

THE YANG FAMILY'S “FORTY VERSES”

*as recorded in the Tai Ji Quan Shi Yi
by Master Dong Yingjie, 1948*

Verses 1-12

EIGHT GATES AND FIVE STEPS

八門五步

Bā Mén Wǔ Bù

The eight gates are the eight quadrants of the square. They come from the principle of yin and yang constantly inverting. They circle all the way around and return back to the beginning, always following that which moves. All in all there are four straights and four corners. It is impossible to deny this.

In this case, wardoff, rollback, press, and push are the four straights of the hand. While pluck, split, elbow, and lean are the four corners of the hand. Join together the corners and straights of the hand and get your bearings amidst the gates and their possibilities.

Accordingly, the steps are differentiated through the body. The Five Motions reside in one's intentions and provide the structural substance of the eight faces. In the Five Movements advance step is Fire, retreat step is Water, look left is Wood, glance right is Metal, and fixed firmly in the center of the square is Earth. Accordingly, advancing and retreating become the water and fire of the steps, looking and glancing become the metal and wood of the steps, and the reckoning of the pivot on its axis becomes the central ground.

The Eight Possibilities are preserved in the chest and the Five Motions are tread by the legs. Hands and feet together, eight and five, adds up to thirteen. Coming about all by themselves, they are the Thirteen Postures. Otherwise known as the Eight Gates and Five Steps.

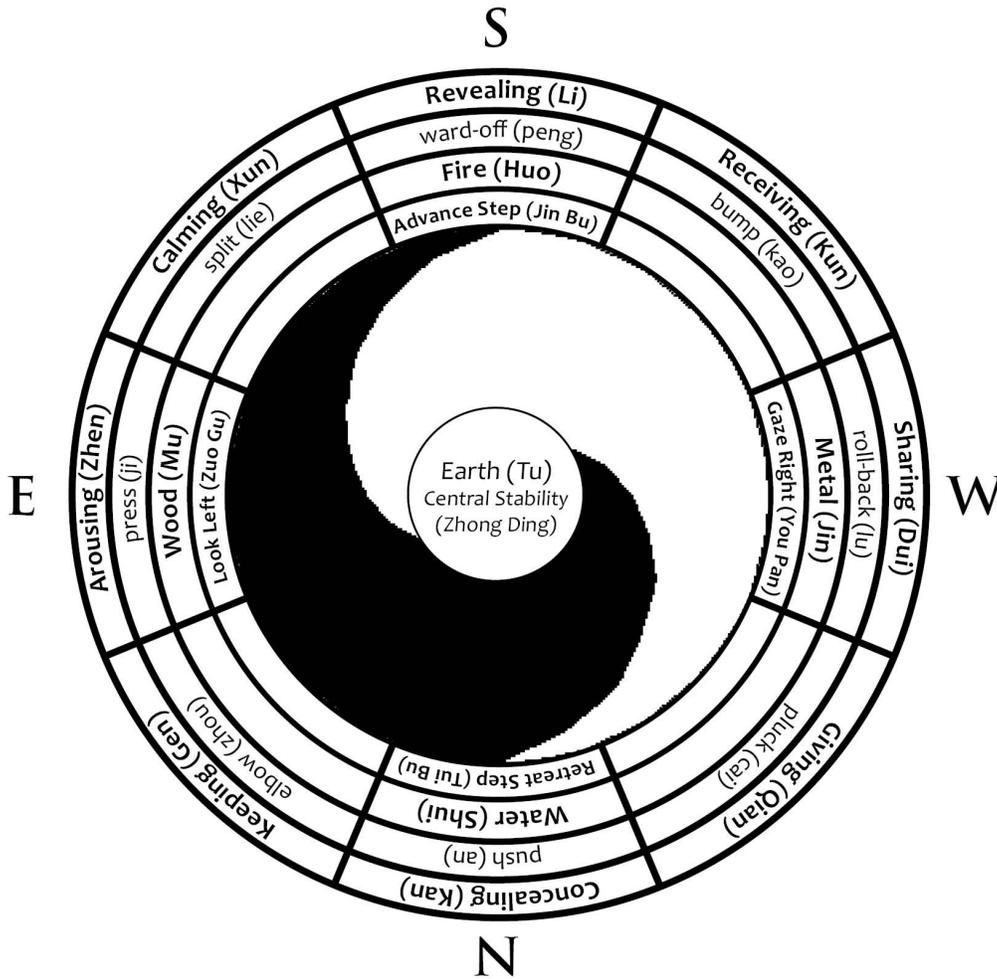
MAKING USE OF THE EIGHT GATES AND FIVE STEPS

八門五步用法

Bā Mén Wǔ Bù Yòng Gōng Fǎ

When the Eight Patterns and Five Phases become completely expressed in a human life is when innate goodness becomes firmly established. This is why it is imperative to first be absolutely clear in regards to knowing, feeling, turning, and moving, or becoming aware of conscious motion. These four words get at

the very root: “know, feel, turn, and move.” To become aware of conscious motion is to gradually acquire the strength of understanding. Through this strength of understanding it is natural to be able to connect and extend to that spirit brightness. Therefore in order to make any use of the Eight and Five, one absolutely must start with knowing, feeling, turning, and moving. It is very difficult to establish that innate goodness. Indeed, it is difficult for me as well.



METHOD FOR DISTINGUISHING INNATE CLARITY

固有分明法

Gù Yǒu Fēn Míng Fǎ

So it is that mankind settles into life from the very beginning with eyes that are able to see, ears that are able to hear, a nose that is able to smell, and a mouth that is able to taste – all the colors and hues, the sounds and tones, the aromas and scents, the five flavors are all present. The whole world is like this, knowing and feeling from the start, sure and good. These hands can pose and these feet can dance. Put together, the four limbs are able. The whole world is like this, turning and moving from the start, sure and good.

Try to contemplate this. Could mankind exist without cause? In nature people are close, yet in practice so far away. Lost and led astray from what was originally had, one must purposefully return oneself to what was originally firmly established innately within.

There can be no martial if not through seeking the root cause of turning and moving. There can be no civil if not through obtaining the original source of knowing and feeling. Thus, turning and moving go along with knowing and feeling – turning while knowing, moving while feeling. If no turning, then no knowing. If no moving, then no feeling. When turning is absolute then movement will come. When feeling is full then knowing will come. Moving and knowing are what is easy. Turning and feeling are what is difficult.

First seek in yourself the knowing, feeling, turning, and moving. Obtain this from your body directly and naturally you will be able to know others as well. It is important when seeking others to beware of losing yourself. It is impossible to not know this logic here. In this way, the power of understanding will surely follow.

ATTACHING, CONTINUING, BEING ATTACHED TO, AND FOLLOWING

粘連黏隨

Zhān Lián Nián Súi

Attaching means taking a hold and lifting up.
Being attached to means retaining affection and treasuring the bond.
Continuing means that yielding the self without departing from it.
Following means that which moves and this that responds.

We can only know others by becoming aware of conscious movement.
Without being clear on attaching, being attached to, continuing, and following, it may not be done.
Like this, attaching, being attached to, continuing, and following lead to the skillful effect.
It is extremely important to be careful with the details.

GOING AGAINST, LOSING, FLATNESS, AND RESISTING

頂丟扁抗

Dǐng Dīu Biǎn Kàng

'Going against' means that which does too much.
'Flatness' means that which does not extend.
'Losing' means that which begins to leave.
'Resisting' means that which takes too long.

It must be known that these four words lead to disease.
If unclear in attaching, being attached to, continuing, and following,
then as well, unclear in knowing, feeling, turning, and moving.
When beginning to study the opposing hands, one must not be unaware.
One must not neglect to remove this disease.
What is difficult, is attaching, being attached to, continuing, and following,
while not allowing oneself to go against, flatten, lose, or resist.
This indeed is not easy.

PROPERLY REGARDING BEING WITHOUT DISEASE

對待無病

Duì Dài Wú Bìng

If there is any going against, being flat, losing, or resisting then the proper way of reacting to situations has been lost. This is what is called “disease.” Having already failed to attach, be attached, continue, and follow then how would it be possible to gain any awareness of conscious movement? If already unaware of one's self then how could there be any awareness of another? Therefore, what is called “properly dealing with things” when facing an opponent means never going against, being flat, losing, or resisting. At the same time one must also be sure to attach, be attached, continue, and follow as well. Be capable as is and not only in regards to being without disease. Becoming aware of conscious motion comes about naturally of itself. This is the way to advance in the skill of understanding energy.

REGARDING THE SKILL AND METHOD OF PROTECTING CENTRAL GROUND

對待用法守中土

Duì Dài Yòng Gōng Fǎ Shǒu Zhōng Tǔ

俗名站樁

su ming zhan chuang

commonly known as the “Standing Pole”

Settle into the center of the square and find the root in the feet.
First make clear the four straights and the advance and retreat of the body.
Ward-off, rollback, press, and push are the four techniques of the self.
It takes considerable effort to attain to the reality of this gongfu.
Keep the structural integrity of the waist and the crown consistently maintained,
By attaching, being attached, continuing and following,
the intention and energy are united.
Turning, moving, knowing and feeling mutually arrive and respond to each other.
Spirit is in the ruling position. Bones and flesh are the subjects.
Clearly differentiate the seventy-two firing times,
and naturally, wherever there is martial there also will be civil.

THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF THE WAIST AND THE CROWN

身形腰頂

Shēn Xíng Yāo Dǐng

How could anything be possible without the structural integrity of the waist and crown?
Lacking such a unity, why even bother spending your hard-earned energy?
The more exhaustively you focus on the waist and crown, the more enduring your growth and vitality.
This structural integrity is what allows you to satisfy the full expression of your self.
If you abandon the truth of this principle then what pivot are we even talking about here?
After ten years of plying the art you will still feel muddled and confused.

TAI JI CIRCLE

太極圈

Tài Jí Quān

Retreating out of the circle is easy.
It's advancing into the circle that's difficult.
Be careful not to part the waist from the crown.
Keep what follows together with what precedes.
The central ground is very difficult to maintain,
but it is imperative not to part from it.

It is easy to retreat and difficult to advance.
Carefully consider the subtlety of this.
Clearly it refers to being in motion
and not to holding a fixed stance.

It means every time with the body,
whether advancing or retreating,
the shoulders should remain even.
Persevere like water:
both slowly wearing away
and suddenly bursting through.

The images of the Cloud Dragon and the Wind Tiger
surround and encircle with their revolutions.
It is essential to utilize the “Matrix of the Sky”
in order to get to the bottom of this,
and eventually, through the long course of time,
one will freely rise up into the sky oneself.

THE TAIJI GONG OF ADVANCING AND RETREATING CEASELESSLY

太極進退不已功

Tài Jí Jìn Tuì Bù Yǐ Gōng

Ward-off, Roll-back, Press and Push come about through natural Principle.
The Yin and Yang of Water and Fire is Already mutually Across.
Natural Instinct is regained through the knowledge of the Four Hands.
Pick, Split, Elbow, and Lean come about as the Square allows,
The Four Corners enable and distribute the comings and goings.

The Thirteen Postures line up one after another over and over without end,
and for this reason they are sometimes referred to as One Long Fist.
The skill of the Masters is to be able to open and expand at the same time as gather and collect.
In ten-thousand situations they never leave Tai Ji (Great Pole).

TAI JI'S ABOVE AND BELOW IS ALSO CALLED SKY AND EARTH

太極上下名天地

Tài Jí Shàng Xià Míng Tiān Dì

The Above and the Below of the Four Hands are modeled after Sky and Earth.
Pluck, Split, Elbow and Lean as well follow the same design.
Pluck is Sky and Lean is Earth. They both seek to respond to each other.
How could there be any question of Above and Below not being Already Across?
It's the same as trying to use Split and Elbow apart from each other.
When Qian and Kun lose each other, then all that remains is sighing and pity.
This is what is revealed with an understanding of the "Matrix of Sky and Earth."
Advance with Elbow and Split and return to human form.

TAIJI'S HUMAN MATRIX AND THE EIGHT CHARACTER SONG

太極人盤八字歌

Tài Jí Rén Pán Bā Zì Gē

The straights and corners of the Bagua give rise to the Song of the Eight Words.
The math of thirteen is really not so complicated after all.

It is only complicated when there is no guideline or balancing point.
Neglecting the energy of the waist and crown will only lead to gasping and sighing.

Do not forget that the most essential teaching consists of only two words.
The ruler and ministers finely work and tend the flesh and bones.

If the Gongfu within is continuous with the Gongfu without,
then in regards to one's own math how could the mistake belong to another?

In regards to the math of others, it will all unfold naturally.
The ultimate cause here is simply the going and returning of Sky and Earth.

All we are seeking is a home for the self without deep disharmony.
Above and Below, Advance and Retreat, forever continuously interwoven.