mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) and extend the sword forward and downward. Exhale.

48. The White Tiger Waves Its Tail (Bai Hu Jiao Wei, 白虎搅尾)



(S) Turn your body clockwise 180 degrees to face S while swinging the sword diagonally up toward the S. Inhale and Exhale.



(E) Turn your body counterclockwise 90 degrees to face E while swinging your sword horizontally to the E. Inhale.



Application: The defender uses his left hand to grab a long-weapon attack while sliding his sword to the opponent's neck.

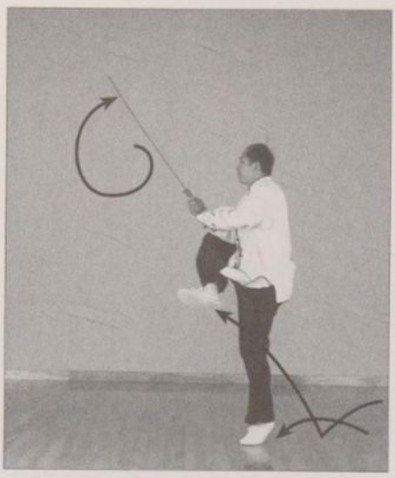


(E) Step your right leg forward into false stance (xu bu) while bringing both of your hands to the middle chest area. Exhale.



Application: If the opponent's neck is beyond reach, the defender immediately slides the sword back to the opponent's wrist.

49. The Fish Jumps into the Dragon Gate (Yu Tiao Long Men, 魚跳龍門)



(E) Lift the right leg, then step it forward, and spring upward and forward while vertically circling the sword in front of the body. Inhale.

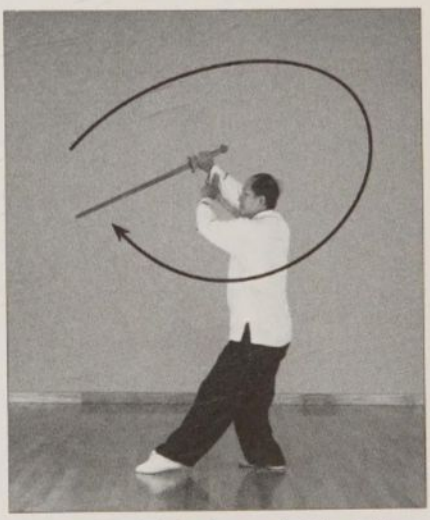


(E) Step the right leg down into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) and extend your sword forward.

50. The Black Dragon Wraps Around the Post (Wu Long Jiao Zhu, 烏龍絞柱)



(E) Shift your weight into the back leg and enter four six stance (si liu bu) while sliding your sword to your left. Inhale.



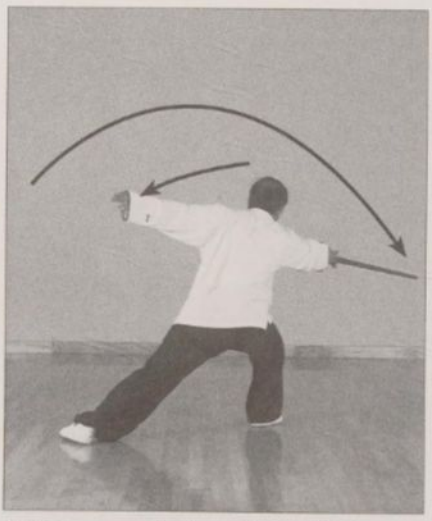
(E) Step your left leg forward while circling your sword to the back and then up on the left side of your body. Start to exhale.



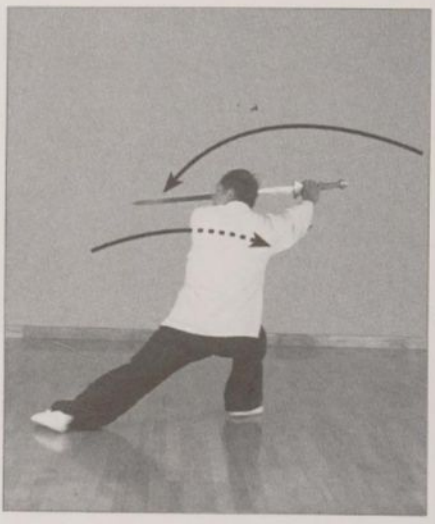
Application: The defender blocks to his left, while shifting into four six stance (si liu bu).



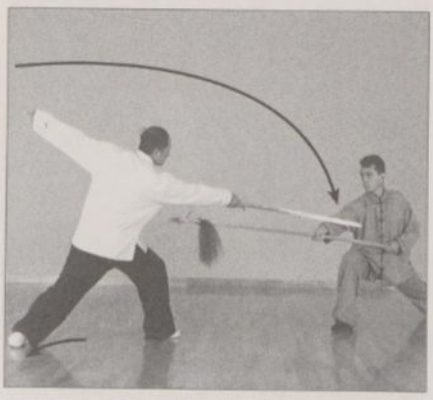
Application: The defender steps his left leg forward and at the same time slides his sword to the opponent's upper chest.



(SW) Turn your body clockwise 135 degrees while shifting into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu), right leg forward, and swinging the sword straight down. Complete exhalation.



(SW) Turn the sword to point E, bring your left hand to the right wrist, and face E. Inhale.



Application: The defender dodges an attack from behind and cuts the opponent's wrist.



Application: As an opponent attacks with a long weapon, the defender grabs the weapon with the left hand.

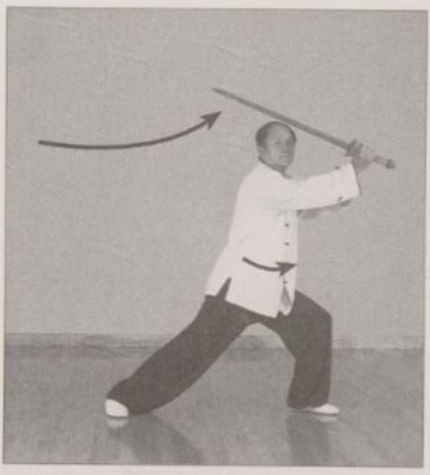


(E) Step forward with your right leg into mountain climbing stance (deng shan bu) and extend the sword forward and downward. Exhale.



Application: The defender moves in to stab the opponent.

51. The Fairy Shows the Way—2 (Xian Ren Chi Lu—2, 仙人指路二)



(E) Shift backward into four six stance (si liu bu) and slide the sword back to the left side. Your right palm faces inward and your left hand touches the right wrist. Inhale.



Application: The defender pushes away an attack.

52. Wind Blows Away the Plum Flowers (Feng Sao Mei Hua, 風掃梅花)

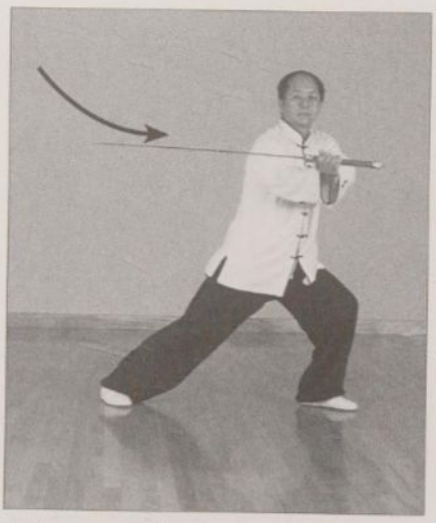




(N) Spin clockwise 360 degrees on the toes of your right leg while extending both arms straight out. Sword tip points forward. Exhale.

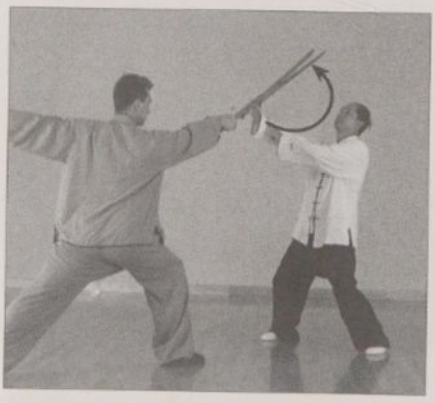


Application: After blocking, the defender cuts the opponent's throat.

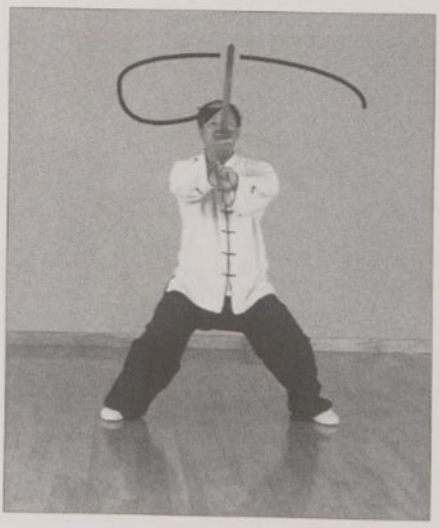




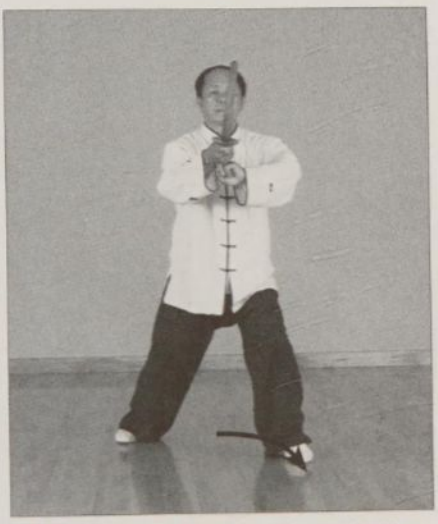
(N) Set your left leg down while circling the sword above your face. Look up. Inhale.



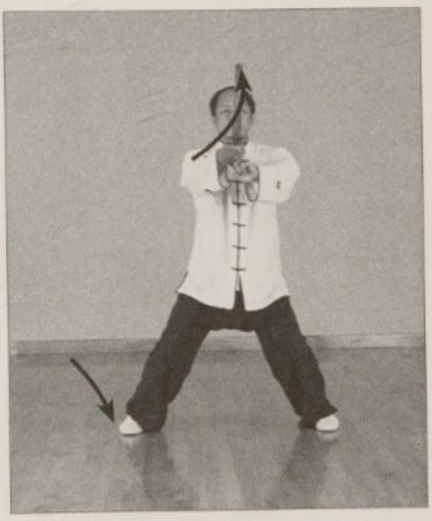
Application: The defender circles his sword in front of his face and leans the head back to neutralize an attack.



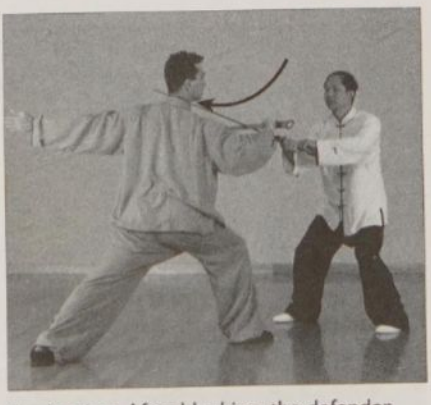
53. To Hold a Tablet (Shou Peng Ya Hu, 手捧牙笏)



(N) Step your left leg forward while holding the sword with the tip facing forward in front of your chest. Start to exhale.

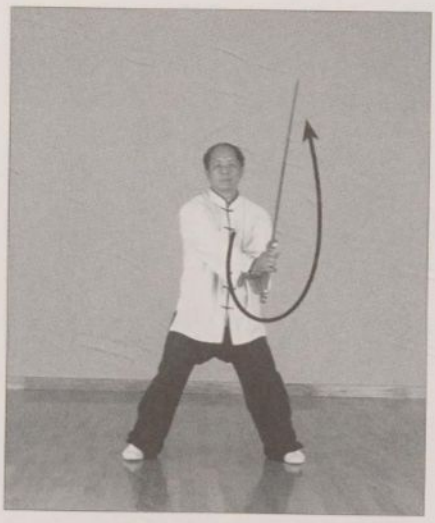


(N) Step with the right leg and bring it in line with the left leg. At the same time, stab your sword forward. Complete exhalation.



Application: After blocking, the defender moves in to stab the opponent in the neck.

54. Hold the Sword and Return to the Original Stance (Bao Jian Gui Yuan, 抱劍歸元)



(N) Circle the sword downward and then upward, and touch the handle of the sword with the left hand to prepare it to take the sword. Begin to inhale.



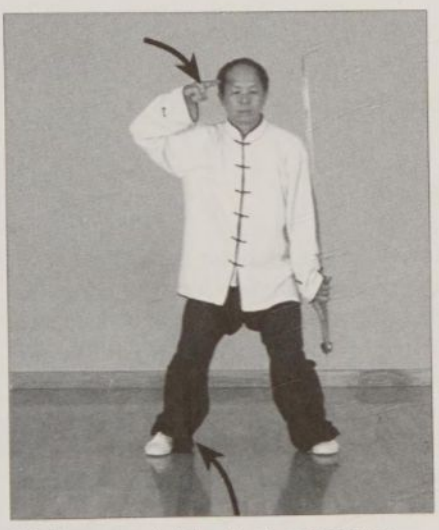
(N) The left hand takes over the sword at the handle and turns the sword upside down. Continue to inhale.



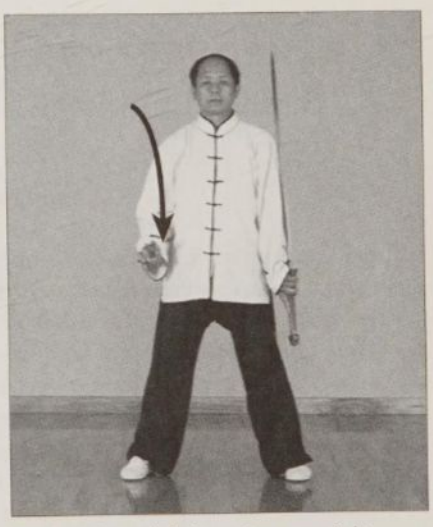
(N) Continue the left hand's downward motion while opening the right arm. The right hand forms the secret sword hand. Continue to inhale.



(N) Step your left leg back while moving your right hand up to the right side of the ear. Continue to inhale.



(N) Step your right leg back and assume horse stance (ma bu). Complete inhalation.



(N) Stand up while lowering your right hand. Release the secret sword hand form. Exhale.

After you have completed the entire sequence, you should continue to keep your mind calm, breathing smoothly and uniformly for a couple of minutes.

Reference

1. 師父引進門，修行在自身。

Chapter 4: Taiji Sword Matching Practice

4-1. Introduction

After the taiji martial artist has learned the narrow blade sword sequence, he or she will go on to sword exercises that serve the same function as pushing hands. These drills are called fighting forms or matching drills. The fighting forms develop all the important abilities needed for free fighting: smooth qi flow into the sword, fluid and lively movement, an understanding of the opponent's power, an ability to adhere, expertise in sword techniques, and proper defense. In this book, ten sword fighting forms will be shown and explained: six left neutralization and right side attack, and four right neutralization and left side attack. Later, experienced taiji practitioners can develop their own fighting forms. Once all the requirements are met, the student proceeds to unrestricted fighting.

4-2. Matching Practice

In this section, we will introduce ten examples of taiji sword matching practice. I have chosen these basic drills as a foundation for your practice. Once you have learned and mastered the entire taiji sword solo sequence, you should try to pick up the movements inside the sequence and create some other fighting matching sets. Remember, without practicing with a partner, you will never develop a correct feeling and learn how to handle different situations. When you practice, you and your partner should start with wooden swords. Only until you have mastered the skills should you use real swords for practice.

For ease of reference, the performer in white pants will be referred to as W, while the performer in black pants will be referred to as B.

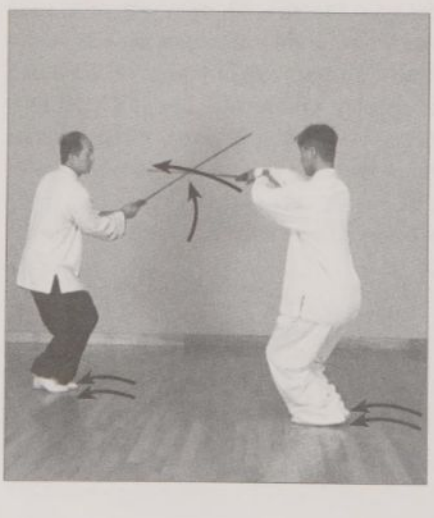
1. Coil Left and Stab Horizontally (Zuo Chan Ping Ci, 左纏平刺)



W steps forward and stabs toward B's throat. B steps backward and uses his sword to block and neutralize W's sword to his left.



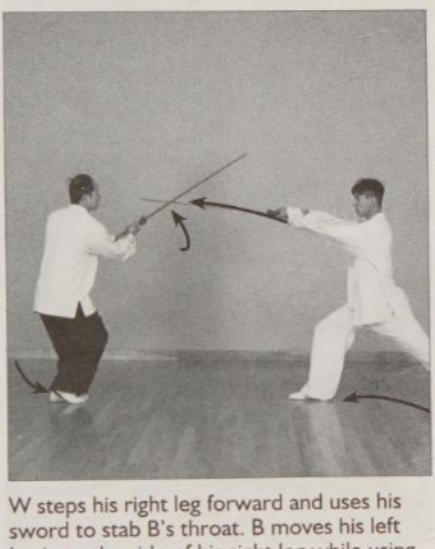
B then coils his sword downward to stick with W's sword to open W's upper body and immediately steps forward to stab toward W's throat. Just before B's sword reaches the halfway point of attack, W steps back and blocks the sword to his left and neutralizes B's attack.



Continue to practice until the matching feels natural and comfortable.

2. Left Neutralizing and Stab Forward (Zuo Hua Qian Ci, 左化前刺)

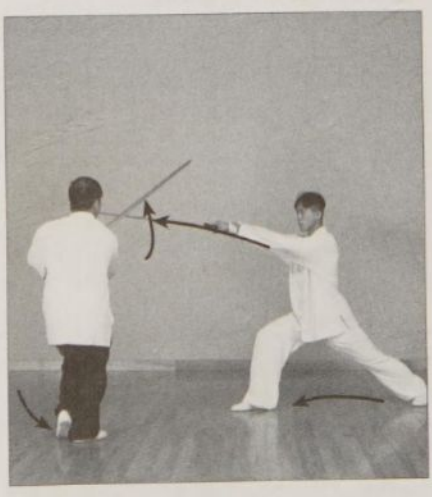
This matching is very similar to the previous one but adds stepping to the right.



W steps his right leg forward and uses his sword to stab B's throat. B moves his left leg in to the side of his right leg while using his sword to block W's attack.



B steps to his right while stabbing his sword to W's throat. W steps his left leg in to the side of his right leg and uses his sword to block the attack.



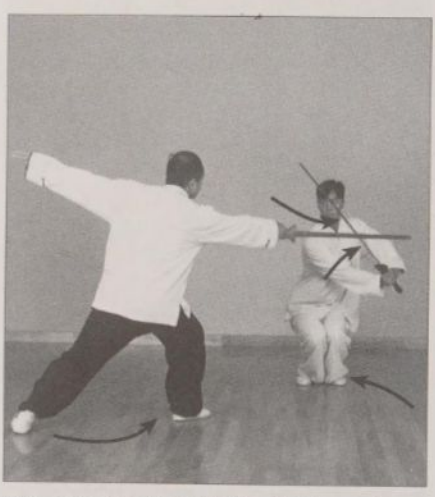
Continue the practice until the stepping and the matching feel natural and comfortable.

3. Left Neutralize and Right Stab (Zuo Hua You Ci, 左化右刺)

This matching is very similar to the previous one, except this time, B stabs to W's chest with the sword blade vertical. The blocking is lower and the neutralization is slightly different.



W stabs at B's stomach area. B slides the attack away to his left while stepping his left leg to the side of his right leg.

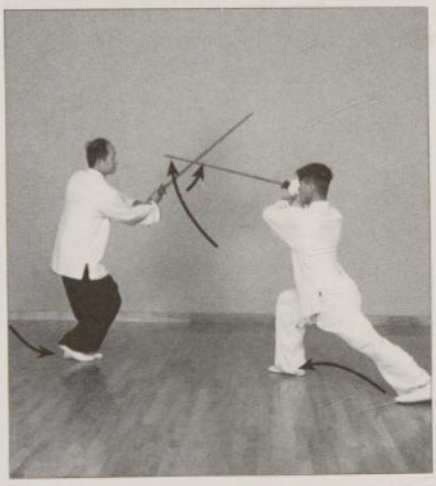


B steps to the side with his right leg and stabs at B's stomach area. W moves his left leg in to the side of his right leg while using his sword to neutralize B's attack to his left.



Continue to practice until the stepping and the matching feel natural and comfortable.

4. Left Neutralize and Right Pull (Zuo Hua You Dan, 左化右帶)



W steps his right leg to his right and at the same time uses the sword to cut at B's neck with a horizontal slash. B dodges the attack by turning his body slightly to the left, stepping his left leg in to the side of his right leg while using his sword to stick with the incoming sword and lead it to his left.



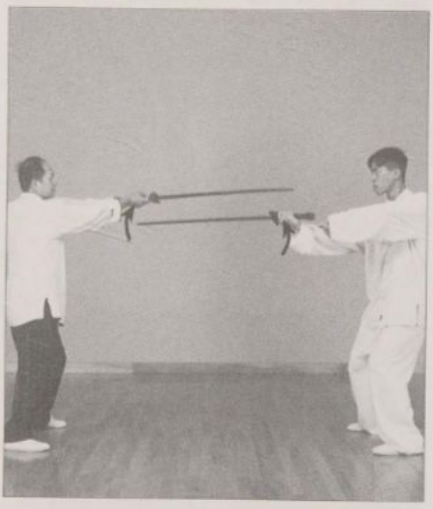
B steps his right leg to his right and uses his sword to slide to W's neck. W turns his body slightly to his left and steps his left leg in to the side of his right leg while using his sword to stick with the incoming sword and lead it to his left side.



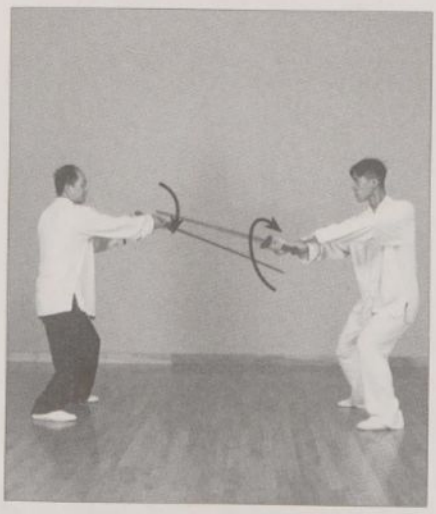
Continue the practice until the stepping and the matching feel natural and comfortable.

5. Left Whirlwind (Zuo Xuan Feng, 左旋風)

This is a mutual wrist cut chasing practice (wrist coiling training) between both B and W. First, practice stationary, until both sides are smooth and natural. Only then should you advance to the stepping practice.



Both B and W start by facing each other.



W circles the tip section of the sword clockwise and tries to cut B's wrist. B circles his wrist away while also using the tip section of his sword to try to cut W's wrist with a counterclockwise circular motion. Though both B's and W's swords chase each other's wrist, neither one should actually cut the other. You should practice slowly at first, until it feels smooth and natural. Then you should speed up the practice.



After you have mastered the stationary practice, add the stepping into the practice. Start the wrist circling practice while facing each other.



Next, when B cuts down W's wrist, he steps his right leg to cross his left leg. In order to avoid the cut, W continues his circling of B's wrist while also stepping his right leg in front of his left leg.



When B loses his target, he steps his left leg to the side again to set up the best angle for attack and at the same time uses his sword to cut W's wrist again. Naturally, in order to avoid the cut, W also steps his left leg to his left while continuing to circle his sword. Eventually, you and your partner will be stepping in a circle.

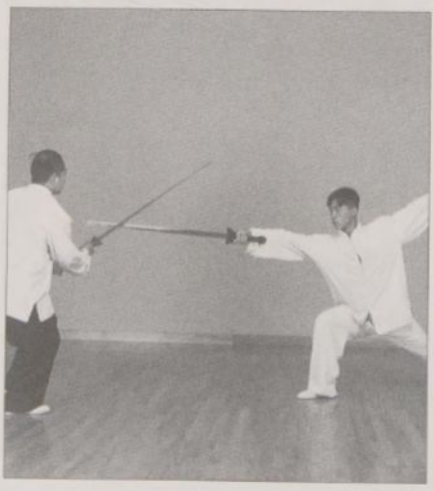
6. Left Neutralize and File the Wrist (Zuo Hua Cuo Wan, 左化銼腕)



W steps his right leg forward and uses his sword to stab toward B's abdominal area. B withdraws his right leg while using his sword to block and neutralize the attack, guiding W's sword to the left.



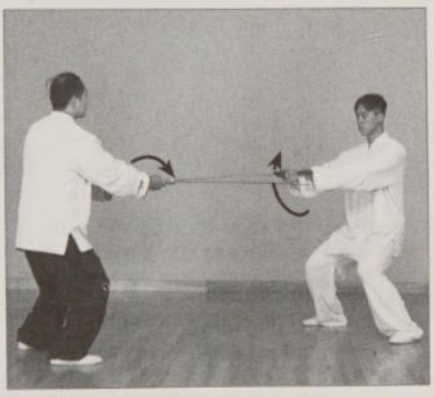
B steps with his front leg to the side and slides his left leg to follow the stepping while also filing down with his sword onto W's wrist. W immediately steps his right leg in and turns his body slightly to his left while using his sword to block and neutralize B's attack, guiding B's sword to the left.



Continue the practice. At this point, W will attack B's wrist by filing instead of stabbing toward the abdominal area.

7. Right Whirlwind (You Xuan Feng, 右旋風)

This training is the same as matching practice #5, except that the circling direction for both W and B are reversed from that of #5.



Both B and W are facing each other and using the tip section of the sword to chase each other's wrist.



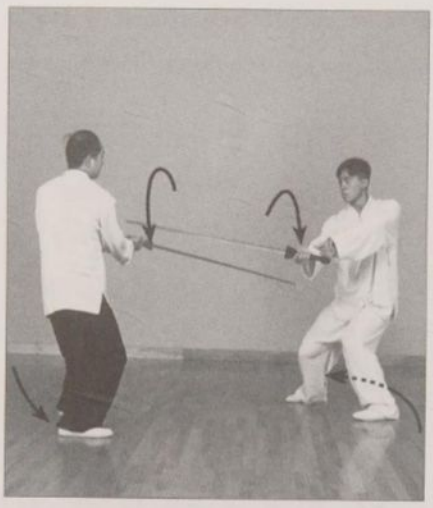
B circles his wrist and sword tip clockwise while W circles his wrist and sword tip counterclockwise. Again, both you and your partner should practice slowly at first until it feels smooth and natural. Then you could speed up or go to the following stepping routine.



Start the practice with stationary circling.



B steps his left leg to cross his right leg while using his sword to circle and slide on W's wrist. In order to avoid the cut, W steps his left leg across his right leg while continuing to circle his sword.

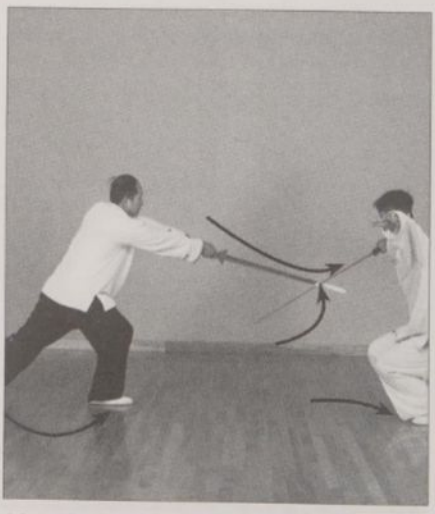


B steps his right leg to his right and again uses his sword to try to cut W's wrist. W steps his right leg to readjust his position while continuing to circle the sword to avoid the cut. Repeat the same practice continuously. Eventually, you and your partner will be stepping in a counterclockwise circle.

8. Right Neutralize and Downward Stab (You Hua Xia Ci, 右化下刺)



W steps his right leg forward while using his sword to stab B's abdominal area. B immediately draws in his right leg while using his sword to block and push the attack to the right.



After blocking, B steps his right leg forward and stabs his sword forward and downward toward W's abdominal area. W then steps his right leg back and at the same time slides his sword back to dissolve B's attack.

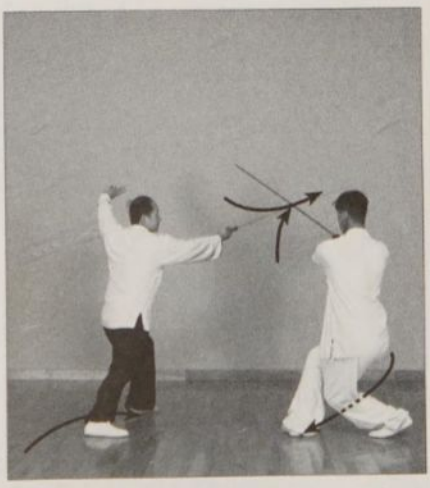


W attacks to continue the cycle.

9. Right Neutralize and Left Pull (You Hua Zuo Dai, 右化左帶)



W steps his left leg to his left and uses his sword to cut toward B's neck. B steps his right leg across his left leg and uses his sword to block and slide the attack away, slightly up and to his right, to neutralize the attack.



B immediately coils his sword down and steps his left leg to his left while sliding his sword toward W's neck. W crosses his right leg right in front of his left leg while turning his body slightly to his right, and uses his sword to block and slide the attack to his right and slightly upward.



W attacks toward B's neck again to continue the cycle.

10. Cloud above the Head and Stab Forward (Shang Yun Qian Ci, 上雲前刺)



W steps both of his legs forward and uses his sword to stab toward B's throat. B steps both of his legs back to maintain distance while circling his sword clockwise in front of and slightly above his head to intercept and neutralize the attack.



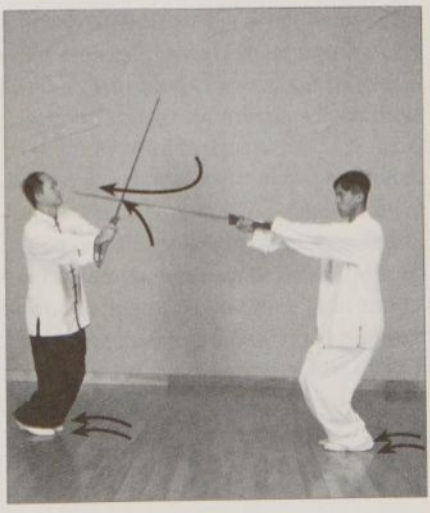
After the neutralization, B continues to press his sword downward to open W's head area.



Immediately, B steps both of his legs forward and uses his sword to stab toward W's throat. In order to avoid the attack, W steps both of his legs back while circling his sword in front of and slightly above his head to neutralize B's stabbing.



After the neutralization, W continues to circle his sword downward to press B's sword down, to open B's head area for further attack.



B neutralizes, then attacks, to continue the cycle.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this book, after more than one thousand years of development, there are many different taiji styles in existence today. Therefore, there are also many different versions of taiji sword training. However, it does not matter how the branches and flowers grow; they all originated from the same taiji root, the yin and yang theory. When you practice taijiquan or taiji sword, you should not forget the basic theory upon which all taiji styles have been built.

The taiji sword information introduced in this book can only offer you concepts for beginning your practice. It remains only a branch of a big taiji tree. If you wish to study deeper, you should keep your eyes open and continue your learning from other sources. Only from different perspectives can your perception and judgment grow deeper and more accurate. In fact, since all of the sword techniques were created based on the structure of the sword and similar strategic movements, almost all of the different styles (both internal and external) have the same sword root. Therefore, it would be wise if you were also to learn and practice some external sword skills. This will significantly enhance your understanding of the uses of the sword.

Although this book offers you both training theory and pictures, often it is not easy to figure out the correct movements from photos, especially moves meant to be performed in a continuous stream. Therefore, if possible, you should also obtain a video. From the video, you will be able to see the accurate connecting movements. Often these connecting movements are the key movements to the flow of techniques.

You should also recognize that even if you have the video, you will still not be able to grasp the feeling of the practice. The accurate feeling of the art can only be obtained from many years of accurate practice. Normally, a qualified master can lead you to a profound feeling in a short time. If possible, you should also take some seminars or private lessons from a qualified master. From a master, you will not only be able to refine your movements, but you will also get the most important factor for learning the sword. This most important factor is the feeling, or the inner quality of the art. In many ways, the quality of your practice is as important as the quantity. Without this deep, accurate feeling, the art you learn will be a shadow.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix A

Names of Taiji Sword Techniques

Yang's Taiji Sword Sequence (楊氏太極劍)

1. Beginning (Qi Shi, 起勢)
2. Step Forward and Close with Sword (Shang Bu He Jian Shi, 上步合劍勢)
3. The Fairy Shows the Way—1 (Xian Ren Zhi Lu—1, 仙人指路一)
4. Three Rings Envelop the Moon (San Huan Tao Yue, 三環套月)
5. Big Chief Star (Da Kui Xing, 大魁星)
6. The Swallow Dips Its Beak in the Water (Yan Zi Chao Shui, 燕子抄水)
7. Left Sweep, Right Sweep (Zuo You Lan Sao, 左右攔掃)
8. Little Chief Star (Xiao Kui Xing, 小魁星)
9. The Yellow Bee Enters the Hole (Huang Feng Ru Dong, 黃蜂入洞)
10. The Spirit Cat Catches the Mouse (Ling Mao Bu Shu, 靈貓捕鼠)
11. The Dragonfly Touches the Water (Qing Ting Tian Shui, 蜻蜓點水)
12. The Swallow Enters the Nest (Yan Zi Ru Chao, 燕子入巢)
13. The Phoenix Spreads Its Wings (Feng Huang Shuang Zhan Chi, 鳳凰雙展翅)
14. Right Whirlwind (You Xuan Feng, 右旋風)
15. Little Chief Star (Xiao Kui Xing, 小魁星)
16. Left Whirlwind (Zuo Xuan Feng, 左旋風)
17. Waiting for a Fish (Deng Yu Shi, 等魚勢)
18. Part the Grass in Search of the Snake (Bo Cao Xun She, 撥草尋蛇)
19. Hold the Moon against the Chest (Huai Zhong Bao Yue, 懷中抱月)
20. Send the Bird to the Woods (Song Niao Shang Lin, 送鳥上林)
21. The Black Dragon Waves Its Tail (Wu Long Bai Wei, 烏龍擺尾)
22. The Wind Blows the Lotus Leaf (Feng Juan He Ye, 風捲荷葉)
23. The Lion Shakes Its Head (Shi Zi Yao Tou, 獅子搖頭)
24. The Tiger Holds Its Head (Hu Bao Tou, 虎抱頭)
25. The Wild Horse Jumps the Stream (Ye Ma Tiao Jian, 野馬跳澗)

26. Turn Body and Rein In the Horse (Fan Shen Le Ma, 翻身勒馬)
27. Compass (Zhi Nan Zhen, 指南針)
28. Clean Up Dust in the Wind (Ying Feng Dan Chen, 迎風撣塵)
29. Push the Boat with the Current (Shun Shui Tui Zhou, 順水推舟)
30. The Shooting Star Chasing the Moon (Liu Xing Gan Yue, 流星趕月)
31. The Bird Flying over the Waterfall (Tian Niao Fei Pu, 天鳥飛瀑)
32. Raise the Screen (Tiao Lian Shi, 挑簾勢)
33. Left and Right Wheel Sword (Zuo You Che Lun Jian, 左右車輪劍)
34. The Swallow Picks Up Mud with Its Beak (Yan Zi Xian Ni, 燕子啣泥)
35. The Roc Spreads Its Wings (Da Peng Zhan Chi, 大鵬展翅)
36. Pick Up the Moon from the Sea Bottom (Hai Di Lao Yue, 海底撈月)
37. Hold the Moon against the Chest (Huai Zhong Bao Yue, 懷中抱月)
38. The Night Demon Gauges the Depth of the Sea (Ye Cha Tan Hai, 夜叉探海)
39. The Rhino Looks at the Moon (Xi Niu Wang Yue, 犀牛望月)
40. Shoot the Geese (She Yan Shi, 射雁勢)
41. The Blue Dragon Waves Its Claws (Qing Long Tan Zhua, 青龍探爪)
42. The Phoenix Spreads Its Wings (Feng Huang Shuang Zhan Chi, 鳳凰雙展翅)
43. Left and Right Step over Obstacle (Zuo You Kua Lan, 左右跨欄)
44. Shoot the Geese (She Yan Shi, 射雁勢)
45. The White Ape Offers Fruit (Bai Yuan Xian Guo, 白猿獻果)
46. Falling Flowers Posture (Luo Hua Shi, 落花勢)
47. The Fair Lady Weaves with the Shuttle (Yu Nu Chuan Suo, 玉女穿梭)
48. The White Tiger Waves Its Tail (Bai Hu Jiao Wei, 白虎攪尾)
49. The Fish Jumps into the Dragon Gate (Yu Tiao Long Men, 魚跳龍門)
50. The Black Dragon Wraps Around the Post (Wu Long Jiao Zhu, 烏龍絞柱)
51. Fairy Shows the Way—2 (Xian Ren Chi Lu—2, 仙人指路二)
52. Wind Blows Away the Plum Flowers (Feng Sao Mei Hua, 風掃梅花)
53. To Hold a Tablet (Shou Peng Ya Hu, 手捧牙笏)
54. Hold the Sword and Return to the Original Stance (Bao Jian Gui Yuan, 抱劍歸元)

Appendix B

Translation and Glossary of Chinese Terms

ba (拔). Draw back or pull. One of the basic sword techniques.
Bai He (白鶴). Means "White Crane." One of the Southern Chinese martial styles.
bao (抱). Embrace. One of the basic sword techniques.
Bei Zhou (北周). Northern Zhou dynasty. One of the dynasties in Chinese history (AD 557–581).
beng (崩). Sink or collapse. One of the basic sword techniques.
bi shou (匕首). Dagger.
Book of Changes (*Yi Jing*, 易經). A book of divination written during the Zhou dynasty (1122–255 BC).
Cao-Cao (曹操). The ruler of Wei. Wei was one of the three kingdoms in the Three Kingdoms dynasty, which followed the Han dynasty and lasted sixty years (AD 220–280).
chan (纏). Wrap. One of the basic sword techniques.
Chang Chuan or **Changquan** (長拳). Means "Long Range Fist." Chang Chuan includes all Northern Chinese long-range martial styles.
Chang Jiang (Yangtze River) (長江) (揚子江). Literally, long river. Second Chinese in parentheses refers to the old name for Chang Jian and refers to the Yangtze River in southern China.
chang sui jian (長繐劍). Any sword with long tassels. Commonly used in Northern styles.
Chen, Wilson (陳威伸). Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's friend and colleague.
Cheng, Gin-Gsao (曾金灶). Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's White Crane master.
chi kung (qigong) (氣功). The gongfu of qi, which means the study of qi.
Chi You (蚩尤). The opponent of the Yellow Emperor (Huang Di) during the years 2697–2597 BC.
chin na or **qin na** (擒拿). Literally means "grab control." A component of Chinese martial arts that emphasizes grabbing techniques to control your opponent's joints, in conjunction with attacking certain acupuncture cavities.
chong (沖). Thrust. One of the basic sword techniques.
chong mai (衝脈). Thrusting vessel. One of the eight qi vessels in Chinese medicine.
chou (抽). Draw back or pull. One of the basic sword techniques.
chuan (穿). Bore. One of the basic sword techniques.
Chun Qiu (春秋). The Spring and Autumn Period. One of the epochs in Chinese history (722-484 BC).

ci (刺). Stab. One of the basic sword techniques.
cuo (銼、錯). File. One of the basic sword techniques.
dai (帶). Draw back or pull. One of the basic sword techniques.
deng shan bu (蹬山步). Mountain climbing stance. One of the basic stances in the Northern styles of Chinese martial arts.
dian (點). Point. One of the basic sword techniques.
dian xue massages (點穴按摩). Chinese massage techniques in which the acupuncture cavities are stimulated through pressing. Dian xue massage is also called acupressure and is the root of Japanese shiatsu.
fa (划). Slide. One of the basic sword techniques.
fan li ci (反立刺). Reverse vertical stab. One of the sword stabbing techniques.
fan liao (反撩). Reverse slide up. One of the sword sliding techniques.
fan ping ci (反平刺). Reverse horizontal stab. One of the sword stabbing techniques.
gai (蓋). Cover. One of the basic sword techniques.
Gan Jiang (干將). A very famous sword maker who also named one of his best swords Gan Jiang. His wife, Mo Xie, was also a well-known sword maker at the time.
gong (kung) (功). Energy or hard work.
ge (格). Impede or hamper. One of the basic sword techniques.
gong jian bu (弓箭步). Bow and arrow stance, also called mountain climbing stance. One of the basic stances in Northern styles of Chinese martial arts.
gongfu (kung fu) (功夫). Means "energy time." Anything that will take time and energy to learn or to accomplish is called gongfu.
gu zheng (古箏). A stringed instrument, played by plucking, and in some ways similar to the zither.
gua (挂). Lift. One of the basic sword techniques.
gua wan (刮腕). Paring wrist. One of the basic sword techniques.
Han dynasty (漢). A dynasty in Chinese history (206 BC–AD 220).
Han race (漢族). The major race in China today.
Han, Ching-tang (韓慶堂). A well-known Chinese martial artist, especially in Taiwan in the last forty years. Master Han is also Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's Long Fist Grand Master.
He Lu (闔閭). A Wu emperor who loved collecting swords.
Henan Province (河南省). The province in China where the Shaolin Temple is located.
heng (橫). Side Cut. One of the basic sword techniques.
Himalayans (喜馬拉亞人). The native residents of the Himalaya Mountain range.
Huai Nan Wan Hua Shu (淮南萬華術). *Huai Nan's Thousand Crafts*, the name of a book about metallurgy, written during the Han dynasty.
Huang Di (黃帝). Huang Di, called the "Yellow Emperor" because he occupied the territory near the Yellow River (2690–2590 BC).

Hubei Province (湖北省). One of the provinces in China.
huo (豁). Expand. One of the basic sword techniques.
huiyin Co-1 (会阴). Perineum. The cavity below the pelvic diaphragm and between the legs.
jia (架). Block. One of the basic sword techniques.
jian (劍). Straight sword.
jian (剪). Clip. One of the basic sword techniques.
Jian Chi (劍池). Sword Pond. Located in Suzhou of Jiangsu Province.
jian jue (劍訣). The secret sword. The hand posture in which the index and middle fingers are straight, while the other three fingers are held so they touch the center of the palm.
jian ke (劍客). In ancient times, the name commonly given to a person who had mastered the sword.
jian qiao (劍鞘). The sheath.
jian sui (劍穗). The tassel.
jiao (絞). Entwine. One of the basic sword techniques.
jie (截). Intercept. One of the basic sword techniques.
jie (揭). Rise. One of the basic sword techniques.
Jin (金). The Mongols. The race of people called Mongols is also called the Jin.
jin ji du li (金雞獨立). Golden rooster stands on one leg stance. One of the stances commonly found in Chinese martial arts.
jin (勁). A power in Chinese martial arts that is derived from muscles that have been energized by qi to their maximum potential.
Jin, Shao-Feng (金紹峰). Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's White Crane Grand Master.
ju chi jian (鋸齒劍). Saw toothed sword. This sword has a serrated edge to give it greater cutting ability. The edge design probably originated when someone found that a badly nicked blade seemed to cut more viciously. The two holes in the tip of the sword resemble the eyes of a snake, and make a whooshing noise when the sword is swung.
Ju Que (巨闕). One of the famous swords forged by Ou Ye Zi during the Chinese Spring and Autumn Period (722–484 BC) and the Warring States Period (403–222 BC). It is said that this sword was so sharp that if dipped in water, it would be withdrawn perfectly dry.
kan (砍). Chop. One of the basic sword techniques.
Kao Tao (高濤). Master Yang, Jwing-Ming's first taijiquan master.
King Wen of Zhou (周文王). An emperor of the Chinese Zhou dynasty.
kun wu jian (崑崳劍). The name of a sword sequence. Also commonly used to refer to the sword itself.
kung (功). Means energy or hard work.

kung fu (gongfu) (功夫). Means "energy-time." Anything that will take time and energy to learn or to accomplish is called kung fu.
la (拉). Draw back or pull. One of the basic sword techniques.
laogong P-8 (勞宮). Two cavities (gates) located at the center of each palm.
lan (攔). Hinder or obstruct. One of the basic sword techniques.
le (扜). Draw back or pull. One of the basic sword techniques.
Li, Mao-Ching (李茂清). Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's Long Fist master.
liao (撩). Slide upward. One of the sword sliding techniques.
Liu Bei (劉備). The ruler of Han, one of the three kingdoms in the Three Kingdoms dynasty.
Long Quan (龍泉). A county in Zhejiang Province that is well known for producing good weapons.
Long Quan jian (龍泉劍). A name for a sword. Can also mean the swords produced in Long Quan County in Zhejiang Province.
ma bu (馬步). Horse stance. One of the basic stances in Northern Chinese martial arts.
Ming dynasty (明朝). One of the dynasties in Chinese history (AD 1368–1644).
mo (抹、摸). Smear. One of the basic sword techniques.
Mo Xie (莫邪). A very famous sword maker, who named one of her best swords Mo Xie. Her husband Gan Jiang was also a well-known sword maker at the time.
Mongolians (蒙古人). An Asian race living to the west of China. In ancient times, they were very warlike and extremely efficient militarily.
nei cuo (內銼). Internal file. One of the sword's filing techniques.
nei gai (內蓋). Internal cover. One of the sword's covering techniques.
nei jiao (內絞). Internal wrap. One of the sword's wrapping techniques.
nei jie (內截). Internal intercept. One of the sword's intercepting techniques.
nei le (內扜). Internal draw back. One of the sword's drawing-back techniques.
nei shang tiao (內上挑). Internal pluck. One of the sword's plucking techniques.
nei xia lan (內下攔). Low internal hinder. One of the sword's hindering techniques.
nei zhong lan (內中攔). Internal hinder. One of the sword's hindering techniques.
Ou Ye Zi (歐冶子). One of the three most famous sword makers in the Chinese Spring and Autumn Period (722–484 BC) and the Warring States Period (403–222 BC). The other two well-known sword makers were Gan Jiang and Mo Xie. Ou Ye Zi forged two very famous swords, Ju Que and Zhan Lu.
pao (拋). Swaying or throwing. One of the basic sword techniques.
pi (劈). Split. One of the basic sword techniques.
Pu Yuan (蒲元). A famous sword maker during the Chinese Three Kingdoms Period (AD 221–280).
qi (chi) (氣). Chinese term for universal energy. A current popular model is that the qi circulating in the human body is bioelectric in nature.

Qi, Ji-guang (戚繼光). A well-known general in the Ming dynasty (AD 1386–1644).
Qi Men jian (戚門劍). Qi family's sword. The name given to the many sword sequences created by Qi, Ji-guang.
qi xing jian (七星劍). Seven star sword. The name of a sword sequence. Also commonly used to refer to the sword itself.
qigong (chi kung) (氣功). The gongfu of qi, which means the study of qi.
Qin dynasty (秦朝). One of the dynasties in Chinese history (255–206 BC).
qin na or **chin na** (擒拿). Literally, means "grab control." A component of Chinese martial arts that emphasizes grabbing techniques to control your opponent's joints, in conjunction with attacking certain acupuncture cavities.
Qin Shi (221–209 BC) (秦始皇). An emperor of the Qin dynasty (255–206 BC).
Qin Yang (沁陽). A county in Henan Province.
Qing dynasty (清朝). One of the dynasties in Chinese history (AD 1644–1911).
San Cai jian (三才劍). Three Power sword. Also a sword sequence. Commonly used to refer to the sword itself.
real dan tian (真丹田). Located at the physical center of the body.
Shang dynasty (商朝). (1766–1122 BC).
shang nei mo (上內抹). High internal smear. One of the sword's smearing techniques.
shang tuo (上托). Upward bear. One of the sword's bearing techniques.
shang wai mo (上外抹). High external smear. One of the sword's smearing techniques.
Shaolin (少林). "Young Woods." Name given to the Shaolin Temple.
Shaolin Temple (少林寺). A monastery located in Henan Province, China. The Shaolin Temple is well known because of its martial arts training.
she she jian (蛇舌劍). Snake tongue sword. This sword has a wavy blade, which makes for a fearful cut. It also has a forked point that may have given the fighter a way to catch his opponent's weapon at long range.
Shi Xiang Zu (師襄子). Confucius's music teacher.
shu (束). Bind. One of the basic sword techniques.
Shu (蜀). Sichuan Province, also called Shu.
si liu bu (四六步). Four six stance. One of the basic stances in Northern Chinese martial styles.
Sichuan Province (四川省蜀). A province in western China.
Song dynasty (宋朝). One of the dynasties in Chinese history (AD 960–1280).
Sui and Tang dynasties (隋、唐). Two of the dynasties in Chinese history (AD 581–907).
Suzhou (蘇州). A city in Jiangsu Province.
Tai Chi Chuan (Taijiquan) (太極拳). A Chinese internal martial style, which is based on the theory of taiji (grand ultimate).
taiji (太極). Means "grand ultimate." This force generates two poles, yin and yang.

taiji jian (太極劍). A sword sequence practiced in taijiquan. Taiji jian also commonly refers to the sword.
Taijiquan (Tai Chi Chuan) (太極拳). A Chinese internal martial style that is based on the theory of taiji (grand ultimate).
Taipei (台北). The capital city of Taiwan, located in the north.
Taiwan (台灣). An island to the southeast of mainland China. Also known as "Formosa."
Taiwan University (台灣大學). A well-known university located in northern Taiwan.
Taizuquan (太祖拳). A style of Chinese external martial arts.
Tamkang (淡江). Name of a university in Taiwan.
Tamkang College Guoshu Club (淡江國術社). A Chinese martial arts club founded by Dr. Yang when he was studying at Tamkang College.
Tang dynasty (AD 618–907) (唐朝). One of the dynasties in Chinese history.
ti (提). Rise. One of the basic sword techniques.
tiao (挑). Pluck. One of the basic sword techniques.
tui na (推拿). Push and grab. A Chinese qigong massage technique for healing.
tuo (托). Bear. One of the basic sword techniques.
wai cuo (外銼). External file. One of the sword's filing techniques.
wai gai (外蓋). External cover. One of the sword's covering techniques.
wai jiao (外絞). External wrap. One of the sword's wrapping techniques.
wai jie (外截). External intercept. One of the sword's intercepting techniques.
wai le (外捋). External draw back. One of the sword's drawing-back techniques.
wai shang tiao (外上挑). External pluck. One of the sword's plucking techniques.
wai xia lan (外下攔). Low external hinder. One of the sword's hindering techniques.
wai zhong lan (外中攔). External hinder. One of the sword's hindering techniques.
wen jian (文劍). Scholar sword. The scholar sword, also known as the female sword (ci jian, 雌劍), is lighter and shorter than the martial or male sword (xiong jian, 雄劍).
Wen Wang Cao (文王操). A piece of music composed by Wen Wang of Zhou.
Wu dynasty (吳). One of the dynasties in Chinese history.
Wu Dai (五代). A period of Chinese history that includes five dynasties (AD 907–960).
wu gou jian (吳鉤劍). Wu hooked sword. This sword was invented during the Wu dynasty (AD 222–280) and is designed for cutting an enemy's limbs, or his horse's legs, after blocking his weapon.
wu jian (武劍). Martial sword. The martial sword, also known as the male sword (xiong jian), is heavier and longer than the scholar or female sword (ci jian).
Wu Kang (武康). A county in Zhejiang Province known for the production of high-quality ancient weapons.
Wudang jian (武當劍). The sword techniques developed at Wudang Mountain.
Wudang Mountain (武當山). A mountain located in Hubei Province in China.

wuji (無極). No extremity. A state of no discrimination between yin and yang. Infinite smoothness.
wushu (gongfu) (武術) (功夫). Literally, martial technique. It is commonly called guoshu (i.e., country techniques) in Taiwan or gongfu in Western society.
wuyi (武藝). Literally, "martial arts."
xi (洗). Wash. One of the basic sword techniques.
xia wai mo (下外抹). Low external smear. One of the sword's smearing techniques.
xie nei mo (下內抹). Low internal smear. One of the sword's smearing techniques.
xie pi (斜劈). Diagonal chop. One of the sword's chopping techniques.
xie tuo (斜托). Diagonal bear. One of the sword's blocking techniques.
Xinzhu Xian (新竹縣). Birthplace of Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming in Taiwan.
xu bu (虛步). False stance, also called tricky stance. One of the basic stances in all Chinese martial styles.
xuan ji bu (玄機步). Tricky stance, also called false stance. One of the basic stances in all Chinese martial styles.
xue gou (血溝). The blood groove. This is a groove on the sword blade that allows pressure to equalize on either side of a sword that is thrust into an opponent's body, permitting easy withdrawal.
ya (壓). Press down. One of the basic sword techniques.
Yang, Jwing-Ming (楊俊敏). Author of this book.
Yangtze River (Chang Jiang) (揚子江) (長江). Also called Chang Jiang (i.e., Long River). One of the two major rivers in China.
yao (搖). Shake. One of the basic sword techniques.
Yi Jing (易經). *Book of Changes*. A book of divination written during the Zhou dynasty (1122–255 BC).
yongquan K-1 (湧泉). Two cavities (gates) located at the front center of the soles of the feet.
Yu Long (雨龍). Rain dragon. The name of a sword. Also called Judge Dee's sword.
Yuan dynasty (元朝). One of the dynasties in Chinese history (AD 1206–1368).
yun (雲). Cloud. One of the basic sword techniques.
zhan (斬). Cut. One of the basic sword techniques.
Zhan Guo (戰國). The Warring States Period. An epoch in Chinese history (BC 403–222).
Zhan Lu (湛盧). One of the two famous swords made by sword maker Ou Ye Zi during the Chinese Spring and Autumn Period (BC 722–484) and the Warring States Period (BC 403–222). The other sword was called "Ju Que."
Zhang, Xiang-san (張詳三). A well-known Chinese martial artist in Taiwan.
Zhejiang Province (浙江省). A province of China near the southeast coast.

zhen dan tian (真丹田). Real dan tian. Located approximately one inch below the navel and three inches inside the body.
zheng jiao (正撩). Normal slide up. One of the sword sliding techniques.
zheng li ci (正立刺). Vertical stab. One of the sword stabbing techniques.
zheng liao (正撩). Normal slide up. One of the sword sliding techniques.
zheng pi (正劈). Vertical chop. One of the sword chopping techniques.
zheng ping ci (正平刺). Horizontal stab. One of the sword stabbing techniques.
zheng tuo (正托). Upward bear. One of the sword upward blocking techniques.
Zhou dynasty (周朝). One of the dynasties in Chinese history (909–255 BC).
Zhuo Lu (涿鹿). Location of an ancient battle between the Emperor Huang Di's forces and those of his opponent, Chi You.
zuo pan bu (坐盤步). Crossed legs stance. One of the basic stances in Northern Chinese martial styles.

About the Author

Yang, Jwing-Ming, PhD (楊俊敏博士)



Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming was born on August 11, 1946, in Xinzhu Xian (新竹縣), Taiwan (台灣), Republic of China (中華民國). He started his *wushu* (武術) (*gongfu* or *kung fu*, 功夫) training at the age of fifteen under Shaolin White Crane (Shaolin Bai He, 少林白鶴) Master Cheng, Gin-Gsao (曾金灶). Master Cheng originally learned Taizuquan (太祖拳) from his grandfather when he was a child. When Master Cheng was fifteen years old, he started learning White Crane from Master Jin, Shao-Feng (金紹峰) and followed him for twenty-three years until Master Jin's death.

In thirteen years of study (1961–1974) under Master Cheng, Dr. Yang became an expert in the White Crane style of Chinese martial arts, which includes both the use of bare hand and various weapons, such as saber, staff, spear, trident, two short rods, and many other weapons. With the same master he also studied White Crane Qigong (氣功), *qin na* or *chin na* (擒拿), *tui na* (推拿), and *dian xue* massages (點穴按摩) and herbal treatment.

At sixteen, Dr. Yang began the study of Yang Style Taijiquan (楊氏太極拳) under Master Kao, Tao (高濤). He later continued his study of taijiquan under Master Li, Mao-Ching (李茂清), and was also a student with Mr. Wilson Chen (陳威伸), in Taipei (台北). Master Li learned his taijiquan from the well-known Master Han, Ching-Tang (韓慶堂), and Mr. Chen learned his taijiquan from Master Chang, Xiang-San (張詳三). From this further practice, Dr. Yang was able to master the taiji bare hand sequence, pushing hands, the two-man fighting sequence, taiji sword, taiji saber, and taiji qigong.

When Dr. Yang was eighteen years old, he entered Tamkang College (淡江學院) in Taipei Xian to study physics. In college, he began the study of traditional Shaolin Long Fist (Changquan or Chang Chuan, 少林長拳) with Master Li, Mao-Ching at the Tamkang College Guoshu Club (淡江國術社), 1964–1968, and eventually became an assistant instructor under Master Li. In 1971, he completed his MS degree in physics at the National Taiwan University (台灣大學) and then served in the Chinese Air Force from 1971 to 1972. In the service, Dr. Yang taught physics at the Junior Academy of

the Chinese Air Force (空軍幼校) while also teaching wushu. After being honorably discharged in 1972, he returned to Tamkang College to teach physics and resumed study under Master Li, Mao-Ching. From Master Li, Dr. Yang learned Northern style wushu, which includes both bare hand and kicking techniques, and numerous weapons.

In 1974, Dr. Yang came to the United States to study mechanical engineering at Purdue University. At the request of a few students, Dr. Yang began to teach gongfu (kung fu), which resulted in the establishment of the Purdue University Chinese Kung Fu Research Club in the spring of 1975. While at Purdue, Dr. Yang also taught college-credit courses in taijiquan. In May of 1978, he was awarded a PhD in mechanical engineering by Purdue.

In 1980, Dr. Yang moved to Houston to work for Texas Instruments. While in Houston, he founded Yang's Shaolin Kung Fu Academy, which was eventually taken over by his disciple, Mr. Jeffery Bolt, after Dr. Yang moved to Boston in 1982. Dr. Yang founded Yang's Martial Arts Academy in Boston on October 1, 1982.

In January of 1984, he gave up his engineering career to devote more time to research, writing, and teaching. In March of 1986, he purchased property in the Jamaica Plain area of Boston to be used as the headquarters of the new organization, Yang's Martial Arts Association (YMAA). The organization expanded to become a division of Yang's Oriental Arts Association, Inc. (YOAA).

In 2008, Dr. Yang began the nonprofit YMAA California Retreat Center. This training facility in rural California is where selected students enroll in a five-year residency to learn Chinese martial arts.

Dr. Yang has been involved in traditional Chinese wushu since 1961, studying Shaolin White Crane (Bai He), Shaolin Long Fist (Changquan), and taijiquan under several different masters. He has taught for more than forty-six years: seven years in Taiwan, five years at Purdue University, two years in Houston, twenty-six years in Boston, and six years at the YMAA California Retreat Center. He has taught seminars all around the world, sharing his knowledge of Chinese martial arts and qigong in Argentina, Austria, Barbados, Botswana, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, China, Chile, England, Egypt, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, and Venezuela.

Since 1986, YMAA has become an international organization, which currently includes more than fifty schools located in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Chile, France, Hungary, Iran, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Venezuela, and the United States.

Many of Dr. Yang's books and videos have been translated into foreign languages, such as French, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Russian, German, and Hungarian.

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