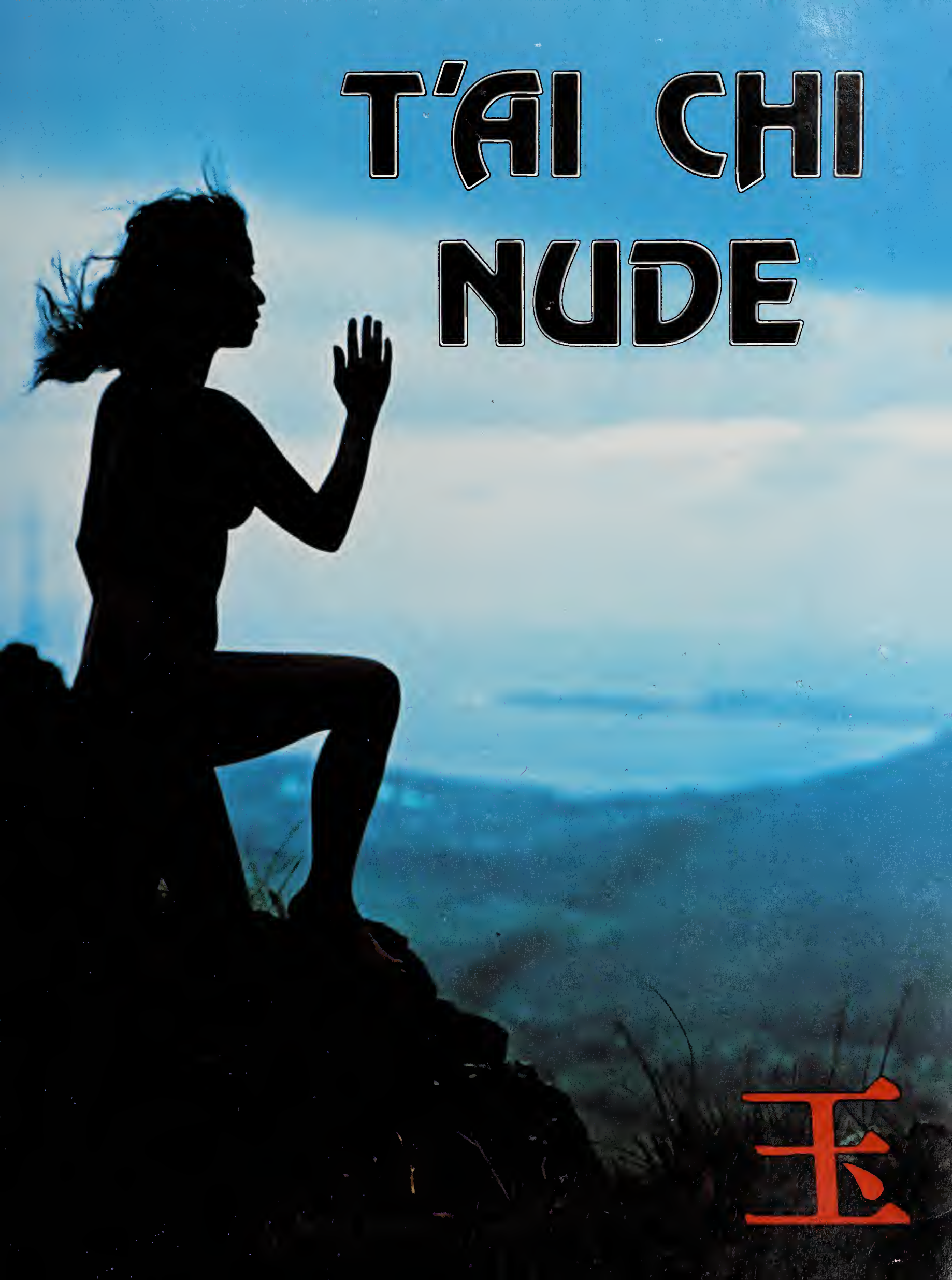
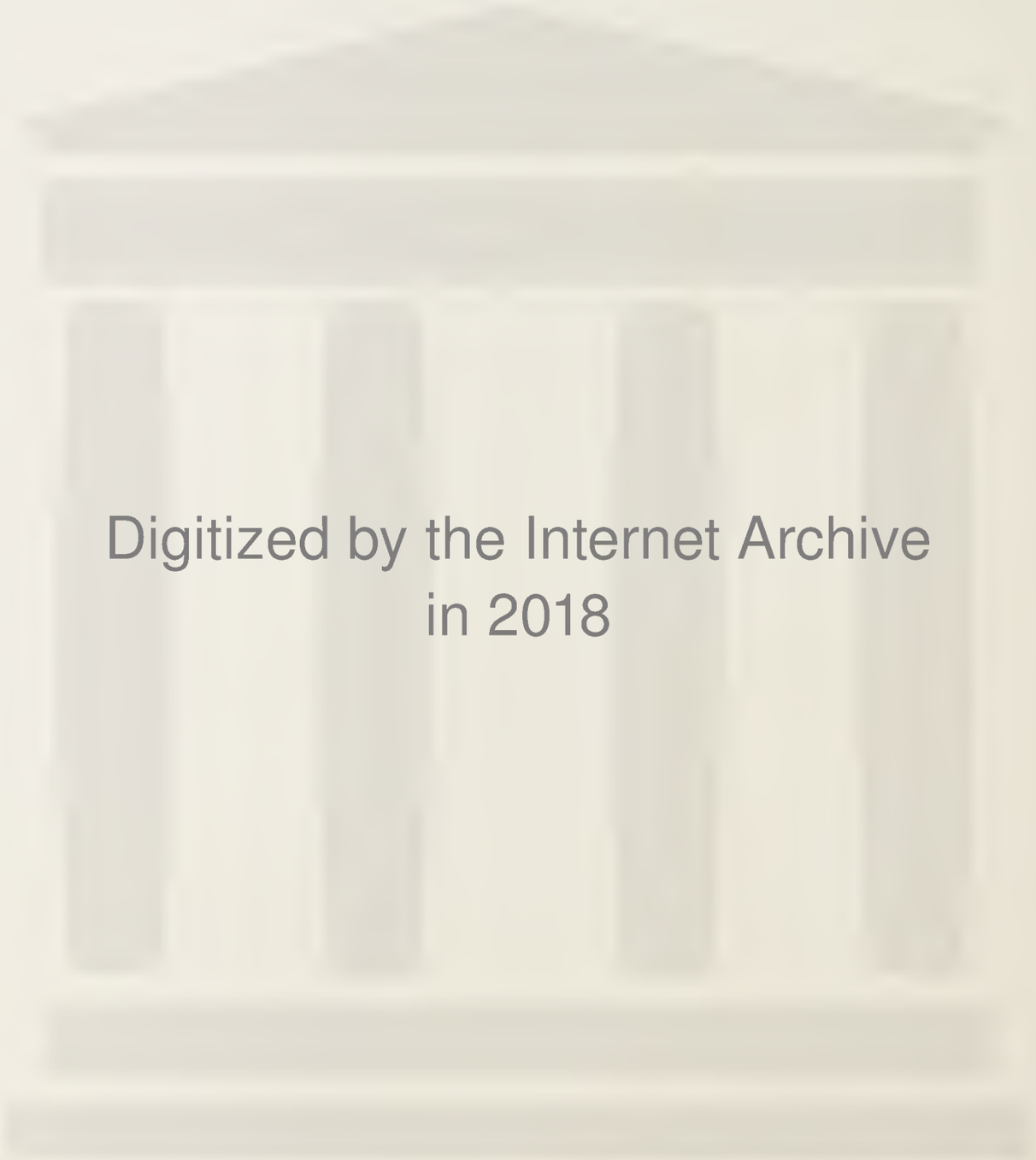
T'AI CHI NUDE





T'AI CHI NUDE

Text by F. L. Yu

Photographs by Richard Brush

San Francisco 1975

Published and Distributed by
AND/OR PRESS
3431 Rincon Annex
San Francisco, Ca.
94119

COVER DESIGN: C. Schnabel

First Printing July 1975

INTRODUCTION

T'ai Chi Ch'uan is an exercise for health, a martial art, and a path to philosophical wisdom. Its teachings represent the innermost of the "inner" schools of Chinese boxing, and are in accord with some of the highest principles of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. However, they do not represent a religion. T'ai Chi Ch'uan has no doctrine of salvation or plan of social action. After one thousand years of history, it has no central organization, but is composed of groups which exist in self-imposed isolation and more or less denounce each other as impostors. Despite this, there remains a central body of written lore which is accepted by all as gospel.

Steeped in mystification and concealed for centuries, the secrets of T'ai Chi Ch'uan are in truth quite difficult even to give away. In a line from the *Classics* it is said: "If unintelligent you cannot be awakened. The old masters were careful in teaching, not only to choose the right students, but to avoid wasting time."

I have for many years wished to publish a work which makes plain the forms and principles of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, without their usual robed obscurity and purposeful obfuscation. In these pictures, the exact disposition of the spine, its true relation to the pelvis, and the actual configuration of the legs are all completely visible. I have endeavored to make the text equally revealing.

It would be misleading to imply that T'ai Chi Ch'uan can be learned from a book, no matter how well written. Technique must be learned through oral instruction, and the knowledge gained from the study of T'ai Chi is the wisdom which comes from the comprehension of internal force. This is a matter of years of practice. But books have their place in study, and this one should serve to make clear that which is obvious, and to bring more into view that which is not.

Space does not allow photographic coverage of the subject of the joined hands exercise of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, which is mentioned in my explanations. I have instead chosen to present as detailed a study of the individual movements as possible. The sequence depicted is not the original sequence of moves practiced by the Yang family, but a slightly shortened version, much in vogue today, which preserves all the essential positions. I am confident that serious students can learn much from the study of these photographs, and that even those unfamiliar with T'ai Chi Ch'uan will realize the balance, roundedness, and natural grace evident in the postures.

Sincerely,
F. L. Yu

Yang Cheng-fu (1883-1935)

I – HISTORY OF T'AI CHI CH'UAN

The Chinese have for centuries exhibited fascination with the arts of war. By the time of Christ, there already existed a history of campaigns and strategies, of theories and counter theories, and the proliferation of weapons that exists today. It is quite probable that Alexander the Great, had he traveled onward from India where he imagined the end of his possible adversaries, would have experienced a rude awakening in China.

Additionally, the Chinese, no matter how sophisticated their weaponry or how lofty their generalship, always maintained a great respect for boxing as the foundation for wisdom in warfare, and numerous styles and traditions of individual combat sprang through family lineage from antiquity. By far the most influential single event in the history of the development of these styles was the pilgrimage of Bodhidharma from India.

Bodhidharma, or Ta-Mo, as he was called in China, is credited with the importation of the *Dhyana* sect of Buddhism. This sect was called *Ch'an* in China and later *Zen* in Japan. At the Shaolin Temple, where he found the monks enervated from lack of exercise, Ta-Mo instituted practices based on the techniques of yoga, combining breathing and movement. Over the course of generations these practices developed into the famous five animal styles of Shaolin Temple boxing. The unbroken traditions of the temple attracted boxers from far and wide.

Legend attributes the invention of T'ai Chi Ch'uan to Chang San-Feng, a Taoist who studied at the Shaolin Temple in his youth. Taoism, the original naturalistic philosophy of China, was in serious competition with the imported religion of the Buddhists. Conflicts between Buddhist and Taoist factions raged sometimes to the level of full-scale battles, and contests between individuals were frequent. Despite this, communication and coexistence were also common, and it was not unusual for a Taoist to seek instruction from the Shaolin monks.

After much experience with the Shaolin styles, Chang San-feng had a dream or enlightening vision in the form of a snake in combat with a bird. He saw that, rather than using force to fight force, the snake and bird co-ordinated with each other, trying to avoid direct opposition in order to penetrate each other's defenses. Since this principle was much more in accord with Taoist principles than the hard and aggressive styles of the monks, Chang began to refine the Shaolin movements to accommodate this idea of moving with, rather than opposing force. The developing style, known as *nei chia,* or inner school, became the foundation for the evolution of present day T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

Stories abound concerning Chang's life, but there is no definite proof of his actual existence. He was reputed to wear rags and exhibit uncouth behavior, never to bathe, and generally to disdain the society of men. It is also said that he lived for over two hundred years and was a great scholar, and that he possessed such powerful energy that the sick would collect dirt from his body, roll it into balls, and eat it to cure their diseases.

The teachings of Chang San-feng, preserved as the original writings of the *Classics of T'ai Chi Ch'uan,* were passed on eventually to Wang Chung-yueh. It is historically uncertain whether this transmission was direct or through intermediaries whose identities have slipped into obscurity, but Wang Chung-yueh not only mastered the art of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, but made commentaries on the original aphorisms as well. These commentaries are generally incorporated into the *Classics* of the modern age without distinction from the writings of Chang.

Wang Chung-yueh had two disciples of major importance. One went south and became the first in a long succession of great teachers. However, the southern school finally came to an end, for lack of a successor. Wang's other disciple, Chiang-fa, lived in the north and eventually became the teacher of Chen Wang-ting, of Chen Chia Kou, in the province of Honan.

Thus began one of the greatest dynasties in the history of the martial arts. The Chen clan kept their T'ai Chi Ch'uan a secret for over four hundred years. Rules forbade the teaching of the art to any outsider, or even to family members of questionable character. Practice was held in secret, and at midnight. The style developed by the Chens is still practiced in China today, and the Chen manual remains an important sourcebook of T'ai Chi lore.

But the present popular style and great fame of T'ai Chi Ch'uan is due to another family, the Yangs. Yang Lu-shan, who is sometimes characterized as a country squire and at other times as a country bumpkin, was an ardent boxer and expert in many styles of combat. Hearing of the greatness of the Chen style of boxing, and knowing of their tradition of secrecy, he sought employment with the family as a servant. Months passed without Yang finding the place of practice, until finally, upon rising in the middle of the night to relieve himself, he heard strange noises. Investigating, he found the family working out and spied on them through a hole in the wall. He continued in this fashion every night for months, diligently practicing what he observed.

The elder of the Chen clan at this time was Chen Chang-hsing, who was also known as "strait-jacket Chen." He was called this because of his extremely upright posture and similar nature. He was certainly not happy when he finally discovered the spying of the young houseboy, and pitted his students against Yang in combat. When the interloper defeated them, Chen's anger changed to delight, and he departed from tradition by taking Yang as his closest student.

There is a story that after much instruction from Chen, Yang tried to test him by attacking him while unawares, and from behind. After Yang was thrown into the air by the automatic reaction of his teacher's body, Chen smiled and faced him, saying: "Now you have learned my last secret." This kind of automatic, unconscious skill is considered to be the true perfection of T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

Besides transmitting to him the secrets of the Chen T'ai Chi boxing, Chen Chang-hsing also charged Yang with the further development and reform of the system, which he felt might have strayed from its original guiding principles. Yang, who was said by all to be one of the greatest geniuses in the history of boxing, evolved his own style and started a famous school in Peking, where he was called Yang Wu-ti, or "Yang of no equal."

The Yang family became the teachers of the palace guards and were the envy and target of every aspiring boxer. One of the most famous stories of Yang Lu-shan tells of him being surprised by a gang of jealous rivals who fancied themselves great boxers. Yang wrapped himself in a cloak and lay on the ground, allowing his assailants to beat him. The next day Yang strode into town, none the worse for wear, to the amazement of those who had heard the boasts of his attackers the previous evening. It was later discovered that his attackers became ill and had to spend time in bed recovering from internal injuries.

Yang was also famous for his skill with the iron spear, which he also used on horseback. He held exhibitions in which he offered a purse of gold to anyone he was unable to disarm. This purse was never claimed.

Yang Lu-shan had three sons. The second and third sons, Pan-hou and Chien-Hou, became famous T'ai Chi masters in their own right and are the subjects of many legends. Pan-hou, for instance, was supposed to have the power of walking on snow without leaving tracks. His style was similar to the type of boxing found in the extreme north, in that it employed very large movements and emphasized extreme elongation of the sinews.

One famous test of Pan-hou was his encounter with a rival known for a technique called the "dog-bite grip." There were many witnesses to this fight, which was a public challenge. The rival boxer grabbed Pan-hou's wrist and was immediately knocked unconscious to the ground. Elated, Pan-hou returned home to report his victory. But upon hearing the story, his father, Yang Lu-shan, pointed to the torn sleeve of his jacket, ripped away by the "dog-bite grip," saying: "Is this the true T'ai Chi Ch'uan?"

Chien-Hou, the youngest son of Yang Lu-shan, had more upright movements characteristic of southern style Chinese boxing. Unlike his older brother, who reportedly had only one student, Chien-Hou was willing to conduct classes and teach freely. One of his tricks was to hold a small bird in his hand, and by yielding to the slightest pressure of its feet, deprive it of a place to stand, and so prevent its flight.

Chien-Hou's son, Yang Cheng-fu, was the teacher of the most venerated T'ai Chi teachers of the present generation. Today there are but a handful of men left who knew Cheng-fu, but there is a light in their eyes when they speak his name. He loved to eat, to fight, and to smoke opium. And he loved women. He was overweight and illiterate, and when he left Peking to teach in the great southern cities of Canton and Shanghai, he taught the richest men in the city, privately, and in their homes.

Chien-Hou was so thoroughly enraged by his son's degeneracy that he brought him home and locked him in a shed for four years. During this time, Chien-Hou devoted a period of each day to teaching his son the error of his ways. At the end of this reckoning, Yang Cheng-fu emerged a fighter before whom no man could stand.

In later life Yang Cheng-fu fell again into his evil habits, and died a premature death in his middle fifties due to his excesses, but he never lost his skill. Some of his students never saw him practice. He would sit in a chair and issue only one word of instruction: *tsung* (relax). His hands were never gentle in *t'ui-shou,* or joined hands practice, and he commonly knocked his students unconscious with a single blow. But he was so soft that he could not be felt. As Chen Wei-ming put it: "His yielding was of the softness of cotton, and his push, penetrating like a bullet."

Yang Cheng-fu's fame was partly due to two of his students, Chang Ch'i-lin and Chen Wei-ming. Chang Ch'i-lin was a great boxer who traveled throughout the provinces of China accepting all challenges. In ten years he was never defeated, and during this time he publicized Yang Cheng-fu as his master. Chen Wei-ming was a scholar and writer of considerable fame who had studied the disciplines of *Hsing-i* and *Pa-kua* for over ten years before learning T'ai Chi at the age of fifty. In his writings he brought Cheng-fu great notoriety, and himself became a famous teacher in his old age.

Today there are no more palace guards, and the descendents of Yang Lu-shan no longer fear the jealous challenges of ambitious rivals, but Yang Cheng-fu's son, Shao-chung, still teaches in his home in Hong Kong. Also from Hong Kong comes the Tung family, whose founder, Tung Yin-chieh, was one of Cheng-fu's most famous students. In Taiwan and New York one may find many students of the great poet and doctor, Cheng Man-ching, who brought the most sophisticated T'ai Chi Ch'uan to the west.

Although all of these men can claim Yang Cheng-fu as their teacher, they have styles which differ in reflection of their own differences personally, and of the changes Yang Cheng-fu made in the movements during the course of his life. The history of T'ai Chi Ch'uan is clearly a history of men, and of changes. It started as a reform movement, and it must never become afraid of its own evolution. As it has changed in the past, so it will in the future. This is called *Tao.*

II — PRINCIPLES OF T'AI CHI CH'UAN

T'ai Chi Ch'uan is practiced through the execution of certain forms and steps, which are presented and described in the photographic section of this book. In executing these movements it is important to realize that in real boxing, as in real life, there are no textbook situations and therefore there are really no textbook movements. Movements have no value in themselves, but only inasmuch as they lend themselves to the instilling of proper principles.

The most complete statement of the principles of T'ai Chi boxing is found in the *Classics of T'ai Chi Ch'uan.* Much of its authorship has been attributed to Chang San-feng and Wang Chung-yueh, but it also contains aphorisms of other origin, notably Yang Cheng-fu's *Ten Important Points.* In the present chapter I will mention some of the principles which are most critical to a proper performance of the shadow boxing movements described in this book. While many of the statements of the classics refer to proper handling of one's relationship to an opponent, I shall give these little treatment at this time. Instead, I will concentrate on the first step in T'ai Chi Ch'uan study: harmony with the self through posture.

The outer musculature is the body's way of acting in the external world. In T'ai Chi Ch'uan, we wish to de-emphasize and relax this external musculature as much as possible and bring our maximum consciousness to the internal organic systems, e.g. heart and associated blood supply system, kidneys, digestive organs, etc. This is theoretically possible through pure meditation, but it may be aided by external movement, when that movement entails a cyclic pattern of relaxation, rather than recurring tension. This kind of moving meditation depends on not throwing our strength and ego identification into our muscular system, freeing the internal body from stress imposed by deliberate muscular actions.

However, the body is still susceptible to the unconscious or "background" tension of the body. Poor posture is one of the most persistent causes of this. The greatest relaxation of the internal body occurs when the body is upright, and the movements of T'ai Chi reflect this. In practice, of course, the physical discomfort of working to adjust habitually incorrect posture may make internal relaxation very difficult. It is well to remember that strength can be exerted against oneself as well as against an opponent, both to ill result. In order to progress, we must be gentle, patient, and unrelenting, and let internal consciousness come gradually.

This internal consciousness is closely connected to a spinal consciousness, which is facilitated by a relaxation of the vertebrae. This is in turn made possible by relaxing the legs. The normal curvature of the human spine enables us to sit upright, a feat impossible for other creatures, but this same curvature is not conducive to the cyclic movement of the waist. Accordingly, in T'ai Chi practice the knees are bent so that the lower spinal curve can relax, and with it, the upper curve. This causes a straightening of the spine, as if the head top is pushing upward against heaven, and a thousand pound weight is suspended from the coccyx, or vestigial tail bone. The more nearly this straightened spine is perpendicular to the ground, or in accord with the pull of gravity, the more easily internal relaxation may occur.

The center of movement should be the center of mass of the body, called the lower *tan t'ien.* This is located about two inches below the navel and inside the trunk. The area of the body encircling the lower *tan t'ian* is called the *waist,* and it initiates all movement. The mental commands directing movement should consolidate themselves in the waist and avoid independent movement of limbs or twisting of the upper spine.

The torso, now erect and free from disconnected movement, is moved without raising or lowering from one foot to the other, the feet being the "roots" of the body. In our photographic form study, the body is sometimes directly over one of the feet, and sometimes in the process of transition from one foot to the other.

It is important that all transitions and the accompanying change of weight be clearly differentiated. A distinction must be made between the substantial or weight bearing foot and the insubstantial foot, which bears less weight or no weight at all. Failure to do this is called the fault of *double-weight,* and is a serious error. The *Classics* say that anyone who practices for years and is still controlled by his opponents has probably missed this point.

Another key from the *Classics* is "Stand like a balance, and rotate like a wheel." This is a combination of maintaining an upright posture, avoiding the fault of double-weight, and utilizing the cyclic movement of the waist. This is the key to what we call *rootedness.* With rootedness, our feet seem stuck to the ground by a powerful force, and we can withstand terrific force from an opponent without straining our muscles, including those of the legs. Relaxation is the prerequisite for success.

The arms and head extend from the torso using the absolute minimum of muscular strength, and toward that end the shoulders and elbows should be consistently relaxed. The chest should be neither pushed out nor caved in, but relaxed down. The breathing is abdominal and the chest does not rise and fall with the movements. Since the intercostal muscles are connected to the spine, they are not employed in breathing; this allows for greater looseness and relaxation of the spinal joints. The shoulders keep their vertical position over the hips at all times, and the nose stays in line with the navel. The body does not twist, bend, or lean in any direction.

The maintenance of these principles requires a vigilant consciousness, and the continued application of this brings one into constant awareness of the spine and lower organs. The strong center which comes from this dynamic meditation is preparation for the training of external sensitivity, one of the most important parts of T'ai Chi Ch'uan study.

Sensitivity arises from the practice of delicate balance and relaxed posture, and from de-emphasizing muscular strength. When this is connected to the autonomic centers of movement in the brain, it results in what is called *listening ability,* or the ability to respond to the touch of another so perfectly that your movement becomes indistinguishable from his. This is practiced through *t'ui-shou,* or joined hands, in which two people remain in continuous contact, and by the mutual experience of give and take try to deepen each other's self-knowledge.

Form in itself is not enough; you must actively pursue the principles of relaxation, rootedness, and listening at all times, and this is a responsibility of the mind. The *Classics* say, "First it is in the mind, then it is in the body." Since the principles are internal, a person may have his arms and legs positioned correctly but lack true alignment internally. One vertebra out of place and everything will go wrong; tension will be evoked by the least movement. These pictures may show you the form, but you must actively pursue the principles in the mind before the body begins habitually to manifest them.

Another important principle of practice is the idea of continuous movement. A clear distinction should be made between practice to perfect the exercise and practicing the exercise to receive its benefits. When learning the positions it is sometimes helpful to hold the postures statically for detailed examination and correction. Even after years, this type of practice has great merit. But the proper

execution of the form is without breaks or hesitations. The *Classics* say that mobilizing the internal force is like pulling silk from a cocoon; there must be no sudden stops or jerks lest the thread break. T'ai Chi Ch'uan is also compared to a great river, because of its flowing movement.

The word *movement,* however, is misleading when used in connection with T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Properly speaking, we are trying to change from position to position with as little movement as possible. This is what Yang Cheng-fu meant when he said: "Seek stillness in movement." In deep meditation, the relaxation of the body increases and the breath becomes more and more refined, finally seeming to stop altogether. When this occurs the body becomes like steel, even though totally relaxed.

Any muscular effort destroys this process, and the beginner learns to recognize the obstructive feeling of activity in the muscles. Later, as the student learns to change from position to position by simply relaxing and releasing his muscles, the arteries and veins dilate, the blood circulates freely, and the sense of activity is replaced by a feeling of stillness, a stillness which can persist through the most violent encounters.

This result depends on proper foundation. For the relaxed shifting of position to occur, every joint in the body must be loose and open. The *Classics* say: "First learn to stretch, then to shrink." Stretching means the stimulation and elongation of the sinews. Shrinking means the natural release following this stimulation; it is total relaxation. T'ai Chi is said to be "balanced" exercise because it affords equal opportunity for shrinking and stretching. It is said to be "invisible" exercise because both the stimulation and the release are accomplished through subtle changes, and the total energy transpiring in the execution of the movements is not obvious to the casual observer. It is through the exact execution of the movements that the joints are thrown open, and through the release of the postures that they are made loose.

In this development, a general pattern is usually followed: first the wrist relaxes, then the elbow, then the shoulder, through the body to the hip, knee, and ankle. Special attention, then, should be given to the wrists in the beginning stages of T'ai Chi study. When the arms hang loosely at the sides, the hands are in the most relaxed position possible. We try to maintain this same wrist position when raising the hands in our movements. The fingers should reach out consciously, but without effort or stiffness. When we make a fist there is no difference except that the fingers are allowed to curl gently together.

I have mentioned abdominal breathing and its advantages. It is a refinement of the natural breathing process of inhalation and exhalation and well adapted to the execution of the T'ai Chi movements. I wish at this point, however, to clear up any possible confusion between this type of breathing and the breath called *ch'i* in the *Classics.*

Ch'i may properly be called the internal breath, and "normal" breathing the external breath. The *Classics* say, "The direction of the *ch'i* is as through a pearl with nine passages, reaching the most minute part (of the body)." This image refers to the way oxygen is dissolved in the blood and reaches the extremities of the body through the winding passages of the blood vessels. In the execution of the T'ai Chi movements, care is taken to facilitate this kind of breath. This is why, sometimes, there is a slight feeling of giddiness when beginning the exercise. The body becomes habituated to the practice, and responds by relaxing internally so fast that there is an unexpected change of consciousness.

The body of a child is exemplary of tremendous and overflowing *ch'i.* There is a healthy plumpness to the features, and a rosy glow to the complexion. The appetite is good, the eyes are clear, the voice is loud. The body of a child is extremely relaxed, and his spirit high. These qualities are even more pronounced in the first year, before the normal curvature of the spine manifests. Children may be characterized as "polymorphous perverse," or equally erotically sensitive over the entire body. This is accompanied by a high metabolic rate, which is the rate at which the cells consume food and oxygen. These conditions are also signs of successful T'ai Chi Ch'uan practice.

Children are lacking, however, in control, and it is in the learning and exercising of control that patterns of tension are built up and energy is wasted. We must be careful in T'ai Chi Ch'uan that our

control over the exercise does not destroy its merits. One should let the *ch'i* flow freely in response to our changes, and gradually learn to direct it without effort.

Our breathing rate and volume is determined by the internal breathing rate, and should be allowed to vary freely. Sometimes a breath may be short, sometimes long. There is a variety in healthy breathing, defying any mental control or preconception. The breath should never stop, or be held. Holding one's breath implies fixed concentration, whereas in T'ai Chi Ch'uan there is always change. In executing the form, then, the breath proceeds with variety, but inexorably, like a master musician who never returns for a lost note.

If these principles are strictly adhered to, and if intelligence is applied, and if there is an abundance of diligent practice, then there will be progress. But progress may easily be mistaken for failure, and failure for progress. T'ai Chi Ch'uan is not a technique of fighting, but a technique of learning. In T'ai Chi one gives up the fight in order to learn about the opponent; of course, in the end there is nothing so valuable in fighting as knowledge of the opponent. In the *Classics* it is said, "I know the opponent; the opponent does not know me. This is the secret of peerless boxing." Only through loss can true knowledge be gained, and progress is hard to accept when it comes. Your first opponent is yourself. To know that opponent you must know his weaknesses, no matter how difficult they are to face. This is real shadow boxing.

III – GOALS OF T'AI CHI CH'UAN

"Remember well the purpose of the exercise: to live forever and be forever young." (*Classics*) In the pursuit of immortality, three things are necessary: harmony with the self, harmony with others, and harmony with the Universe. The first objective is scientific, the second is social, the third is philosophical. For this reason, the practice of T'ai Chi Ch'uan has satisfied the needs of Taoists, Confucianists, and Buddhists, and relates to a wide range of modern interests as well.

Harmony with the self, or health, is the basic objective. The study of T'ai Chi promotes the circulation of the life energies of the body (*ch'i*). The word *ch'i* is difficult to translate, because of the variety of its usage. Its closest functional meaning is *energy,* although its literal rendering is *breath.* It is used as an anthropomorphic metaphor when referring to macrocosmic events, as in: the "breath" of the sun or the "breath" of a rock. *Ch'i* is energy in a state of change; even in a rock there is a slow transformation of substance and energy. When we handle a rock we can feel the *ch'i* of its relationship to the Earth, which we call gravity.

The chemistry of life calls for the utilization of oxygen by burning (oxidation). Life originated in small single-celled creatures whose oxygen supply was in solution in the liquid surrounding them. When large, multi-celled, air breathing animals evolved it was still necessary to provide a liquid environment for the cells. This environment, the blood, must be filled with oxygen from the atmosphere, and the organs must be regulated in their use of the oxygen. This depends on proper circulation of three kinds of *ch'i*: atmospheric *ch'i*, blood *ch'i*, and organic *ch'i*.

Oxygen from the atmosphere is dissolved in the bloodstream through ordinary breathing or respiration. Efficient respiration depends on circulation of the air through the lungs with minimum muscular effort, in co-ordination with the requirements of the *ch'i* of the blood. Since the lungs are like bells which hang within the chest, and have their largest portion near the bottom, breathing with only the upper chest (intercostal breathing) is woefully inadequate. To achieve maximum efficiency, the diaphragm must take over the major work, drawing in the air by means of lower, longer breaths.

Atmospheric *ch'i* may be more or less present in the air we breathe, and this is not simply a matter of chemistry. A teacher of mine once said, "Some air isn't worth the trouble of breathing." Any change in atmospheric humidity, density, temperature, electrical charge or magnetic field can drastically alter the efficiency with which the body can utilize the air. There is more *ch'i* on a mountain-top than in a factory, and more *ch'i* in a concert hall than in front of a television set.

One factor influencing the atmospheric *ch'i* is the ionization or charge of the air. Positive ions depress respiration, while negative ions stimulate more complete breathing. The action of air, sunlight, and surf at the beach produces a high proportion of negative ions, while the action of a plane flying through the air produces a concentration of positive ions in the cabin.

The atmospheric *ch'i* becomes the *ch'i* of the blood. Molecules of hemoglobin carry oxygen from the lungs to all the cells of the body. The movements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan are designed to facilitate this process. Care is taken that the joints, which are natural points of obstruction to circulation, are made loose and flexible. Since muscular tension which comes from the cerebral cortex causes contraction of blood vessels, both muscular action and ordinary thought should be kept to a minimum (elementary meditation). This does not imply stasis. The exercise is dynamic, promoting stimulation of energy through internal changes, which are made possible by posture that reduces stress on the inner body.

Because of the specialization of the cells of the body into organic groups, the *ch'i* of the blood must be mixed properly with the *ch'i* of each organ. The flow of this organic *ch'i* regulates the activity of the organs. In healthy people the sequence of activity normally follows a twenty-four hour cycle, during which each organ in its turn gets to feast on the *ch'i* of the blood.

Organic *ch'i* takes the form of super-saturated biological acids which contain large amounts of genetic information and are essential in repairing tissue damage. It is circulated by a system of tubes lying just beneath the surface of the skin: these are the meridians of acupuncture. The system has certain points of low electrical resistance which are used in the treatment of disease. These are the vital points of acupuncture. In a healthy body the electrical resistance of the skin is high, the resistance of the fluid within the meridians is low, and that of the vital points is the lowest. The result of this voltage differential is the circulation of the electrically charged fluid. In acupuncture therapy blockages in the circulation of organic *ch'i* are broken up with the aid of needles applied to the vital points.

T'ai Chi Ch'uan stimulates and revitalizes the circulation of organic *ch'i* as well as that of the blood and atmospheric *ch'i*. This is accomplished through careful meditation, which is more sophisticated than simple relaxation. The Classics say to "string" the body together so that when one part changes, every part changes. This means that the consciousness of the body continuously circulates. The resultant electrical massage of the epidermal cells composing and surrounding the acupuncture meridians breaks up minor obstructions and facilitates the flow of organic *ch'i.* With systematic and regular application of consciousness there should be no opportunity for larger blockages to occur.

The mastery of the circulation of *ch'i* produces an external breath which is slow, constant, and quiet. This is a sign of success in achieving our first objective: harmony with the self. By paying such detailed attention to ourselves we build a foundation of quietness from which we may grow into harmony with others.

It is sometimes said that great men treat all men the same. This is because they are quiet internally, and because they are listening. To whom should one listen more closely, his friend or his enemy? Both relationships demand attention; when one withdraws attention, it is out of fear or sloth. Inwardly watchful, a man of principle is not afraid to accommodate others. In aiding a friend or in destroying an enemy, the principle is the same.

The joined hands practice of T'ai Chi Ch'uan slowly brings about this realization on the physical and psychological level, and this in turn begins to affect the social behavior of the individual in unconscious as well as conscious ways. The techniques of practice, which are founded on "listening," are *tsou* (yielding), *nien* (adherence), and *ti-fang* (uprooting).

"The opponent is hard and I am soft; this is called *tsou.*" (*Classics*) Softness or yieldingness is the result of relaxation and of practice in responding with consciousness to the touch of another. Physical contact commonly excites muscular tension, which spreads out through the body like a wave. An opponent who is skilled in T'ai Chi Ch'uan can easily take advantage of this. We decondition waves of tension by learning to give up strength at any point that is touched.

Yielding is not to be confused with escape. There are two types of escaping: over-reacting with the whole body (retreat); and distorting one's body in order to avoid the touch of the opponent. In regard to

this second type of escape, the *Classics* say, "Let the postures have no hollows or projections." Distorting your posture only assures the opponent that your position will be disordered when he finally puts his finger on your point of tension. This incomplete yielding should be replaced by proper principle, particularly the balanced turning of the waist.

Tsou is defined by the *Classics* as a relative condition. Many people mistakenly affect a simulation of absolute softness which has nothing whatsoever to do with *listening.* In this case the body cannot change (from substantial to insubstantial), and one may end up behaving like a human punching bag. This comes from clinging dogmatically to an incomplete idea of non-resistance.

In the social world this misconception appears in the form of a fixed passive position, low key and self-righteous. Contrast this to a flexible position which re-defines softness in terms relative to the situation and persons involved. Behavior which is yielding in one situation may be evasive in another. One person's frank emotion may be another's vulgar aggression. Consideration of these factors means true yielding, as opposed to smug role-playing.

"I coordinate with the opponent's back; this is called *nien*." (*Classics*) Adherence is an active and continual adjustment of one's own posture relative to the postural changes of an opponent. It provides constant coordination with the opponent's potential force, and with his steps as well. Adherence is certainly the critical factor in aggressive boxing, but many attempt to utilize it before developing sensitivity through yieldingness. The result of this is stylized preconception, which results in slow reflexes and makes advantageous co-ordination impossible.

Adherence, properly applied, means matching the opponent's changes move for move. If you are able to co-ordinate large movements of the opponent with small movements of your own, you feel in control and yet detached from the situation, toying with the opponent carelessly. "The form is like a falcon poised (in the air) to seize a rabbit, and the spirit is like a cat catching a mouse." (*Classics*) When you feel cornered on an open plain, you know that you are faced with powerful adherence.

Because the method used in the joined hands exercise demands continuous touch, the T'ai Chi adept develops the psychological advantage of wishing to close immediately with the opponent. Touch brings the most complete understanding, and understanding (*intelligence,* in the military sense) is the single most important factor in warfare.

In society, adherence which is not accompanied by yielding manifests as dynamic aggressive behavior, up-tempo, and self-righteous. Such an individual is so busy coordinating that he loses sensitivity to what he is coordinating with. He is an intentional menace to some and an unintentional menace to everyone else. However, when *nien* and *tsou* work together, it is called *neutralizing* an attack, and means defusing a threatening situation without resisting or counter-attacking. This kind of behavior always leaves one with the upperhand, while enabling the opponent to save face. It is the action of a gentleman.

"To go up you must first go down. By pulling up and also pushing down, the root may be broken." This is a description of *t'i-fang*, or uprooting. In Chinese, this image calls to mind the trick of uprooting a tree by rocking it back and forth. By timing one's force to coincide with the rhythmic swaying of the trunk, one can easily topple a tree against which no amount of direct force could prevail. The situation is more complex when one uses this principle against a human adversary, whose responses may be much more variable. But if you are softer than your opponent, his wave of tension, no matter how slight, gives you the chance to uproot him.

If this wave is amplified by force, then uprooting will become spectacular. We should not use our own force, however, for that would destroy the careful foundation of softness that we have worked for. So it behooves us to wait for the opponent to resist or counter-attack. If the opponent does not fight, does not struggle for control, then our T'ai Chi techniques will seem equally feeble.

But if there is resistance, the skilled practitioner can accept this force, root it into the ground, and release it back at the opponent as a drawn bow releases an arrow. This gives the T'ai Chi boxer a relaxed

and watchful frame of mind. Far from trying to beat his man to the punch, he is waiting patiently for the other man's force. He has already adjusted his position to uproot possible attacks.

I mentioned that the great man, whether in combat or society, treats all men the same. It is because of the principle of uprooting that he can afford to do this. He knows that if he listens well and coordinates perfectly he is always in the best position for love or war. He can afford to wait, and to be indiscriminate. This indiscriminate attention is the key to harmony with others. It forms the basis for the third objective in our pursuit of immortality: harmony with the Universe.

We have seen how it is necessary to become quiet in order to perceive others. Our relations with others must achieve this same degree of quiet before we can clearly perceive the Universe. By clearly perceiving the Universe I mean that our perceptions are unclouded by either the physical interference of our bodies or by interference caused by our social projections. Two examples of these types of interference would be the distraction caused by simple physical pain, and the immaturity of investing natural events with human motivations. In both cases preoccupation with more basic problems of desire and fulfillment prohibit clear observation of subtler levels of reality.

The elimination of interference at every level is accomplished by using discrimination to destroy that inequality which necessitates discrimination. In the body, inequality exists when some parts of the body are conscious and other parts unconscious. Through the practice of the T'ai Chi movements, which require great discrimination, consciousness is deliberately extended to all parts of the body. When this is accomplished, one may forget the self and freely merge with the thought of the opponent. The principles and techniques of joined hands practice require discrimination on a fine scale. This eventually develops into a condition of indiscriminate emptiness in which it is no longer even necessary to distinguish friend from foe.

Lao-tse says: "The sage does not follow the ways of men." As we can forget the self to follow the other, so we can forget the other to follow the Tao. This should not mean irresponsibility in our affairs any more than forgetting the body means irresponsibility towards the body. Consciousness has simply stopped wasting energy in those areas and our energy is free to move on to subtler levels of perception.

When one is operating on these subtle levels, distinctions of principle begin to disappear. Harmony with the Universe has only one principle: faith. Let me make a distinction here between faith and what I shall call *belief*. Belief requires an object, a condition, a principle; it requires something to believe *in*. Faith can only come to one who is indiscriminate on the philosophical level, one who has neither a personal plan of universal order nor a fixed idea of right and wrong. Such a person may be either a monster or a sage. If his lack of desire and discrimination is not matched by equal lack of desire on the personal and social levels, he is a monster. If, on the other hand, his desirelessness is the culmination of a purification of consciousness on all levels, he becomes a sage.

This idea of true faith, free from assumptions about cause and effect, is all that can be said on this subject. To burden the reader with philosophical abstractions, mystical visions, or spiritual pantheons would be irresponsible. These are nothing more than beliefs for the mind to cling to, projections of insecurity. Just as tension is a manifestation of the insecurity of the body, and the use of force is a manifestation of the insecurity of the personality, so is the compulsive manufacture of theories about the Universe indicative of spiritual insecurity.

Many people will find these points difficult to accept. We control the body by giving up control of the body (strength); we control others by giving up control of others (force); we control the Universe by giving up control of the Universe (belief). Only the sincere work of years will enable one to see the truth of these statements, because it is a truth which comes from within. At the heart of it is the idea of achieving gain through loss. What we are "losing" are the obstacles to our life, and the obstructions to our perception of death. This is the pursuit of immortality.

IV – FORMS OF T'AI CHI CH'UAN
(A Guide to the Photographs)

In T'ai Chi Ch'uan we practice changing from one general position to another, each of which has a myriad of potential aggressive and defensive actions. The classics say that internal force is rooted in the feet, directed by the waist, and expressed through the fingers. Accordingly, when using the photographs, begin by examining the feet for both placement and weight distribution. The instructions for the movements begin at the previous picture and end at the position in the photograph to which they are attached. The direction and type of step that is employed are explained. The direction of the camera throughout the series is fixed, but it is allowed to move laterally to follow the steps of the exercise. Assured of the correctness of the feet, next examine their relationship to the waist and legs. Be conscious of the three major joints: ankle, knee, and hip. Note the angular relationship and the exact placement of the tailbone. Lastly, line up the shoulders and hips, and position the arms and hands. It is within this context that you must now concentrate on total relaxation, particularly of the abdominal region. If these conditions can be maintained, a high degree of "internal" exercise can be accomplished through the movements.

1 COMMENCEMENT OF T'AI CHI CH'UAN

Yu-Pei Shih

Facing to the north, take a natural posture, heels together, toes apart, arms hanging loosely at the sides. (The directions of north, south, etc., are traditional but need not be adhered to).

The hands and fingers are relaxed from the shoulders, the mind is clear, and a slight puffiness in the palms and fingertips may be noticed.

起勢

2 COMMENCEMENT OF T'AI CHI CH'UAN

Yu-Pei Shih

Shifting the weight fully onto the right leg, extend the left foot to a position approximately shoulder wide, toes facing directly north. Turn the backs of the hands to face north also, and shift the weight fully onto the left leg, while turning the toe of the right foot inward to parallel the direction of the left foot. Then shift the weight to the center (50-50 weight distribution).

Care should be taken in this and all succeeding postures to avoid any tilting or leaning when weight shifts occur. The knees bend only enough to allow the lower back to relax, and the elbows flex to the same degree, causing the palms to face slightly downward.

3 COMMENCEMENT OF T'AI CHI CH'UAN

Yu-pei Shih

Raise the wrists to a shoulder high position with arms fully extended, and with elbows, shoulders and fingers completely relaxed.

This resembles a puppet action with strings attached to the wrists. The elbows should maintain the same degree of flexation as in the previous position (#2).

起勢

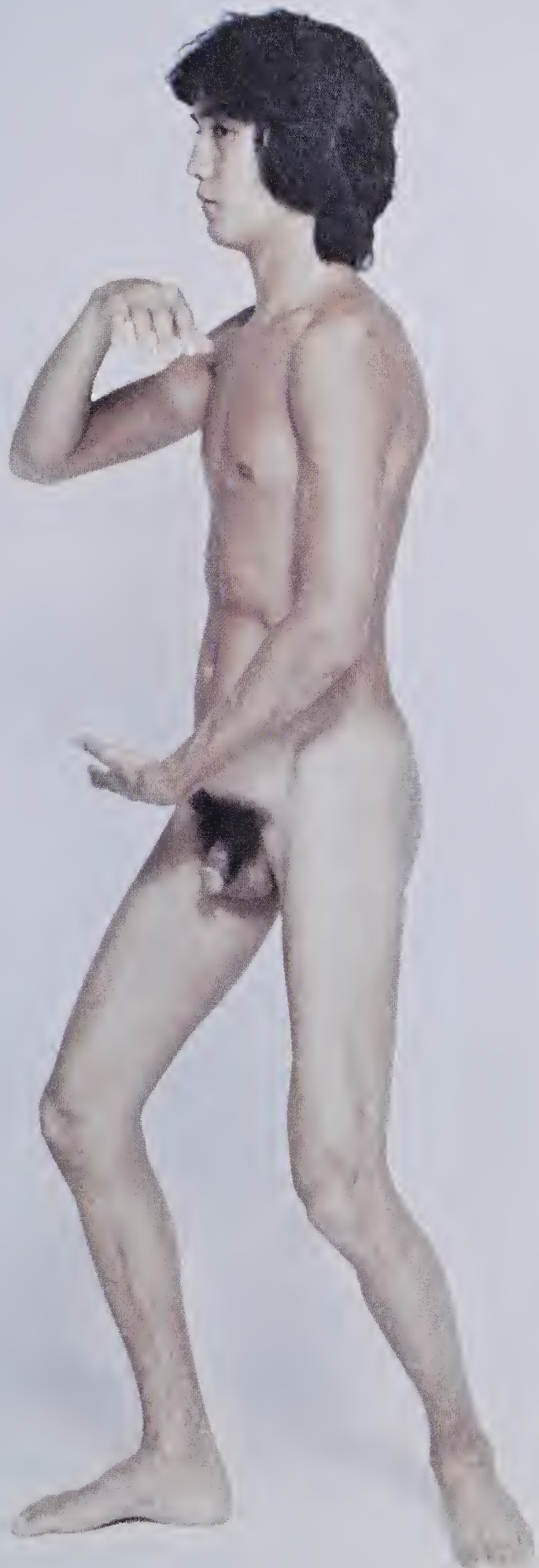
4 COMMENCEMENT OF T'AI CHI CH'UAN

Yu-pei Shih

Sinking elbows and shoulders as much as possible, allow the fingers to float upward.

Care should be taken not to tense the fingers and to keep the wrists from being broken.

The hands are now drawn straight back to the body, and the wrists lead again as the arms float down, ending as in position #2.



5 GRASPING THE SPARROWS TAIL

Lan Ch'iao Wei

Shift the weight fully onto the left leg and cycle the waist to the right approximately ninety degrees. Allow the right leg to rotate with the body, keeping the heel in place as the toe turns to face east. Simultaneously raise the right arm by the wrist and turn the left palm upwards under the right palm to simulate holding a large ball loosely in the hands. Shift the weight fully onto the right leg and let the whole body sink to a lower position.

It is here that you arrive at the level at which the remainder of the movements are performed. Since leaning is not permitted, the length of one's step is dependent upon this level, and both factors should be adjusted by the student for maximum ease of execution.

攬雀尾

6 GRASPING THE SPARROWS TAIL

Lan Ch'iao Wei

Step directly north with the left foot without shifting the weight, touching with the heel first. Without raising or sinking, shift the body until approximately seventy percent of the weight is on the left leg, simultaneously lowering the right hand and raising the left. At this point turn the waist to face the north, allowing the right leg to follow the body by turning the angle of the right foot inward forty-five degrees (northeast).

Special care should be taken to step directly out with the left foot, so that a shoulder wide stance is maintained (see picture). The length of step should be determined by the amount of sinking done in position #5. This is called *ward off to the left.*

攬雀尾

7 GRASPING THE SPARROWS TAIL

Lan Ch'iao Wei

Shift the weight fully onto the left leg and let the right heel come slightly off the ground. Simultaneously, turn the left palm down to face the floor and bring the right palm to a position directly under it, palm upwards.

This again simulates holding a ball. Try to relax the left hip joint without allowing the hip to stick out. The arms are now held closer to the body.

攬雀尾

8 GRASPING THE SPARROWS TAIL

Lan Ch'iao Wei

Cycle the waist to face the northeast and allow the right foot to turn on the toe. Pick up the foot and replace it to form a shoulder wide stance to the east. Shift the weight until seventy percent is on the right leg, while raising the right arm to *ward off* position (as in position #6), and the left hand to a point midway between the heart and the right wrist. Turn the waist to face directly to the east while relaxing the left leg and closing the angle of the left foot to forty-five degrees.

This position is completely analogous to position #6, except for the position of the left hand. It is called *ward off to the right.*

9 GRASPING THE SPARROWS TAIL

Lan Ch'Tao Wei

Without altering the position of the arms, cycle the waist further to face the southeast. Shift the weight fully onto the left leg, simultaneously turning the palms slightly upward and moving the body away from them. Now rotate the waist to the left, retracting the arms and allowing them to follow the body.

This movement has the idea of slightly retreating from an attack while controlling the attacking force. It is called *pull back.*

攬雀尾

10 GRASPING THE SPARROWS TAIL

Lan Ch'iao Wei

Cycle the waist further to the left and allow the left arm to swing in an arc behind the body. Shift the weight seventy percent to the east while rotating the waist to a fully forward position. Simultaneously allow the left hand to arc back and contact the wrist of the right arm, which again assumes the position of *ward off.*

This position is identical with Position #8, except that now the left hand lightly contacts the right wrist. Note that it is unnecessary to close the angle of the left foot since this has not changed since position #4. This is called *press.*

11 GRASPING THE SPARROWS TAIL

Lan Ch'iao Wei

Shift the weight fully to the left foot, while allowing the body's movement to separate the hands. Draw the hands back to the body and turn the palms to face out. Shift the weight forward to the seventy-thirty distribution of the previous postures while allowing the arms to float outward.

In this movement the waist does not rotate. The hands must be kept very relaxed and the elbows sunk down. The arms are parallel, and as far apart as the shoulders. This is called *push.*

單鞭

12 SINGLE WHIP

Tan Pien

Withdraw the weight fully to the rear leg, letting the hands hang in the air as you move away from them, palms down. With one hundred percent weight on the left leg, cycle the waist as far as possible to the left, carrying the arms with you. Simultaneously, the right foot turns on the heel, bringing the toes to face north.

The arms project directly from the shoulders as in position #4. Special care should be taken not to twist the body, which is a great temptation in this posture. This and the posture following it, which are part of the movement of single whip, have been likened to the image of two fishes swimming in a yin-yang pattern.

13 SINGLE WHIP

Tan Pien

Shift the weight fully onto the right leg, dropping the left hand and turning the palm up, simultaneously forming a "bird's beak" with the thumb and four fingers of the right hand and bringing it near the body. Turn the waist first to face the northeast. Freeing the left heel, turn the waist back to the northwest, letting the left leg rotate easily around the toe. At the same time, the bird's beak is extended to the northeast in the manner of a strike.

This complicated movement gets its name from the action of the waist in pulling the right arm across and "whipping" it out to the northeast corner. The right hand is sometimes thought of as gripping, sometimes as striking.

單鞭

14 SINGLE WHIP

Tan Pien

Place your left foot in a position shoulder wide and with toes facing to the west, touching lightly with the heel. Allow seventy percent of the weight to shift onto the left leg and allow the left arm to raise so that the fingers point upward, and the palm faces the body at shoulder height. Now relax and cycle the waist to a position facing directly west, while turning the left palm outward and closing the angle of the right foot forty-five degrees. The right arm and hand continue to form the bird's beak and to lag behind the rotation of the body.

The position of the waist and legs, and the placement of the left arm, are identical with position #11. The right elbow must be relaxed down and the arm almost straight. The degree to which the shoulder joint should be opened is a matter of the student's development.

提手

15 RAISE HANDS

T'i Shou

Shift the weight fully forward onto the left leg, allow the right heel to come off the ground, and rotate the waist to the right to face north, letting the right leg turn freely on the toe. Simultaneously open the arms with palms facing inward as if embracing a giant sphere. Relaxing the chest, shoulders, and elbows, bring the arms together to a position as wide as the shoulders, one high and one low, and with palms facing each other. At the same time, lift the right leg and replace it lightly on the heel, directly in front (north) of the left heel.

This is a classic "en garde" posture, common to many types of boxing. The open and relaxed hands are characteristic of the spirit of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, but the foot is free to kick at will.

白鶴晾翅

16 WHITE CRANE SPREADS ITS WINGS

Liang Ch'ih

Rotate the waist slightly to the left and withdraw the right foot to the body, simultaneously dropping the hands. Replace the right heel to its former position and shift the weight nearly one hundred percent to the right leg, raising the left palm to the height of the elbow.

The right arm is slightly bent as in *ward off*, but hanging loosely from the shoulder. This position is called *shoulder.*

白鶴晾翅

17 WHITE CRANE SPREADS ITS WINGS

Liang Ch'ih

Shifting the weight fully to the right leg, rotate the waist to face the west. At the same time, let the left foot shift to a point opposite the right heel, the toes lightly touching the ground. Let the left arm relax down to a position above and to the left of the left leg, palm downward, and let the right arm rise upward, in the manner of a salute.

In this position the left leg is free to kick, while the right hand protects the head. In practice the arms may be used to separate the opponent's hands while the foot counters to the lower regions.

摟膝

18 BRUSH THE KNEE

Lou Hsih

Rotate the waist to the right and drop the right hand, as both arms follow the body's movement. Rotating back to the northwest, let the right arm swing in an arc and bring the right hand back by the ear, palm down. Simultaneously, step out lightly with the heel to a shoulder wide position in the westerly direction. Shift the weight to a position with seventy percent on the left foot and turn the waist to face directly west. At the same time, the left palm crosses over the knee and stops slightly to the left of it, and the right hand floats forward in the manner of a push.

Again we have almost the same position as *push* (position #11), except that the left leg is forward instead of the right, and the left arm is dropped to brush aside a low attack by the opponent.

19 PLAY THE P'I–P'A

Shou Hui P'i P'a

Shift the weight fully onto the left foot and let the right heel raise slightly. Move the right foot a few inches forward, closing the distance to the left foot. Shift the weight fully to the right foot, and raise the hands as in position #15.

This position is analogous to raise hands, except that the right toe may be more turned in. It is called by its name because the hands move from upper and lower positions, respectively, slightly reminiscent of the method of playing an old Chinese instrument, similar to a guitar.

At this point the waist rotates again to the right, the hands drop, and there is a repetition of position #18, *brush the knee.*

進步搬攔捶

20 STEP FORWARD, DEFLECT, PARRY, PUNCH

Chin Pu, Pan, Lan, Ch'ui

From the position of *brush the knee*, shift the weight fully to the rear leg, turning the waist to face the southwest, and dropping the right palm to a point in front of the groin. The left arm swings to the rear, palm slightly turned upwards. Turn out the left toe to face the southwest, and shift the weight completely onto the left leg, making a fist with the right hand. Take a half step to the northwest corner with the right foot, and shift the weight fully onto it. Cycle the waist to face the northwest and bring the left arm with it in the manner of a chop; let the left leg also follow the waist to step forward with the heel into a shoulder wide position facing to the west. Letting the left hand rest in space, shift the body weight forward towards it until seventy percent rests on the left leg. Rotate the waist to face directly west, using its movement to project the fist forward.

This *punch* is no different from a *push* except in the position of the hand, which is still as relaxed as possible.

如封似閉

21 WITHDRAW AND PUSH

Ju Feng Szu Pi

Rotate the waist to face the southwest, moving the right arm to the left with the body, and leaving the left arm in place. Pass the right arm over the left, relaxing the fist into an open hand, and withdraw the body to fully rest on the right leg, facing due west, with the arms following.

The initial movement of the waist here is analogous to that of position #9. The concept here is that your punch has been deflected, your attack is closed back upon itself and you retreat to the rear leg.

如封似閉

22 WITHDRAW AND PUSH

Ju Feng Szu Pi

Turn the palms outward and shift forward until you are seventy percent weighted on the left leg, letting the arms float outward, fingers first.

The movement as a whole (positions #21 and #22) depicts someone escaping from a completely trapped position, splitting his opponent's attack, and countering with a push. Notice that in these two positions the placement of the feet has not changed. This final position is analogous with *push* (position #11).

23 CROSS THE HANDS

Shih-tzu Shou

Shifting the weight slightly forward, turn out the right toe to face the north and then shift the weight fully onto the right leg. Simultaneously cycle the waist to face north, carrying the right arm with the body, while the left arm trails behind. Turn the angle of the left toe inward with the movement of the waist.

This posture may also be done without first turning out the right foot, increasing its similarity to position #12. However, instead of the hands being level, they are palms outward and raised as high as the head.

十字手

24 CROSS THE HANDS

Shih-tzu Shou

Turning the left toe directly forward, shift the weight onto the left leg, allowing the hands to float downward and then to gather back together again, right over left, palms facing the body. With the weight fully on the left leg, move the right foot into a position approximately shoulder wide and parallel with the left. Shift fifty percent of the weight to the right.

This posture approximates the opening posture (positions #2, #3, and #4) with regard to the waist and legs. This is generally called the end of the *first section* of the T'ai Chi Ch'uan movements.

抱虎歸山

25 EMBRACE THE TIGER AND RETURN TO THE MOUNTAIN

Pao Hu Kuei Shan

Shifting the weight completely onto the left foot, rotate the waist to face east and step out with the right foot in a southeasterly direction. At the same time, let the right hand drift down over the groin, palm slightly down, and the left hand drift upwards to be level with the shoulders, palm up. Shifting seventy percent of the weight onto the right leg, rotate the waist to face the southeast. Simultaneously, close the angle of the left foot to face the east, brush the knee (see position #18) with the right palm, and strike forward with the left palm, fingers first. Finally, turn the right palm upwards with a small circle of the right hand.

This posture must be performed such that the feet form a shoulder wide position relative to the southeast. It is analogous to *brush the knee* (position #18) except that the right palm is turned upwards.

抱虎歸山

26 EMBRACE THE TIGER AND RETURN TO THE MOUNTAIN

Pao Hu Kuei Shan

Cycle the waist to face the south and shift the weight onto the rear leg, repeating exactly the movements of *grasping the sparrow's tail* (positions #9, #10, and #11) except to a southeasterly direction. Next, repeat the movements of *single whip* (positions #12, #13, and #14), finally facing to the northwest.

Because of the change in direction this movement is called *slanting single whip.*

肘底看捶

27 FIST UNDER THE ELBOW

Chou Ti K'an Ch'ui

Shift the weight completely onto the right leg and turn the waist to face the west, simultaneously moving the left leg and the left arm with the body, until both toes and fingers point directly west. Shift all of your weight onto the left leg and rotate the waist to face the southwest, relaxing the bird's beak. Opening the arms wide, draw the right foot to a position almost as far west as the left one, with toes pointing to the northwest. Shift the weight onto the right leg and let the left arm describe a circle parallel to the ground as the waist rotates back to face the west. With the weight one hundred percent on the right leg, shift the left foot to a point opposite (due west) the right heel. Simultaneously, the right hand forms a fist and the left arm positions itself directly over it, fingers pointing upward.

Note that the waist and legs are identical with *play the p'i p'a* (position #19). In practice, the left hand may control the arm of the opponent while the right one strikes.

倒攆猴

28 REPULSING THE MONKEY

Tao Nien Hou

Cycle the waist to the right, dropping the right hand in an arc and allowing the arms to stretch out horizontally as if holding a giant ball. Cycle the waist back to face the west, bringing the right hand close to the ear, palm down, and turning the outstretched left hand palm up. With one hundred percent of your weight still on the right leg, step back with the left foot to a position shoulder wide with respect to the right heel, and considerably behind it, landing lightly with the toe. Shift your weight fully to the left leg, while turning the heel slightly outwards so that the toes of the left foot point directly to the west. The right arm remains in place as the body retreats and the palm faces outward. The left arm drops to the side, still outstretched. Finally, let the right foot turn in, pivoting on the heel, so that the toes point to the west also.

The movement is somewhat like *brush the knee* (position #18) in reverse. The feet walk backwards as if on imaginary railroad tracks, always parallel.

倒攆猴

29 REPULSING THE MONKEY

Tao Nien Hou

Turning the waist to the left, allow the arms again to simulate holding a giant ball, and repeat the exact same procedure as in position #28 on the opposite side.

Following this is another repeat of position #28, making three repetitions in all, two stepping back on the left side, and one on the right.

斜飛勢

30 DIAGONAL FLIGHT

Hsia Fei Shih

Cycle the waist to the left and separate the arms as in position #28, but bring the hands opposite each other, one by the shoulder and the other below the waist, palms facing. Cycle the waist to face the north, and place the right foot pointing to the northeast. Shift seventy percent of the weight onto the right leg and begin to close the angle of the left foot. Simultaneously, separate the arms so that the right arm, which was down, raises to the level of the eyes, and the left arm, which was up, sinks to below the level of the waist.

The movement of the waist and legs is identical with that described in *embrace the tiger and return to the mountain*, except for starting from a somewhat different position, with the right foot advanced, rather than beside the left. This posture is sometimes called *ward off slantingly upward.*

31 WAVING HANDS IN THE CLOUDS

Yun Shou

Cycle the waist to the right and close the angle of the left foot to face directly north. The hands turn over and come closer to the body to hold an imaginary ball as in position #5. The left foot steps up to the same level as the right, and the weight begins to shift onto the left leg. As the weight is shifted, the waist cycles back to face directly north, and the hands simultaneously change position, the right becoming low and the left becoming high. Both palms turn to face the body and the weight is shifted nearly one hundred percent to the left, closing the angle of the right foot to point directly north.

You now have a parallel stance wider than the shoulders. Be sure the left hand is relaxed at the wrist.

雲手

32 WAVING HANDS IN THE CLOUDS

Yun Shou

Shifting the weight fully onto the left foot, cycle the waist to the left and turn the palms to face each other, again holding a ball analogous to position #5. The right foot moves sideways a few inches to come within shoulder wide distance from the left foot.

In this sideways stepping the feet are always kept strictly parallel, and the waist is rotated as far as possible without losing the rootedness of the foot.

33 WAVING HANDS IN THE CLOUDS

Yun Shou

As the weight shifts to the right leg, again the hands change position, the waist cycles to face the north, and the palms turn to face the body. Arriving completely on the right leg, the body cycles to the right, the hands form a ball, and the left foot steps out sideways to a wider placement, as in position #31.

There is now a repeat of the movements described in positions #31, #32 and #33. Movements #31 and #32 are then repeated again, except that the right foot steps out to the north slightly in the last position. Then, instead of position #33, the right hand forms a bird's beak, rises to shoulder height, and the weight shifts to the right leg. The left leg is freed, the left arm is dropped, and the posture becomes that depicted in position #13.

This proceeds with a repeat of position #14, *single whip*, facing to the west.

單鞭下勢

34 SQUATTING SINGLE WHIP

Tan Pien Shia Shih

Shift all the weight forward to the left leg and turn the waist to the northwest, turning out the right toe on the heel to point due north (or slightly northeast). Shift the weight fully onto the right leg while the left arm contracts slightly and the right arm extends fully to the northeast corner. Squat down on the right leg while relaxing the left arm and allowing the fingers to point slightly downward and towards the left foot. The left toe may cycle slightly inward during the retreat.

This is the only posture in which the body sinks below the moderate level common to t'ai chi ch'uan. It is a real test of relaxation. The torso must remain as upright as possible and you must particularly avoid the temptation to lean forward at the waist, which allows the buttocks to protrude.

金鷄獨立

35 GOLDEN PHEASANT STANDS ON ONE LEG

Chin Chi Tu Li

From the preceding posture, turn the waist slightly forward to the west, turning the left toe slightly outward. Shift the weight onto the left leg, letting the left hand adhere to the side of the left leg and finally raise to the height of the eyes. Simultaneously release the bird's beak in the right hand and let the open palm face slightly down. Shift the weight one hundred percent to the left leg, picking up the right heel. Bring the entire right side forward and upward, raising the knee and dropping the foreleg, and lowering the left arm to below the waist.

The left foot should face to the southwest, and the right arm should be directly over the right leg. You should regain your original level when the bird's beak is dropped, and before the right arm and leg are advanced.

金鷄獨立

36 GOLDEN PHEASANT STANDS ON ONE LEG

Chin Chi Tu Li

Step back slightly with the right foot, allowing the toes to point to the northwest, and shift your weight completely to the right leg. As the weight changes, the right arm is lowered and the left arm and leg raise upward in imitation of position #35.

Notice the contrast between this type of stepping backwards and that described in *repulsing the monkey.* The knee, when used in this way, is a deadly weapon.

37 SEPARATION OF THE FOOT

Fen Chiao

Stepping to the side (south) with the left foot, shift the weight fully to the left leg and raise the right arm, palm downwards, to stretch out to the northwest while the left arm, palm upwards, follows the body's retreat and drops to the level of the navel. Cycle the waist to the left and allow the left arm to swing in an arc and the right to withdraw towards the body. As the waist cycles back to face the west, allow the left arm to drop inside the right, both hands facing inward and touching at the wrists. Turn the palms outward and separate them to both sides of the body, while separating the right foot upward and outward at the same time.

In the final posture, the right arm and leg are in the same vertical plane, and point to the northwest. This may be thought of as a kick with the toes to a point around the kneecap or lower.

分
脚

38 SEPARATION OF THE FOOT

Fen Chiao

Replace the right foot to the side (north) and pointing to the northwest. Shift your weight fully to the right and repeat on the opposite side the movements described in position #37.

Special care must be taken in these separations not to bob up and down or to allow tension in the kicking legs. Do not look at your kicking feet, and pay close attention to the suspension of the head-top.

轉身蹬脚

39 TURN AND STRIKE WITH THE HEEL

Chuan Shen Teng Chiao

Let the left foot swing inward and relax the left arm to cross the body, turning the waist slightly to the left, and allowing the right arm to straighten slightly. Balancing on the right heel, turn the body to the left until the waist points to the southeast, and the toes of the right foot point directly to the south. Simultaneously allow the right arm to relax and fall outside the left one, with both palms facing the body. Turn the palms to face outward and separate the arms to either side of the body. At the same time, flex the left ankle slightly and kick with the heel directly to the east. There is now a repeat the movement of *brush the knee*, as described in position #18.

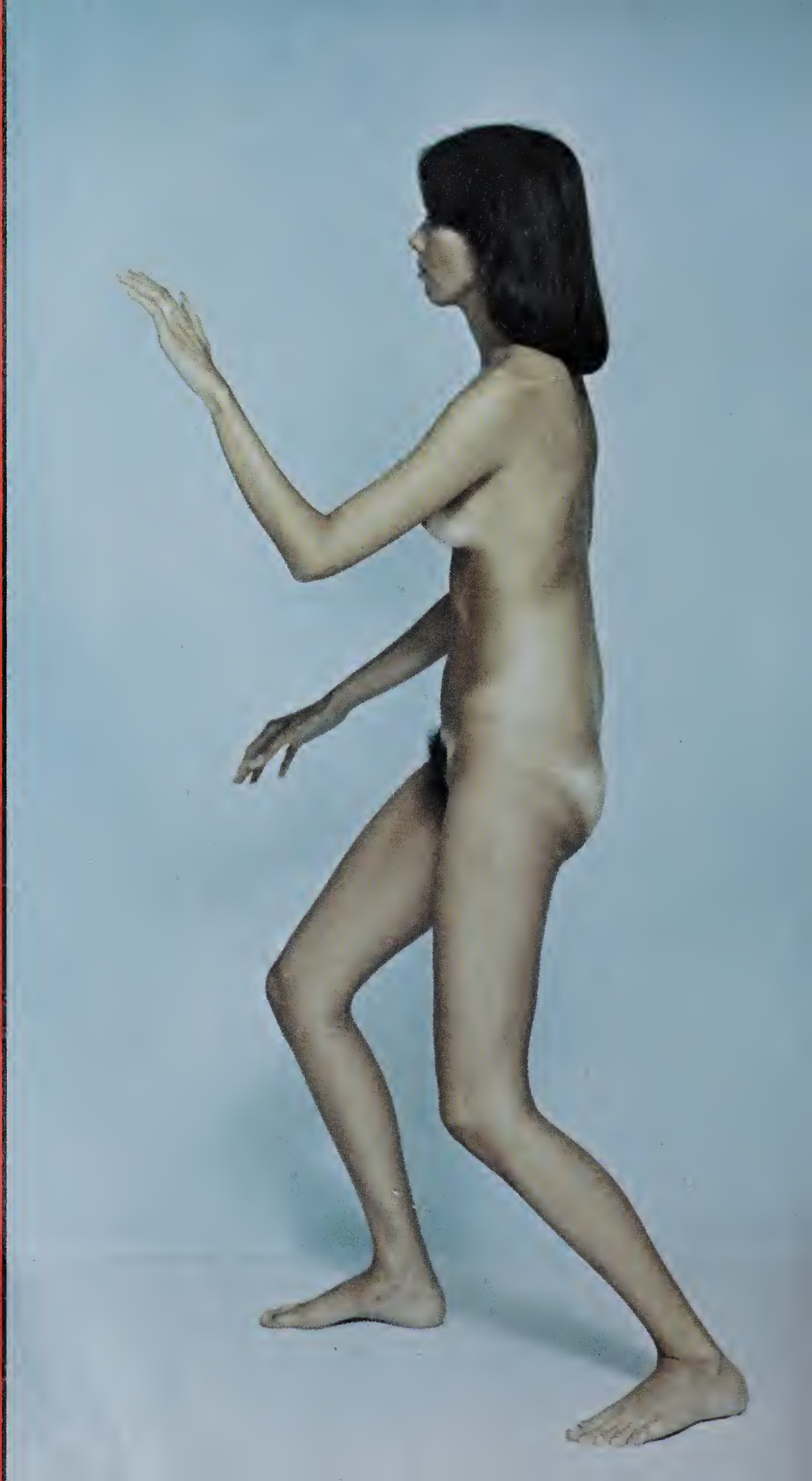
摟膝拗步

40 BRUSH THE KNEE AND TWIST STEP

Lou Hsih Yao Pu

Starting from the finished posture of position #18, but now facing due east instead of due west, shift the weight fully onto the right leg and turn the waist to the northeast corner, also turning the left foot on the heel to the same direction. At the same time, let the right arm fall across the body and the left arm turn palm upward and relax into the body reminiscent of *pull back* (position #9).Shift the weight fully onto the left leg and step forward with the right heel to a point shoulder wide with respect to the east. With the right toes pointing east, shift the weight seventy percent onto the right leg and repeat the posture of *brush the knee* (position #18) to the opposite side.

Position #18 and position #40 are completely analogous.



進步栽捶

41 PUNCH THE KNEE
Chin Pu Tsai Ch'ui

From the previous position, shift the weight to the left leg and cycle the body, to repeat the previous *twist step*. While the left hand brushes the knee as in position #18, and the waist and legs duplicate that movement, the right hand makes a fist. When the waist is turned fully to the east, the body sinks slightly and bends forward, as if to strike with the fist at the level of an opponent's knee.

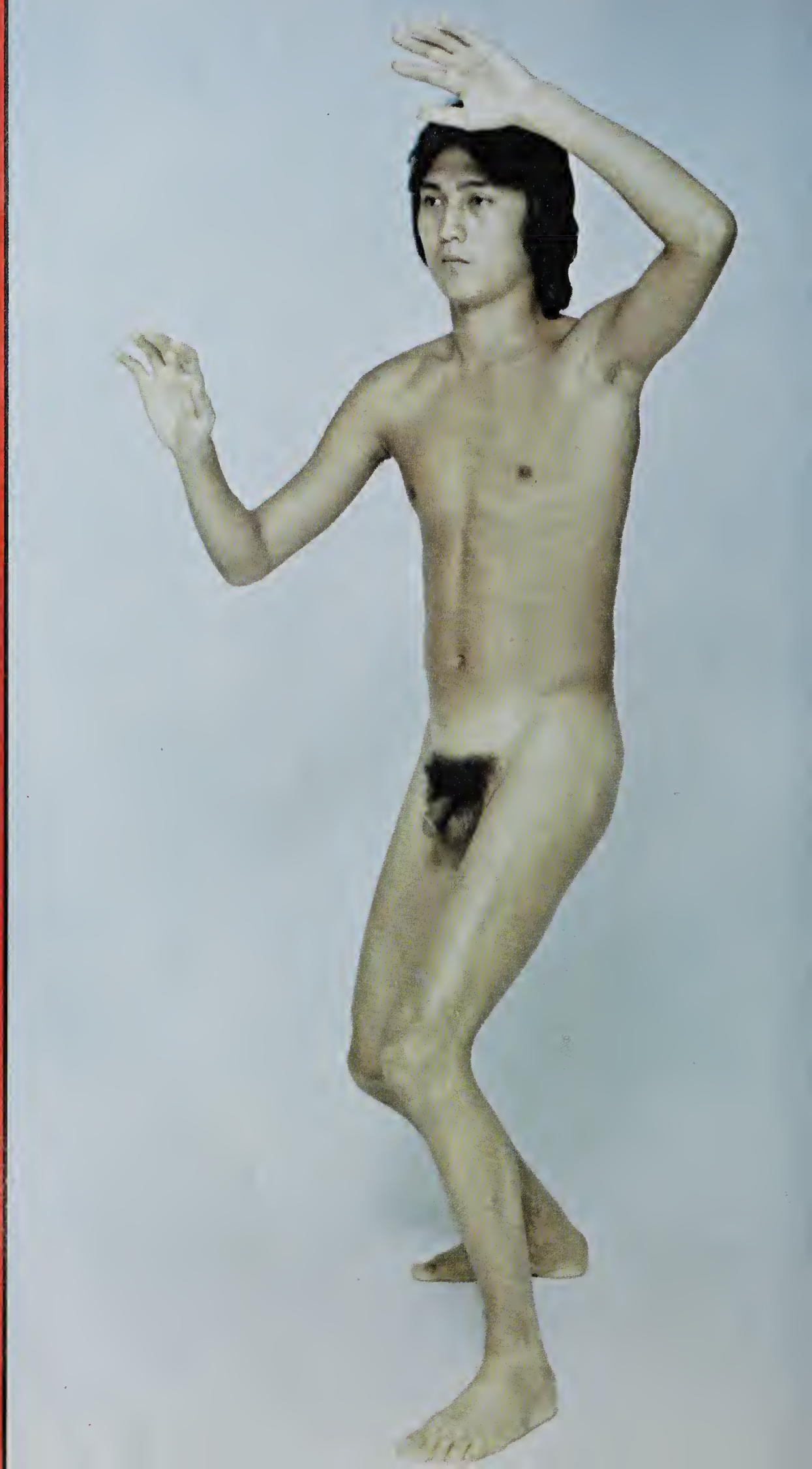
Following this posture is another *twist step* on the left side, with the hands carrying a small imaginary ball, left hand over right, and moving into a repetition of *grasping the sparrow's tail*, done as originally to the east, followed by *single whip*, as described in position #8 through #14.

玉女穿梭

42 FAIRY WEAVES AT THE SHUTTLES

Yu Nu Ch'uan Shu

From the position of *single whip* (position #14) shift the weight fully to the right leg and let the left arm extend away from the body, palm down. Cycle the waist to face the north and turn the angle of the left foot so that the toes face directly north. Also let the left arm follow the movement of the waist so that its fingers point directly north. Shift the weight fully to the left leg and allow the right leg to turn on the toe, which points to the east. Shifting the weight onto the right leg, step forward with the left foot to form a shoulder wide position with regard to the northeast. Shift the weight seventy percent onto the left leg while raising the left arm to ward off above the head. Turn the waist to face the northeast corner squarely, and let the right palm strike out, in the manner of *brush the knee* (position #18).



43 FAIRY WEAVES AT THE SHUTTLES

Yu Nu Ch'uan Shu

Shift the weight fully onto the right leg and turn the waist to face due south. At the same time, close the angle of the left foot to point directly south, and let the arms retract into the body, the left lowering at the elbow until the fingers point up and the palm slightly inward, the right palm rotating to face directly upwards, and positioned beneath the left elbow.

You may bring the left foot to the south if you wish. This kind of very close stepping is used extensively in the art of Pa-Kua, and facilitates extreme changes of direction.

玉女穿梭

44 FAIRY WEAVES AT THE SHUTTLES

Yu Nu Ch'uan Shu

Shift the weight fully to the left leg and rotate the waist to face due west. Simultaneously, move the right foot to a position shoulder wide with regard to the northwest, placing the heel first. Letting the right toes fall to point northwest, shift the weight seventy percent to the right leg and repeat the movements of position #42, except to the opposite side.

This movement is sometimes called the "four corners," because the directions are all slanting. The positions are all analogous to *brush the knee* at their final point, with the brushing hand now guarding the face instead.

These movements (positions #42, #43 and #44) are now repeated, except to the southwest and southeast corners, respectively. This is followed by a repetition of *grasping the sparrows tail, single whip,* and *squatting single whip*, all in their original directions.

上步七星

45 STEP FORWARD TO THE SEVEN STARS

Shang Pu Ch'i Hsing

From the position of *squatting single whip* (position #34), proceed as in *golden pheasant stands on one leg*, until the point of advancing the right side. At this point the right wrist moves forward to touch the left on the outside, backs of the hands pointing upward. At the same time the right foot is advanced with the toe touching lightly to the ground, and pointing directly west.

Note that the body position here and in *golden pheasant stands on one leg* is the same. Only the position of the arms and the insubstantial foot are different. Historically, the right foot was at one time held off the ground a few inches, simulating a kick to the ankle.

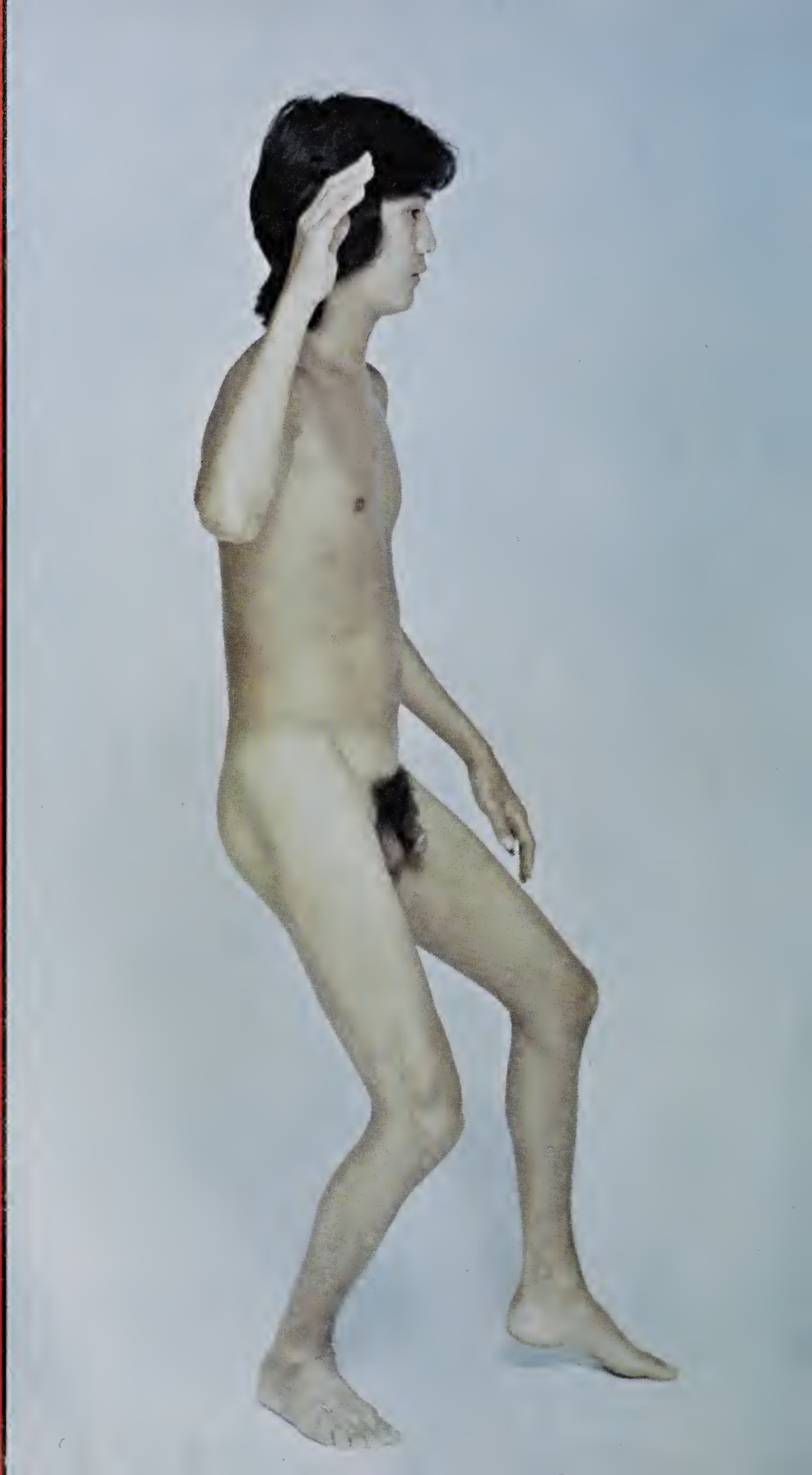
退步跨虎

46 STEP BACK TO RIDE THE TIGER

T'ui Pu K'ua Hu

Place your right foot in back of you, toes touching first, and shift your weight fully onto the right leg. The right and left arms separate and move to either side of the body, and to upper and lower positions, respectively. The left heel picks up and the toe touches lightly to the ground.

This position is almost identical with *white crane spreads its wings* (position #17), except for the placement of the right hand. Where in position #17 the hand guarded mainly from above, here it separates and protects to the side.



轉身撇蓮

47 SWEEPING THE LOTUS

Chuan Shen Pai Lien

From the previous posture, swing the arms and left leg slightly to the left, and using their momentum turn on the right toe so that the left foot may step completely around and in back of the right one, to the southwest. Shift the weight onto the left foot and cycle the waist to face directly west, turning the right leg on the toe. The arms extend directly in front of the body. Using the momentum of the waist and legs, let the right leg swing upward to the left and sweep sideways to the right, bringing the toes close to the outstretched finger tips of both hands.

In this movement the hands control an opponent's attack while the leg sweeps under it and into the kidneys or abdomen. To execute this properly, care should be taken to "sit down" completely on the left leg.

彎弓射虎

48 BEND THE BOW AND SHOOT THE TIGER

Wan Kung She Hu

Let the right foot come to rest, pointing toward the northwest corner. Cycle the waist to the left and let the hands form fists, the right arm deflecting downward and the left remaining at shoulder level. Cycle the waist to face the west and shift the weight seventy percent onto the right leg. As you cycle the waist completely to the northwest corner, the right fist circles upward and the left circles downward, following the movements of the body, and the left foot turns inward to point more to the west. Finally, the arms complete the cycle, the right stopping close to the head and the left projecting to the southwest in the form of a punch.

Following this, the weight is shifted fully onto the right leg, and the left foot picks up and replaces itself, this time with the toes pointing to the southwest. The weight shifts fully onto the left leg, and the movements repeat the *sequence of step forward, deflect, parry, and punch, withdraw* and *cross the hands* (positions #20 through #24). From position #24, the hands separate as they float to below the waist, palms facing slightly downward, and the body raises slightly to assume the posture of position #2. This is called the conclusion of T'ai Chi Ch'uan.

$4.95

AND/OR PRESS