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楊氏東方文化出版中心

1-800-669-8892

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MARTIAL ARTS - INTERNAL

THE COMPLETE
FORM, QIGONG, &
APPLICATIONS

Taiji Sword, Classical Yang Style

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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ISBN:1-886969-74-4

Edited by James O'Leary

Cover design by Ilana Rosenberg

Publisher's Cataloging in Publication

(Prepared by Quality Books Inc.)

Yang, Jwing-Ming, 1946-
Taiji sword, classical Yang style : the complete
form, qigong, and applications / Yang, Jwing-Ming. --
1st ed.
p. cm
Includes index.
ISBN: 1-886969-74-4

1. Swordplay. 2. Martial arts. 3. T'ai chi ch'uan
4. Fencing, Oriental. I. Title.

GV1150.Y36 1999

796.86

QBI99-500409

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Printed in Canada

Contents

Romanization of Chinese Words	vi
About the Author	vii
Foreword by Jeffery A. Bolt	xi
Preface	xiii
Acknowledgments	xv
Chapter 1. General Introduction 一般介紹	1
1-1. About the Sword	
1-2. Historical Survey	
1-3. Sword Structure	
1-4. The Sword Way	
1-5. About Taiji Sword	
Chapter 2. Fundamental Training 基本訓練	20
2-1. Introduction	
2-2. Hand Grips and the Secret Sword	
2-3. Fundamental Stances	
2-4. Power Training	
2-5. Key Words and Techniques	
2-6. Fundamental Training	
Chapter 3. Taiji Sword and Its Applications 太極劍與應用	99
3-1. Introduction	
3-2. Taiji Sword and Applications	
Chapter 4. Taiji Sword Matching Practice 太極劍基本對練	178
4-1. Introduction	
4-2. Matching Practice	
Chapter 5. Conclusion 結論	189
Appendix A. Names of Taiji Sword Techniques	190
Appendix B. Translation and Glossary of Chinese Terms	192
Index	203

Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

Foreword

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

Jeffery A. Bolt
Houston, Texas

Preface

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

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

Now, Taijiquan has become a popular practice world-wide. More and more, people are searching for a deeper theory and more pure expressions of this art. Because of this, I have written many Taijiquan books based on my personal study and more than 37 years of experience in Taijiquan practice. The books which I have written are:

1. *Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan*
2. *Tai Chi Theory and Martial Power*
3. *Tai Chi Chuan Martial Applications*
4. *Taiji Chin Na*
5. *The Essence of Taiji Qigong*
6. *Taijiquan, Classical Yang Style*

Now, this new book: *Taiji Sword, Classical Yang Style*. Although barehand Taijiquan and Taiji sword have been introduced in the first referenced book, *Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan* (published by Unique Publications), in the years since its publication in 1982, my understanding and experience have deepened. After 18 more years of practice and teaching, I feel an obligation to clarify and revise certain aspects of my earlier works.

This book contains all new writing and pictures. Revised Taiji sword theory and Qigong practices are also included. Martial applications for each movement are also discussed. However, even though I have tried to make the movements and applications as clear as possible, I still find that the feeling of the art remains missing. This feeling cannot be expressed in words, pictures, or even through video. The profound comprehension of the art comes only from diligent, continuous and regular practice, study, and thought. Learning Taiji is like learning a complex piece of music. The feelings of a musician with 5 years experience can be conveyed so much differently than those of one with 20 years of experience.

Preface

The final goal of Taiji practice is to reach this deep level of understanding to live a more enlightened life. If you ignore this ultimate goal, your accomplishments in the art will remain shallow.

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

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming
Boston, Massachusetts

General Introduction

一般介紹

1-1. ABOUT THE SWORD 關於劍

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

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

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

Names of Sword Sequences. Sword sequences are commonly named for mountains near where the sequence was created, such as Wudang Jian (武當劍); for a division or style of Gongfu (功夫), such as Taiji Jian (太極劍); or for the person who composed the sequence, such as Qi Men Jian (Qi's Family Sword, 戚門劍). They can also be named by the creator of the sequence as he pleases (e.g., Three Power Sword, San Cai Jian, 三才劍).

Functions of the Sword. More than most weapons, the sword serves a variety of purposes. First, the sword has always been used as a defensive, rather than an offensive, battle weapon. Because it is shorter than the spear, the halberd, and many of the other large battle weapons, the sword lacks their long-range killing potential. In battle, the sword was mainly carried for use when the soldier's main weapon was lost or broken. Second, in peace time the sword was treated as a defensive weapon, and was carried by scholars and magistrates, as well as by soldiers. Third, the sword could symbolize the bearer's status. This function of the sword developed to the point that some swords carried by scholars (Wen Jian, 文劍) were so ornate that they could not easily be used for fighting, although this was unusual before the advent of firearms. Fourth, the sword was an integral part of many dances.



Figure 1-1

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



Figure 1-2

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

Carrying the Sword. In China, the sword was either slung from a belt around the waist (Figure 1-1) or hung on the back with shoulder straps (Figure 1-2). The sword could either be carried in a soft scabbard for easy drawing over the shoulder, or a hard scabbard which could be quickly untied from the back for quick access. The way a person carried his sword depended on the weight and length of the sword—double swords and martial swords (Wu Jian, 武劍) were ordinarily carried on the back—as well as personal preference.



Figure 1-3



Figure 1-4

How to Inspect a Sword.

There are two occasions upon which a sword will be inspected—by the swordsman after using the sword, and by an admirer of the weapon (possibly for purchase). There are several very important conventions to be observed when one inspects a sword, and they should be communi-

cated to the neophyte prior to allowing him to handle the weapon. First, the sword is always passed from person to person by handing it hilt first. This minimizes the danger of accidental injury, which is *always* a possibility when dealing with any weapon. Second, the sword handler *never* touches the blade with bare skin, because the sweat-salt and oils from the skin will result in corrosion. Third, the blade is always kept at least eight inches (20-30 cm.) away from the nose and mouth, since moisture from the breath can also result in corrosion of the blade. Fourth, the sword handler never points the sword at another person, both for safety and from courtesy. Fifth, the edge of the blade is inspected by holding the sword by its hilt in one hand and resting the other end against the scabbard (Figure 1-3). If there is no scabbard, the thumbnail of the free hand may be used (Figure 1-4), or even the sleeve (Figure 1-5), so that again, the blade is protected from corrosion. Finally, although it is not a traditional observance, experience has

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



Figure 1-5

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



Figure 1-6

1. The length, from the tip of the sword to the handle, should be as long as the height from your feet to the base of your sternum (Figure 1-6).
2. The taper of the blade, from hilt to tip, should be smooth and steady, with no abrupt changes in width or thickness.
3. The blade must be straight when viewed down the edge (Figure 1-7).
4. The blade must be firmly mounted in the handle. It should not rattle when you shake it.
5. Spring steel blades must be flexible enough to bend 30 degrees and not retain any bow.

Yang's Taiji Sword Sequence 楊氏太極劍**1. Beginning (Qi Shi, 起勢)**

Figure 3-1: (N) The sword is held at the left side and the right palm faces down. The hand form of the right palm is just like that of barehand Taijiquan. The middle finger is slightly forward, while the pinkie and the thumb are slightly backward. Keep your mind calm, and inhale and exhale deeply several times. This is a Wuji state (無極). Keep your mind at your center of gravity (i.e., real Dan Tian, 真丹田).



Figure 3-1

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



Figure 3-2



Figure 3-3

Figure 3-2: (N) Raise your left knee and turn your right palm to face forward. Begin to inhale.

Figure 3-3: (N) Step forward with your left leg. Raise up your right hand to the side and form it into the Secret Sword Hand. Complete inhalation.

Figure 3-4: (N) Bring your right leg forward into Horse Stance (Ma Bu, 馬步). Move your right hand to your left wrist while bringing your left arm, with the sword, to the front of your body. Exhale.

This is a saluting movement, therefore there are no applications.



Figure 3-4

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



Figure 3-5



Figure 3-6



Figure 3-5A



Figure 3-6A

Figure 3-5: (W) Turn your body to W while changing to False Stance (Xu Bu, 虛步). Swing the sword across your body, and raise your right hand. Inhale.

Figure 3-5A: As an opponent attempts to stab the abdomen, you slide away the attacker's weapon.

Figure 3-6: (W) Step the left leg forward into Mountain Climbing Stance (Deng Shan Bu, 蹬山步), continue to move your right hand (Secret Sword Hand) to the chest area and then forward with fingers pointing forward. Exhale.

Figure 3-6A: After sliding the opponent's sword away, you attack the opponent's throat with the Secret Sword Hand.

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



Figure 3-7



Figure 3-8



Figure 3-7A



Figure 3-8A

Figure 3-7: (W) Make a small clockwise circle with your right hand. Begin to inhale.

Figure 3-7A: This technique is used to block a punch or to reverse the situation when the wrist is grabbed.

Figure 3-8: (W) Step forward with your right leg into Crossed Legs Stance (Zuo Pan Bu, 坐盤步). Swing the sword to the front with the handle pointed up. Retreat your right hand to your chest area. Complete inhalation.

Figure 3-8A: From the last blocking, use your sword to push or to cut the opponent's forearm.

Figure 3-9: (N) Continue to bring the sword to the front of your body and then open both of your hands to the sides. The upper body faces N and the face looks E. Exhale.

Figure 3-9A: After blocking in 3-8A, attack the opponent's chin with the handle of the sword.

Figure 3-9B: Your right hand (Secret Sword Hand) can also be used to attack an opponent who attacks you from behind.



Figure 3-9



Figure 3-9A



Figure 3-9B

5. Big Chief Star (Da Kui Xing, 大魁星)



Figure 3-10

Figure 3-10: (W) Step your left leg forward into Mountain Climbing Stance (Deng Shan Bu, 蹬山步) while moving your right hand to the handle of the sword. Inhale.



Figure 3-11

Figure 3-11: (NE) Switch the sword to your right hand and then turn NE while sliding the sword to knee level. The left hand stays in touch with your right wrist. Exhale.



Figure 3-11A

Figure 3-11A: You dodge the attack and cut the enemy's knee.



Figure 3-12

Figure 3-12: (E) Raise the sword while beginning to draw your left leg up. Inhale.



Figure 3-13

Figure 3-13: (W) Raise your left knee into The Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg Stance (Jin Ji Du Li, 金雞獨立) while pointing the sword forward and the left Secret Sword Hand to the opponent's third eye. Exhale.



Figure 3-13A

Figure 3-13A: The left hand can be used to block or intercept an incoming attack. The left leg can be used for kicking immediately after the blocking.

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



Figure 3-14



Figure 3-15

Figure 3-14: (SW) Step your left leg down into Four-Six Stance (Si Liu Bu, 四六步), and at the same time move the sword to the right hand side above the head. Inhale.

Figure 3-15: (SW) Shift the stance forward into Mountain Climbing Stance (Deng Shan Bu, 蹬山步) and slide the sword up. Your left hand touches your right wrist. Exhale.



Figure 3-15A

Figure 3-15A: As the opponent stabs forward, you move to the side and slide your sword across the neck of the attacker. This is not a hacking motion, but a forward slide. The action shown in Figure 3-14 can be used as a block to deflect the opponent's sword to the side first before your attack to his head.

7. Left Sweep, Right Sweep (Zuo You Lan Sao, 左右拦掃)



Figure 3-16



Figure 3-17



Figure 3-16A



Figure 3-17A

Figure 3-16: (NW) Move your right leg in to the side of your left leg, becoming False Stance (Xu Bu, 虛步) while circling your sword counterclockwise in front of your right hand side. Inhale.

Figure 3-16A: You intercept and slide away an attack to the upper body with the lower third of the sword.

Figure 3-17: (NW) Step your right leg down to the NW while sliding the sword forward and to the right. The stance is Mountain Climbing Stance (Deng Shan Bu, 蹬山步). Exhale.

Figure 3-17A: After blocking in 3-15A, you move in to cut the attacker's waist.

Index

- Accuracy Training, 32
Adhering, 18-19, 52-53, 80
Advance Forward File, 82
Applications, 19-21, 99-176, 206
Arc the Arms, 43-44
Axial Center, 80-81
Bamboo Twisting, 29
Barehand Taiji, 18
Basic Training, 17, 53, 81-96, 206
Big Chief Star, 108
Bind, 76, 198
Bioelectricity, 33
Block, 20, 77-78
Blood Groove, 15, 201
Bore, 9, 76, 193
Bow and Arrow Stance, 24, 194
Care of the Sword, 6
Carrying the Sword, 3
Cavities, 28, 35-36, 193, 198
Cavity Press, 21
Chan, 41, 46, 69, 179, 192
Chop, 54, 59, 101, 165, 196, 201-202
Chuan, 76, 165
Clean Up Dust in the Wind, 92, 142, 144
Clip, 78, 195
Cloud, 72, 188, 202
Cloud Above the Head and Stab Forward, 188
Coil and Turn, 41-42, 46
Coil Left and Stab Horizontally, 179
Coiling, 18-19, 32-33, 41, 46, 52-53, 80, 182
Compass, 102, 141
Confucius, 100-101, 198
Cover, 73, 193, 197, 200
Cut, 77
Dan Tian, 26, 28, 34-38, 103, 202
Defensive Attack, 20
Dodging, 21
Draw Back, 62, 192-193, 196-197, 200
Embrace, 75, 192
EMF (Electro-Motive Force), 24-27
Entwine, 69, 195
Essence, 18, 26, 28, 33, 53, 100-101, 206
Expand, 34, 39-40, 64, 195
Expand the Bow, 39-40
External, 17, 19, 24, 27-28, 37, 59, 61-62, 66-69, 71, 73, 189, 198-201
External Styles, 19, 24, 28
Fairy Points the Way, 50, 52
Falling Flowers Posture, 96, 162
False Stance, 26
File, 68, 82, 184, 193, 197-198, 200
Forward and Backward Coil, 46
Foundation, 2, 7, 17-19, 21, 23, 80, 206
Four Gates Breathing, 36-37
Four-Six Stance, 24, 110, 118, 169, 172, 199
Functions of the Sword, 2
Geography, 16
Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg Stance, 25, 109, 131, 149, 195
Gongfu, 1, 23, 33, 101, 192, 194, 196, 198, 201
Grips, 21
Hamper, 70, 194
Hard, 2-3, 17, 27-28, 33, 53, 99, 194, 196, 206
Hinder, 66, 71, 196-197, 200
Historical Survey, 7, 9, 11
Hold the Moon Against the Chest, 131, 154
Horse Stance, 23-24, 104, 121, 146, 177, 196
Hubei Province, 52, 194
Impede, 70, 194
Inspecting the Sword, 4
Intercept, 59, 71, 77, 89, 109, 111-112, 140, 155, 162-163, 188, 195, 197, 200
Internal, 7, 18-20, 27-31, 37, 53, 59-69,
Internal Power, 7, 20, 53
Internal Styles, 19, 27-28
Jian, 1-3, 14-17, 21, 24, 37, 78, 81, 104, 139, 150, 176
Key Words, 52-53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79
King Wen of Zhou, 101, 196
Left and Right Horizontal Pull, 80
Left and Right Step Over Obstacles, 94
Left and Right Wheel Sword, 150-151
Left Circle and Twist Sword, 81
Left Neutralize and File the Wrist, 184
Left Neutralizing and Stab Forward, 180
Left Sweep, 83-84, 111-112
Left Sweep, Right Sweep, 83-84, 111-112
Left Whirlwind, 88, 125-126, 182-183
Lift, 24, 30, 34, 41, 45-46, 51-52, 63, 82, 94-95

Index

- Little Chief Star, 85-86, 113-114, 124
Liu He Ba Fa, 27
Long Range, 2, 13-14, 20, 153, 192, 198
Long Weapons, 7
Martial Qigong, 26, 28
Matching, 178-188
Matching Practice, 178-188
Meditation, 17, 27, 206
Mentality, 100
Middle Range, 16-17, 20, 52
Mountain Climbing Stance, 24
Muscular Strength, 20-21
Names of Swords, 1
Neutralizing, 18, 52-53, 76, 80, 180
Northern Sword, 19, 52
Obstruct, 71, 196
Ohm's Law, 24
Part the Grass in Search of the Snake, 89-90
Physical Body, 17-18, 26-28
Pluck, 60-61, 197, 200
Point, 2, 5, 14, 23, 45-46, 65, 179, 193, 198
Power, 26-33
Press Down, 73, 128, 201
Pull, 62, 66, 80, 84, 95, 154, 182, 187, 192-193, 196
Push the Boat with the Current, 145-146
Push Ups, 29
Qi Body, 28
Qigong, 18, 26-28, 33, 35, 37, 102
Raise the Screen, 148
Respect, 2, 17
Right Neutralize and Downward Stab, 186
Right Neutralize and Left Pull, 187
Right Sweep, 83-84, 111-112
Right Whirlwind, 87-88, 122, 125, 184-185
Rise, 24, 75, 195, 199
Saber, 1-2, 7, 11, 20-21
Secret Sword, 21, 33, 104-105, 107, 109, 129, 195
Selecting the Sword, 4
Seminars, 189
Send the Bird to the Woods, 131
Shake, 4, 57, 202
Sheath, 5-6, 8, 16, 195
Sheathing the Sword, 5-6
Shi Xiang Zi, 100-101
Shoot the Geese, 155, 160
Short Range, 7
Short Weapons, 2, 7, 17, 20-21
Side Cut, 79, 83, 95, 194
Sink, 38, 77, 192
Sink the Qi, 38
Slide, 5-6, 16, 33, 56, 62-67, 71, 82-83, 85
Sliding Block, 20
Smear, 66-67, 196, 198, 201
Soft, 3, 7, 27-28, 33, 76, 80, 206
Soft-Hard, 28
Southern Sword, 19, 52
Spear, 2, 7, 17, 63, 120
Split, 54, 197
Stab, 8, 55-56, 59, 64, 71,
Step Forward and Close with Sword, 104
Sticking, 13, 18-19, 32-33, 52-53, 80, 93
Sticking and Coiling Training, 32
Swaying, 57, 66, 197
Sweep, 58, 83-84, 111-112, 198
Swing Training, 31
Sword Proverbs, 7
Sword Secret Breathing, 37
Sword Sequences, 1, 99, 197
Sword Structure, 12-13, 15-16
Sword Way, 17
Taiji Sword Qigong, 18, 33, 37
Taijiquan, 17-18, 24, 27, 33, 42, 99, 101,
Tassel, 16, 195
Terminology, 53
The Bird Flying Over the Waterfall, 147
The Black Dragon Waves Its Tail, 132
The Black Dragon Wraps Around the Post,
169-170
The Blue Dragon Waves Its Claws, 156
The Dragonfly Touches the Water, 118
The Fair Lady Weaves with Shuttle, 165
The Fairy Shows the Way, 105, 172
The Lion Shakes Its Head, 91, 135-136
The Night Demon Gauges the Depth of the
Sea, 154
The Phoenix Spreads Its Wings, 121, 156
The Rhino Looks at the Moon, 155
The Roc Spreads Its Wings, 152
The Shooting Star Chasing the Moon, 146
The Spirit Cat Catches the Mouse, 116
The Swallow Dips Its Beak in the Water, 110
The Swallow Enters the Nest, 119-120
The Swallow Picks up Mud with Its Beak,
151
The Tiger Holds Its Head, 138
The White Ape Offers Fruit, 161
The White Tiger Waves Its Tail, 166
The Wild Horse Jumps the Stream, 139
The Wind Blows the Lotus Leaf, 133-134
The Yellow Bee Enters the Hole, 115
Three Rings Envelop the Moon, 106
Thrust, 8, 16, 32, 55-56
Tip of the Sword, 4, 6
To Hold a Tablet, 175
Turn Body and Rein in the Horse, 140
Two Brains, 26
Types of Swords, 14
Upward and Downward Yin and Yang, 48

Virtues, 17, 21
Waiting for a Fish, 127
Wash, 74, 201
Wind Blows Away the Plum Flowers, 173-
174
Windlass, 30
Wrap, 69, 192, 197, 200
Wudang Mountain, 52, 201
Wuji, 34, 103, 201
Wuji Breathing, 34
Xingyiquan, 28, 206
Yangtze River, 52, 192, 201
Yongquan Breathing, 35-36
Zhang, San-Feng, 99

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