Eight Section Brocade

By
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Eight Pieces of Silk Brocade Qigong
Eight Treasures Chi Kung
Eight Silken Movements Qigong

(Ba Duan Jin, Pa Tuan Chin, Pal Dan Gum, Pa Tuan Tsin, Ba Duan Gin - Qigong)

A Qigong Form
A Taijiquan and Kung Fu Warm-up Exercise Set

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(Note: The Eight Section Brocade Qigong and Thirteen Treasures Walking Qigong will be published in installments in Cloud Hands webpages beginning in January, 2004. They will be published in their entirety by September, 2004.)
Introduction

The use of exercises, calisthenics, stretching, and breathing exercises to maintain good health, fight disease, and enhance the quality of life is of great antiquity. Human beings have always
enjoyed sports, games, exercise and play - it is essential to being human, a creature that
plays - *homo ludens*.

The use of exercises to revitalize one's health and prevent disease has a long documented history
in both India and China. Artwork, medical manuals, folklore, treatises, scriptures and reports on
the subject go back over 4,000 years. Likewise, military physical conditioning techniques and
training with military weapons (bow, sword, staff, knife, spear, etc.) are of comparable antiquity.

Over many centuries in China, traditional medical practices (e.g., acupuncture, herbalism, massage, and
exercise routines, etc.) were combined with esoteric and magical Taoist practices, and with military training
techniques. In addition, trade and cultural exchanges between India and China transferred Buddhist theory and
practices, Taoism, Yoga, medicinal herbs, medical techniques, and martial arts training techniques between the
two regions. These methods and practices were explored and adapted in China to help maintain good health,
to prevent and cure diseases, to provide martial arts prowess, to restore vitality, and to enhance the spirit of
the patient or practitioner. Seeking ways to enjoy a long, healthy, and energetic life are of universal and
perennial interest.

Making beneficial exercises interesting and enjoyable has always been a challenge to creative people.
Hua T'o (110-207 A.D.) is one of the famous physicians of the Han Dynasty.
In *The History of the Later Han*, Hua T'o wrote:

"Man's body must have exercise, but it should never be done
to the point of exhaustion. By moving
about briskly, digestion is improved, the blood vessels are
opened, and illnesses are prevented.
It is like a used doorstep which never rots. As far as Tao Yin
(bending and stretching exercises) is concerned, we have the bear's neck, the crane's twist, and swaying the waist and moving the joints to promote long life. Now I have created the art called the Frolics of the Five Animals: the Tiger, the Deer, the Bear, the Monkey, and the Crane. It eliminates sickness, benefits the legs, and is also a form of Tao Yin. If you feel out of sorts, just practice one of my Frolics. A gentle sweat will exude, the complexion will become rosy; the body will feel light and you will want to eat."


The noted Qigong scholar, Kenneth Cohen, notes that the eight-century Daoist treatise Xiu Zhen Shi Shu ("The Ten Treatises on Restoring the Original Vitality"), attributes the development of the Eight Section Brocade to one of the legendary Eight Immortals of Chinese folklore, Chong Li-quan.

During the period of 800 - 1200 CE, variations of these exercises were done in Wudang Mountain Daoist Temples for health and meditation purposes, and some were used as warm up exercises by monks training at the Shaolin Temple in hard style martial arts (Wushu). One can also see some movements and postures in the The Five Animal Frolics that are comparable to the Eight Treasures. Many of these health exercise practices continue to this day.

During the Southern Sung Dynasty in China (1177 - 1279 A.D.), the famous General Yeuh Fei developed a set of twelve exercises that were used to train his troops, and some later became part of the Eight Section Brocade. General Yeuh Fei is also credited with developing the Hsing I internal martial arts style. At first, there were twelve movements in this exercise set, all done in a vigorous manner, and done with the weight of military equipment.
In more recent centuries, eight of the exercises, done with far less speed and force, became widely used as warm up exercises in many soft style internal martial arts and in Chi Kung (Qigong) disciplines; and, became widely known as the Eight Section Brocade Qigong or Eight Treasures Exercises. The soft style of the Eight Section Brocade, emphasizing Daoist exercise methods and aims, is arguably now the most popular qigong exercise set practiced all around the world.

I have been taught this exercise by six different t'ai chi ch'uan and/or qigong instructors. Some instructors have done the movements very slowly, very deliberately, only two times, and with a minimum of muscular effort. Some teachers did the movements at a moderate pace, each movement was done 8 to 16 times, and the degree of exertion was moderate to demanding. Some encouraged low horse stances, others used higher shoulder width stances. Some were precise about repetitions, others not. There were slight to significant variations in the style and form of the movements depending upon the speed with which they were done, in the order of the movements, and in the breathing patterns. All but one instructor taught us to do the movements in a standing position. One instructor emphasized yin-yang balance, meditation, opening qi channels, circulating the qi, visualizations, and other esoteric and arcane aspects of Southern Complete Reality Taoism. The literature on the subject, and videotaped lessons, also reflect the different styles, goals, intensity, and qigong objectives used in performing this very popular chi kung set.

I enjoy doing the movements of the Eight Section Brocade at a moderate pace, doing 6 to 8 repetitions of each movement, and using the breathing patterns and the order of the movements as presented below. I use the set for warming up my body before T'ai Chi Ch'uan practice or
during walking. I tend to do the set in a relaxed and easy manner, and primarily for stretching. Occasionally, I do the Eight Treasures very slowly, with emphasis placed on breathing, energy movement and gathering, and for meditation. What is most important is 1) doing the entire set once each day, and 2) using a pace and doing a number of repetitions that are suitable to your current level of physical conditioning and the overall state of your health.

When done slowly, deliberately, and with full concentration on Yi guiding Chi (Mind guiding internal energy), the Eight Section Brocade is one of scores of exercise sets in the Chi Kung family. "Chi" or "Qi" is breath, energy, vital force, air, or life power; and, there are different types of Chi. The word "Kung" or "Gong" implies a regular, systematic, intense, long term, and dedicated training regimen. Therefore, "Chi Kung" or "Qi gong" is a long term training program to circulate, cultivate, regulate, enhance, and guide vital internal energies. In traditional Taoist practice, the teachers speak about the need to do this exercise routine for a minimum of 100 days before benefits become noticeable, and to continue the exercises for many years to assure longevity and to aim towards attaining the special powers of a chen-jen or "realized being."

"Only after a hundred days of concentrated work is the light real;
Only then is it the fire of spirit.
To set up the Foundation requires a hundred days."
- The Secret of the Golden Flower, Translated by Thomas Cleary, p. 17, 49.

All Chi Kung (Qigong) exercises are intended to improve health, increase energy, revitalize the body.
and mind, prevent or control disease, tone the internal organs, improve balance, reduce stress, boost the immune system, remove toxins, tone the muscles and tendons, uplift mood, and contribute to longevity.

Some experts contend that the Eight Section Brocade is not a Chi Kung exercise set. They argue that the set is a Shaolin martial arts warm up and stretching exercise set. The movements can be done without the mental (Mind=Yi) emphasis being placed on guiding and moving the Chi in the body, unblocking Chi channels, circulating the Chi around the Microcosmic Orbit, storing Chi, converting Chi to Jing, etc. When the Eight Treasures movements are done at a faster pace or with more muscular emphasis, it is not always possible to concentrate on Yi guiding Chi or other facets of serious Chi Kung training. Nevertheless, many of the physical and psychological benefits derived from using the Eight Treasures as a Chi Kung exercise routine will also be obtained if the Eight Treasures are practiced daily and solely as a martial arts warm up and stretching exercise set. If Chi is a reality, it must function without our conscious attention; but, we cannot gain additional benefit or advantage from Chi functioning in our martial arts practice or health regimen without disciplined conscious attention.

Most people will enjoy and benefit greatly from doing the Eight Section Brocade in a relaxed manner. The use of intense muscular contractions, excessive stretching, or aggressive movements are counterproductive. Relax, breathe naturally and fully, move slowly, sink into the earth, become like freely moving water, be soft, be gentle. Don't be attached to your monkey mind of free associations, worries, and concerns - observe them and then release them into nothingness. Free your mind of mundane concerns and cultivate calmness, inner peace, and not thinking. Allow yourself to feel your body and take pleasure from it during the movements. Be fully aware of your surroundings through all of your senses. Listen to your body. Relax and enjoy yourself.
Cultivate a detached, open, and tranquil consciousness. Unburden your body-mind of anxieties and tensions and fully relax. All of these aims can be summarized by the term "Sung." Sung denotes relaxation, alertness, sensitivity, awareness, calmness, and a tranquil mind.

Many additional ideas, quotations, references, notes, and reflections regarding the concepts and movements of the Eight Section Brocade Qigong and stretching set are to be found below in the "Comments" section for each movement.

**Eight Section Brocade Menu**

**Starting and Resting Position**

1. **Pressing the Heavens with Two Hands**
2. **Drawing the Bow and Letting the Arrow Fly**
3. **Separating Heaven and Earth**
4. **Wise Owl Gazes Backward**
5. **Punching with Angry Gaze**
6. **Bouncing on the Toes**
7. **Big Bear Turns from Side to Side**
8. **Touching Toes then Bending Backwards**

**Ending Movement Options:** Swinging, Storing Chi, or Massage
Starting and Resting Position

Stand up straight.
Your feet should be close together - touching each other.
    This aids in the improvement of balance; however, a
shoulder width stance
    is more productive and efficient for many.
Both feet are flat on the floor.
Relax your body.
Stay balanced and centered.
Clear your mind and set aside the work and worries of the day.
Smile!
Keep your head up and look forward.
Your eyes should be open, with a soft and wide angle focus.
Breath in and out in a relaxed, easy, and regular manner.
Keep your lips parted slightly.
Your arms should hang down in a relaxed manner at your sides.
The palms of your hands should face your thighs.
Relax the shoulders and let them hang down.
Some recommend that you keep the tip of your tongue
    lightly touching the roof of your mouth.
Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

This posture is often called the "Wu Ji" posture in Taijiquan. It is
the resting position, the position
before any motion begins, a state of "grand emptiness." It is the
primordial condition - empty, free,
motionless, without qualities. It precedes the movement of
Yin/Yang both logically and temporally.
The classics talk of Wu Ji giving birth to Tai Ji, emptiness
transforming itself into the manifold of
cyclic dualities. Our course, our bodies are never completely at
rest: our hearts contract and relax,
our blood moves up and down, we breath in and out, our two feet
and two arms help keep us in
balance as we stand, our mind may be calm and focused but
billions of neurons are quite busy
in our brains creating that phenomenon we directly apprehend as
consciousness. So, the "Wu Ji"
state of this posture is more symbolic, allegorical, or figuratively
interpreted. Students should note that this posture is very similar to the Yoga posture of Tadasana - the Mountain Pose.
We should stand like a Mountain: strong, stable, unmoving, grand, still, aloof, above the mundane, powerful, accepting but unbroken by the storms of ideas, emotions and worries.

1. Pressing the Heavens with Two Hands

Movement: Pressing the Sky with Two Hands
Supporting the Heavens

Assume the Starting Position.

Step out with your right leg to a shoulder width stance. Keep your knees slightly bent, back straight, butt tucked in, hips tensed.

Slowly and gently raise your hands to your waist. Your palms should be up, with your fingers slightly apart. The fingers of each hand should point to each other, and be kept about 2 to 4 inches apart.

Movement Sequence A:
Raise both hands up until you reach your forehead. Inhale as you raise your arms and relax your abdomen. At your forehead, turn your hands so your palms face outward.
Press your arms upward and outwards in front or your body.
The arms should press out at a 20 to 45 degree angle from the body, do not press the arms straight up. Keep your wrists bent so your fingers point to each other. Keep your fingers 2 to 4 inches apart. Continue to inhale while relaxing your abdomen. Gently stretch the whole body upward as the arms press upward. Rise up slightly on your toes as your hands reach their maximum height. When moving up imagine your internal energy (Chi) moving up from your waist, up your spine, and into your head. Imagine the energy of the air, sky and Heavens filling your lungs and whole being. Keep your head looking forward as your arms move up, keep a wide angle focus to your eyes, and follow your hands with your eyes. Stretch your arms up to the limit of your comfort zone, then begin the downward cycle of the movement. Turn the palms outward as you circle both arms out and down. Begin to exhale as your arms move down. Return your feet to a flat footed position. Gently tighten your abdomen as your exhale. When moving your hands down imagine moving energy from the Heavens and from your head and lungs down the front of your body into your waist (about three inches below and behind your navel). Keep your head looking forward as your arms move down, keep a wide angle focus to your eyes, and follow your hands with your eyes. Keep both hands in your field of vision as your hands move down.
When your arms reach your legs and your palms touch your thighs, begin to inhale, slowly and gently raise your hands to your waist, palms up, fingers pointing towards each other.

Inhale when moving up, exhale when moving down.

Repeat "Pressing the Sky" 2, 3, 5, 8, 12 or 16 times. Whatever number of repetitions are chosen for the first exercise should be duplicated in each of the other exercises.

I prefer eight repetitions with a count of six on the inhale and a count of six on the exhale.

Return to the Resting "Wu Ji" Position
Feet together, knees slightly bent.
Relax and sink.
Breathe naturally a few times.
These are often called "cleansing breaths." Sometimes the arms are raised up in front of the body to about chest height while breathing in through the nose, and then the arms are lowered to the sides as one exhales through the mouth. Use as many "cleansing breaths" as needed to help you relax, lower your heartbeat, and compose yourself.

Again, this neutral, standing position is often referred to as Wu Ji - the place before movement, an empty and free state of being, the fertile nothingness that precedes Yin and Yang. Some Chi Kung enthusiasts stand in this position for many minutes, doing nothing, bothering nobody, not interfering, minding their own business (wu wei).
Variations of the Movement

a) Interlock the fingers. Press the arms up from the forehead, and return down to the forehead.
   When the arms move up, the palms turn out.
   When the arms move down, the palms turn in.
   Touch both thumbs to the forehead.
   Breathe in when pressing up, breathe out when moving down.

b) Use Reverse Breathing (Taoist or Chen Tai Chi style)
   Breathe out when your arms are pressed upward/outward, breath in when your arms return down.
   When breathing in gently tighten your abdomen and expand your chest.
   When breathing out expand your abdomen and sink the chest.
   Do the movements very slowly when you begin Reverse Breathing techniques.
   (Note: It is best to begin with Regular breathing (Buddhist style): relax and expand your abdomen as you inhale and compress/tighten the abdomen as you exhale. Breathe into your belly.
   Don’t expand the chest very much.)

c) Do only two repetitions in a very slow and deliberate manner with little muscular effort.
   Keep your feet flat on the floor at all times during the movement.

d) The arm movements of this exercise can be done while seated or while walking.

e) Repeat the movement of "Pressing the Sky" 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 16, or 32 times. Whatever number of repetitions are chosen for the first exercise should be duplicated in each of the other exercises.
   I prefer 6 to 8 repetitions with a count of six on the inhale and a count of six on the exhale.
Some begin the movements by stepping out with the left leg instead of the right leg.

Normally, chi kung is done in a quiet, natural, and uncluttered setting. Silence is cultivated. However, sometimes, you might try doing chi kung to some soft, melodic, ethereal music.

**Health Benefits**

- Deep soft breathing helps to lower your heartbeat and blood pressure.
- Stretching helps contribute to the relaxation of stiff and tense muscles.
- Standing up straight helps realign the back muscles and the spine.
- Many Chinese healers believe that this exercise helps regulate and improve the heart, lungs, stomach, spleen, and liver. It stimulates the internal organs in the upper trunk area. The Triple Warmer or Triple Burner refers to the heart, lungs, and stomach. A clear and peaceful mind reduces negative stress on the body. Shoulders and triceps are exercised a little. Bending the knees exercises the front thighs.

**Disclaimer**

**References** (See below for reference sources.)

Prop the Heaven to Improve the Functions of the Triple Warmers. (1)
Supporting the Sky with Both Hands Regulates All Internal Organs. (2)
Double Hands Hold up the Heavens to Regulate the *Sanjiao* (Triple Burner). (3)
Scoop the Stream. (4)
Holding up the Sky with both Hands to Regulate the *San Chiu* (Triple Warmer). (5)
Two Hands Reach Skyward to Balance the Triple Burner. (6)
Pressing the Heavens with Two Hands. (7)
Upholding Heaven with Both Hands. (8)

**Comments: Pressing to the Heavens**
Observations, Notes, Quotations, Reflections, Questions and Answers

"In order for this to have any beneficial effect on your health, approaching it with confidence, sincerity, and perseverance in practicing the exercises is very important. Only with confidence can you develop sincerity and focus your mind while exercising; only with sincerity can you persevere to practice and gain the essence of the exercises; and only with perseverance can you get the beneficial effects of the exercises and develop more interest in them."
By Jiawen Miao, *Eight Section Brocade*
*Simple Fitness Exercises: Traditional Chinese Movements for Health & Rejuvenation.*

Each movement of the Eight Section Brocade has specific techniques for
using your eyes. Exercise your eyes in accordance with the instructions, e.g., following the movements of your hands, looking off into the distance, looking upward, keeping a wide angle focus of vision, etc. In some ways, these exercises are similar in style to those developed by optometrists and vision improvement advocates such as William H. Bates, Jacob Liberman, Martin Sussman, or Aldos Huxley. Learning to use your eyes in new ways and exercising your eye muscles are thought to be of benefit to your general well-being. Chi Kung and internal martial arts are seen as intertwined; and acute, careful, alert and lively visual skills are essential to self-defense and success as a martial artist. Your safety is dependent upon seeing what is going on around you, keeping your eyes out for trouble, keeping your eyes peeled, and seeing what is coming up. Do not neglect this important dimension of the Eight Treasures. More

Most Qigong and Taijiquan routines emphasize "Respecting the Curves of the Body." Your neck, back, legs, and arms are all naturally curved or bent in a particular direction. It is always best for any posture in Qigong or Taijiquan to respect the natural curves. Legs should be slightly bent; don't lock your knees. Arms should be slightly bent; don't lock your elbows. You should not move in ways that bend or curve the body away from or counter to their natural curve or bend. To do so is to risk hyperextension, dislocation, and painful injuries to your muscles, ligaments, tendons, cartilage, joints, or bones. Whipping you neck backwards or twisting your back backwards are extremely dangerous. Highly conditioned athletes (e.g., dancers, gymnasts, acrobats, jumpers, divers, contortionists, etc.) might be able to push the limits; but, ordinary folks, sensible people, need to be very careful and use restraint when doing some qigong exercise movements and postures.
This general caution applies to all the postures of the Eight Section Brocade, and especially to some of the movements such as Touching the Toes and Bending Backwards.

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2. Drawing the Bow and Letting the Arrow Fly

Movement: Pulling the Bow and Releasing the Arrow
Drawing the Bow and Shooting the Serpent

Assume the Starting "Wu Ji" Position.

Step out with your right foot into a horse stance. Point both feet forward and keep them flat on the floor. The feet should be wider than shoulder width apart. Bend the knees. Keep your back straight and head up.

Gently raise your hands to your chest. Cross your hands, left in front of right. Extend your left arm out level with your chest. Hold your fingers slightly bent as if your
fingers and hand are curled around a bow, holding the bow in your left hand.
At the same time your left arm is extending outward, you lift your right arm up to chest height, your right arm bends at the elbow, your index and middle finger bend, and then your right arm moves out to the right keeping your elbow bent. Imagine that you are holding the string of a bow, fingers on the string and above and below the arrow, and then pulling on the bow string with your right arm.
Look to the left.
As you draw the bow and string apart breathe in deeply.
Aim the bow and arrow, and then release the fingers of the right hand to let the arrow fly.
As you release the arrow, begin to slowly breathe out.
Relax.

The movement of the two arms should mimic the drawing of a bow string and arrow, aiming the arrow, and releasing the arrow. Coordinate the movement of the arms to match this image. Feel the tension in the bow and string as you draw them apart to fire the arrow. Aim the arrow at a target. Watch the arrow fly to its target.
Concentrate on the target.

Breathe in while drawing the bow, and breathe out when releasing the arrow and repositioning the hands for the next shot.

Return arms downward in an arc and then back up the center of your body.
Cross your arms in front of your chest, right hand in front of the left hand.
Relax.
Your head should be facing forward.
Horse stance.
Extend your right arm out level with your chest. Hold your fingers slightly bent as if your fingers and hand are curled around a bow, holding he bow in your right hand.

At the same time your right arm is moving outward, you lift your left arm up to chest height, your left arm bends at the elbow, your index and middle finger bend, and then your left arm moves out to the left keeping your elbow bent. Imagine that you are holding the string of a bow, left fingers on the string and around the arrow, and then pulling on the bow string with your left arm.

Look to the right.
As you draw the bow and string apart breathe in deeply.
Aim the bow and arrow, and release the fingers of the left hand to let the arrow fly.
As you release the arrow, begin to slowly breathe out.

Repeat the movements to both the left and right sides, eight times to each side, so that you draw and fire eight arrows to the left side and eight arrows to the right side.

**Return to Resting Position**
Place your feet together.
Relax, sink, stay balanced.
Stay balanced and centered.
Breathe naturally a few times.

**Variations of the Movement**

a) The fingers of the hand are held slightly open and in-line the entire exercise.
   The more you bend your knees and the lower you drop into the
horse stance,
the greater the demands on the thighs and the greater the
difficulty of
the exercise.
Sink lower in the horse stance after firing every 4 arrows.

b) The drawing of the bow can be done very slowly or
deliberately, or faster and
with more force. Always pause, concentrate, and aim before
firing.
Follow the arrow through the sky as it flies out from the bow.
Some circle the arms upward after each shot of the arrow.

c) Some hold the hand in a position with the index pointing out,
the thumb up,
and all the other fingers curled inward and touching the
palm. The hand
sort of looks like a play handgun. The index finger is
pointed at the target.

d) Generally, the arms are level with the shoulder and at a right
angle to the
hips. However, if your are imagining shooting an arrow a
great distance,
then the arm should be at a angle greater than 90º relative to
the hips. The arrow
must be aimed higher than the target when the target is at a
great distance
from the archer.

e) The number of arrows fired can vary: 2, 3, 5, 8, 16, 24, 36, etc.

f) The arm movements of this exercise may be done while
seated or while walking.
Refer to my notes in the Thirteen Treasures Walking Qigong.

Although most references for this exercise are to the act of
shooting eagles, hawks, or other types
of birds, this is not required. One could imagine aiming at and
letting an arrow fly to many
types of targets. A Buddhist might imagine targeting and striking
at one's individual faults, shortcomings, and evil behaviors; or hitting the targets of wisdom or enlightenment. A Taoist might imagine targeting and striking at tension, interfering behaviors, and gluttony; or hitting the targets of health, energy, vitality, and longevity. A Confucian might imagine targeting and striking at selfishness, sloth, disrespect, greed and ignorance; or hitting the targets of social harmony, cooperation, civility, and propriety. A hunter might imagine shooting all types of game animals; or, a soldier imagine shooting at an enemy in battle. What are the negative behaviors, attitudes, and ideas that you wish to eliminate? What are the positive goals, aims, or objectives that you wish to target and hit on the bull's-eye?

Health Benefits

Horse stances condition and strengthen the legs, knees, waist and back muscles. Shoulders, biceps and forearms are conditioned and strengthened. Many Chinese healers believe that this exercise helps regulate and improve the kidneys. Balance and brain functions are improved by coordinated movements. Stretching helps contribute to the relaxation of stiff and tense muscles. Standing up straight in a horse stance helps realign the back muscles and the spine. A clear and peaceful mind reduces negative stress on the body. Increased heart rate and breathing rate provide some cardiovascular benefit. Useful imagery can have positive effects on mental functioning and performance. Using both sides of the body (mirroring in a movement form) can have positive effects on the structural alignment of the body and enhance coordination.
Slow, deep and regular breathing positively effects mood, energy levels, and alertness; as well as improving the mechanical functioning of the lungs.

Exercises the eye muscles.

Disclaimer

References (See below for reference sources.)

Drawing the Bow to Kill a Vulture. (1)
Drawing a Bow to Each Side Resembles Shooting an Eagle. (2)
Open the Bow like Shooting a Hawk, Two Arms Strong and Firm to Strengthen Kidneys and Waist. (3)
The Shaolin Archer. (4)
Drawing the Bow to the Left and Right as though Shooting a Bird. (5)
Open the Bow as Thought Shooting the Buzzard. (6)
Drawing the Bow and Letting the Arrow Fly. (7)
Drawing the Bow with Each Hand. (8)

Comments: Opening the Bow and Letting the Arrow Fly
Observations, Notes, Quotations, Reflections, Questions and Answers

"This section can expand the chest, relieve functional disturbances of the lung-qi, and limber up arms and shoulders; prevent and treat diseases in the neck and shoulder, and reduce pain in lower back and leg."
Can anyone learn the Eight Section Brocade without the benefit of direct instruction from a Chi Kung instructor or master? I believe you can make very good progress on your own. This form is not very complex in terms of length, sequence or postures. In addition to the instructions found on this webpage, there are many fine books with detailed descriptions and illustrations and there are a few instructional videotapes on this subject produced by recognized experts with decades of experience in Qigong or Taijiquan internal arts. Workshops on the Eight Treasures are widely available. Group practice of this form brings a unique positive and healthy synergy, new insights, the opportunity for useful corrections to your movements from a qualified instructor, and the beauty of the coordinated movement of a group. Take advantage of some group practice if you can. Always be open to ideas on the topic and be ready and willing to learn from others. Cheng Man-ch'ing speaks about how a few persons used only books to learn T'ai Chi Ch'uan (a very difficult task), and his remarks could equally or more so apply to learning less complex Qigong forms on your own from books, videotapes or DVDs; he says,

"Some have asked me if it is really possible to master T'ai-chi ch'uan relying solely on a book and having no teacher. My answer is that this is a very good question. Self study in T'ai-chi ch'uan is indeed very difficult. Former masters stressed oral transmission and personal instruction. But when there is no alternative, and in order to benefit the greatest number, one must not shrink from the difficulties, but seek every possible means."


No matter how you came to learn to do this form, in the end, your own
practice in the form is all that really matters. You must personally experience the movements and the benefits of the Eight Treasures, and have your own body-mind grasp their essence - this is how you will really "learn" the Eight Treasures. Your solo practice is the primary and essential element of your progress. Without your daily practice and effort (Kung) at the Eight Treasures, on your own, true learning will never occur. This is an experiential, existential, inner movement art; and your real experiences, healthy attitude, and increased energy and vitality are the only real criteria of accomplishment.

Some days you will only have the energy to imagine pulling on the string of a child's bow - a five pound bow. On other days you will have the internal power and strong desire to imagine pulling on a massive 50 pound bow. Go with the flow! Recognize your energy levels, and use them in a practical and flexible manner.

"When condensing the internal power, it should be like the pulling of a bow; when projecting the internal power, it should be like the shooting of an arrow."
- Master Wu Yu-hsiang (1812 - 1880), Translation by Waysun Liao

I enjoy doing this exercise while walking. Be sure to AIM, look carefully at the target, and imagine watching the arrow fly to its target. While walking, you can aim at a variety of targets, near or far, to the side or to the front. Experiment! I do the standing version of the Eight Treasures outdoors in my garden or by the pond.
3. Separating Heaven and Earth

Starting Position

Movement

Step out to a shoulder width stance, feet parallel, arms at sides, hands on thighs.
The right hand lifts up along your side and the palm faces down. The left hand moves to the center of the waist, palm up.
Inhale deeply and completely as you turn your left hand over so the palm faces your chest. Bring your left arm up so your hand moves up the middle of your chest.
Slowly lift your right hand to your waist, palm facing down. Inhale through your nose.
When you left hand reaches your eye level, turn your left palm out.

Begin to exhale through your mouth.
As you slowly and completely exhale, press your left arm upward and forward, as far as comfortable, palm facing up. At the same time, press your right arm down and slightly back as far as comfortable, palm facing down.
Follow your left hand with your eyes. Keep your head facing forward,
and don't bend your neck to look at your hand.
Gaze at your left hand.

Slowly begin to inhale as you move your left hand in a circular manner out and down. Follow the left hand with your eyes as it moves down. At the same time, while inhaling and moving you left arm out and down, bring your right arm up and out in a circular manner. Bring your right hand to your eye level, palm up. Bring your left hand to your waist level, palm down.

As you slowly and completely exhale, press your right arm upward and forward, as far as comfortable, palm facing up. At the same time, press your left arm down and slightly back as far as comfortable, palm facing down. Follow your right hand with your eyes. Keep your head facing forward, and don't bend your neck to look at your hand. Gaze at your right hand.

Repeat the cycle, alternating from side to side, for 6 to 8 repetitions. Exhale as you press up and out, inhale as your arms/hands circle out and down. After 3 or 4 repetitions to either side, then fix your gaze on your lower hand as you exhale.

**Variations of the Movement**

a) Take a right bow stance with 70% of your weight in front right leg and foot, and 30% in the back left leg and foot. Keep your head up and your back straight.
Place your right hand on your forehead, palm facing out.
Place your left hand in the small of your back, palm facing out.

Inhale.
Begin to exhale and press your right arm forward and upward, palm facing out.
At the same time press your left arm backward and down, palm facing out.
Look at your right hand as it moves up and out.
Stop the exhale as the arms reach their maximum extension.
Return your right hand to your forehead and left hand to the small of your back. Inhale.
Repeat the movement 6 times.

Reverse stance to a left bow stance, left hand on forehead, palm facing out.
Right hand on the small of the back, palm facing out. Inhale.
Press the left arm up and out, palm out.
Press the right arm back and down, palm out.
Exhale as you press both arms out.
Look at your left hand as it moves up and out.
Stop the exhale as the arms reach their maximum extension.
Return your left hand to your forehead and right hand to the small of your back. Inhale.
Repeat the movement 6 times.

b) Instead of the arms circling out and down after pressing heaven and earth, one arm comes down the center of the body and the other arm moves up the center of the body.

c) The arm movements of this exercise may be done while seated or while walking.
Refer to my notes in the Thirteen Treasures Walking Qigong.
Health Benefits

Conditioning and stretching the arm, shoulder, back, and abdominal muscles.
Opening up the chest for deeper breathing.
Many Chinese healers believe that this exercise helps regulate and improve the spleen and stomach.
Rotating and bending the wrists are part of many spiral energy techniques.
Balance and brain functions are improved by coordinated movements.
Stretching helps contribute to the relaxation of stiff and tense muscles.
A clear and peaceful mind reduces negative stress on the body.
Increased heart rate and breathing rate provide some cardiovascular benefit.
Using both sides of the body (mirroring in a movement form) can have positive effects on the structural alignment of the body and enhance coordination.
Slow, deep and regular breathing positively effects mood, energy levels, and alertness; as well as improving the mechanical functioning of the lungs.

References (See below for reference sources.)

Raise Single Arm to Regulate the Functions of Spleen and Stomach. (1)
Holding Up a Single Hand Regulates the Spleen and Stomach. (2)
Lift Singly: Spleen and Stomach Gain Peace and Harmony. (3)
Press the Sky. (4)
Lifting One Single Hand to Regulate the Spleen and Stomach.  

(5)
Raise Each Arm to Regulate the Spleen. (6)
Separating Heaven and Earth. (7)
Raising the Hands One at a Time. (8)

Comments

This exercise reminds me of "The White Crane Cools its Wings" in the traditional Yang Family style Tai Chi Chuan long form. In that movement, all the bodyweight is on the back leg and the front leg is in an toe stance. It is a kind of separating, or splitting motion, with one arm moving in one direction and the other arm in the opposite direction. Also, in the movement "Parting the Wild Horse's Mane" or "Wild Horse Ruffles Its Mane," the arms move in opposite directions in a splitting motion.

The first three movements of the Eight Section Brocade all open and stretch the chest and abdominal muscles (Pectoralis major, Serratus anterior, Obliquus externus abdominis, Teres major, Latissimus dorsi, etc.) as well as the shoulders and upper arms to some extent. The ribcage area (Scapula, Costa, Intercostal muscles, Rectus abdominis, Oliquus externus abdominis, etc) are given a gentle workout. Combined with the deep breathing patterns, these movements help the lungs take in and expel a larger volume of air than normal. Most people find this to be pleasurable, energizing, and revitalizing.

If, when doing any exercise, a person experiences pain, dizziness, uneasiness, or real discomfort, they should stop. Every beginner should stay within their comfort zone,
don't over stretch, and don't try
to imitate a fellow student or the teacher and go beyond their physical
limits and abilities. Be
reasonable and kind to yourself. Take your time, advance slowly, be
careful, and remain injury free.
Sometimes and old or new injury, or joint disease, will limit your range of
motion - stay within your
comfort zone. Exercise daily, and be patient.

Why just "eight" movements and not 13 movements or 10 movements?
The influence of the ancient
Chinese book called the *I Ching (The Book of Changes)* on Chinese
culture, philosophy, and fortune
telling is extremely important. The 8 basic trigrams are combined in
various ways to make up the
64 hexagrams used in the *I Ching*. It was a natural temptation and tricky
challenge to fit the elements
of a qigong exercise drill into some pattern of eight, and then link them to
the symbolism of the *I Ching*
trigrams. The Shaolin and Chan Chinese Buddhists have the *Noble
Eightfold Way*. Taijiquan has
a set of postures known as the *Eight Gates*. The symbolism of the number
"eight" in Chinese
culture parallels the popularity of the symbolism of the numbers "seven"
or "four" in the European
culture and philosophy (e.g., the Seven Virtues, the Seven Deadly Sins,
the Four Gospels, Kant's
Fourfold Roots, or Ken Wilbur's contemporary quaternary model).
4. The Wise Owl Gazes Backward

The Wise Owl Gazes Backward
Snowy Owl
John James Audubon
*The Birds of America*, 1827

Starting Position - *Wu Ji, Tadasana*

Movement

Stand with feet at shoulder width apart.
Look straight ahead and gaze at some distant point.
Hands at hips with your palms facing down. Press down with palms.
Stand up straight. Relax. Lift your head up, chin tucked in a bit. Smile.

Don't move your shoulders or back much during the exercise.
Inhale slowly.
Slowly and gently turn your head to the left side.
Look behind you as far as you can; turn your eyes to the far left.
Gaze into the distance behind you at some point on the ground.
Exhale slowly as you look behind you.
After you have completely exhaled, then
begin to slowly inhale, and return your head slowly and gently to the front.
Look straight ahead and gaze at some distant point.

Slowly and gently turn your head to the right side.
Continue to slowly inhale as you turn your head to the right.
Look behind you as far as you can; turn your eyes to the far right.
Gaze into the distance behind you at some point on the ground.
Exhale slowly as you look behind you.
After you have completely exhaled, then
begin to slowly inhale, and return your head slowly and gently to the front.
Look straight ahead and gaze at some distant point.

Repeat the movement, gazing to the front, left rear, and right rear, 8 times.
As you warm up your neck muscles, turn a little farther to side and back.
Be gentle with yourself, move very slowly.
Be sure to gaze as far backward and downward as possible when looking to the back.
Breath naturally, easily, slowly.
Inhale slowly as you move your head from side to side.
Exhale slowly as you look backward.

Imagine yourself as a wise old owl turning his head from side to side. Imagine having the powers of distant vision and night vision of some birds of prey.

**Variations of the Movement**

a) Hold your arms up at shoulder height, elbows bent, and palms facing forward.
   Slowly turn your torso at the waist to the left and move your left arm to the back. Turn your head to the left and look backward. Keep your feet at shoulder width. Turn your neck to the side and back as you turn your waist. Repeat the movement to the
other side. Move slowly and gently! Do not make this into the dangerous and vigorous calisthenics exercise called "The Windmill." Gently stretch the waist, back and neck. Repeat 6 to 8 times on each side.

b) Lift your arms and place your palms together at shoulder width height. Extend your left leg forward as you move your left arm backward. Place your left toe on the ground at a comfortable distance in front to maintain your balance. Turn your torso to the left side and backward. Look at your left hand behind you. The right arm should remain in front at shoulder height. Stay balanced. Return the left arm back to the front, and look at both hands in front. Move the left leg back to a shoulder width stance.

Extend your right leg forward as you move your right arm backward. Place your right toe on the ground at a comfortable distance in front to maintain your balance. Turn your torso to the right side and backward. Look at your right hand behind you. The left arm should remain in front at shoulder height. Stay balanced. Return the right arm back to the front, and look at both hands in front. Move your right leg back to a shoulder width stance. Repeat 6 to 8 times on each side.

c) This movement can be done quite easily when walking. Turn your head from side to side and gaze backward. Allow your arms to swing naturally as you walk forward. Keep your torso facing forward; only turn your head from side to side and look backward.

d) This movement can be done while seated. Move slowly! Move gently.
e) Place your right hand behind your head. Keep your right elbow up. Gently hold your head.
   Turn your head to the left and look backward. Exhale as you turn your head and look backward. Lift your right elbow up slightly as your Inhale as you move your head forward.
   Inhale as you turn your head forward. Do 6 to 8 eight repetitions.
   Reverse hands and to 6 to 8 eight repetitions looking to the right side with left elbow up.

**Health Benefits**

- Exercises the neck muscles.
- Exercises the eye muscles.
- Balance and brain functions are improved by coordinated movements.
- Stretching helps contribute to the relaxation of stiff and tense muscles.
- A clear and peaceful mind reduces negative stress on the body.
- Using both sides of the body (mirroring in a movement form) can have positive effects on the structural alignment of the body and enhance coordination.
- Slow, deep and regular breathing brings extra oxygen into your blood.

**Disclaimer**

**References**  (See below for reference sources.)

Turn Head to Look Back to Allay Five Strains and Seven Impairments.  (1)
Looking Back like a Cow Gazing at the Moon.  (2)
Thrust out the Chest and Twist the Neck to take a Good Look to the Rear.

   The Five Weaknesses and Seven Injuries will be Gone.  (3)
Eye of the Tiger.   (4)
Looking Backward to Get Rid of Weary and Injurious Feelings.

(5)

Looking Behind to Cure Fatigue and Distress.   (6)
The Wise Owl Gazes Backward.   (7)
Turning the Head and Looking Behind.   (8)

Comments

Persons with neck ailments should be very careful when doing this movement.  Turn very little!!
Move very slowly.  Take your time, don't rush, be patient.  Do not bend your head backward towards your back - this hyperextends the neck and puts stress on the vertebrate in the neck.  Keep your head up straight, chin slightly down and just turn your head from side to side.

"Gently shake the Heavenly Pillar means to crick and move the neck. Properly, the neck is cricked to the left and right sides along with a gazing procedure. The two shoulders are followed by the gaze when swaying. The left and right sides are counted separately, with each side being performed twenty-four times, and collectively forty-eight times. This cricking of the neck, swaying of the shoulders, and gazing in accordance with the movements in effect remove the fire of the heart and eliminate any invasions or disturbances of external malignant spirits."  Master Li Ching-yun. Translated by Stuart A. Olson.
Really turn the eyes to the side as you look backwards. Exercise the eyes!

"Referring to the seven factors causing impairments by overstrain, viz., [1] overfeeding that impairs the spleen; [2] fury that causes adverse flow of Qi and impairs the liver; [3] forced overloading or prolonged sitting in damp places that injures the kidneys; [4] cold weather or drinking cold beverages that injures the lungs; [5] sorrow and anxiety that injure the heart; [6] wind and rain, cold and summer-heat that impair the constitution; and [7] great shock and intemperance that impair mentality."
- Ancient Way to Keep Fit, compiled by Zong Wu and Li Mao, 1992, p. 113. - Regarding "Turn Head to Look Back to Allay five Strains and Seven Impairments."

5. Punching with Angry Gaze
Starting Position

Movement

Step out to the right into a horse stance: feet pointing forward, feet at more than shoulder width, knees bent, back straight, head up, eyes looking forward, shoulders relaxed.

Arms are positioned at the waist. Hands are held in a soft and relaxed fist. Palms are up.

Slowly extend the right arm to the front, turning the fist as the arm moves forward.

The arm should be gently lifted up and extended. The arm should end at about chest level. The fist should be palm down at the end of the extension. Do not use muscular force to strike forward.

Exhale through the mouth as the arm moves out, inhale through the nose as the arm moves in.

The lips should be slightly parted, with the tongue at the top of the mouth.

Eyes should be wide open, staring forward, and the gaze should be intense.

Open the eyes really wide!
Project fire, fierceness, toughness, determination and courage through your eyes.
Glare at your opponent.
Clench your teeth, part your lips - snarl!

Imagine that energy is projected outward from the fist and moves into an imaginary opponent.

This energy travels along a path set by your stare.

The right arms returns to the waist as the left arm duplicates the previous movement of the other arm. The combined movement results in alternating soft punches by each arm.

Repeat the soft punch with each hand for a number of repetitions: 2, 4, 8, 16, 36, etc

Stay relaxed, keep your head up, and keep your back straight.
Generally, exhale as you strike something. Inhale as you gather your energy before a strike.

**Return to Resting Position**
- Feet together.
- Relax and sink.
- Stay balanced and centered.
- Breathe naturally a few times. Take some cleansing breaths.

**Variations of the Movement**

Sink lower in the horse stance every 2 to 4 punches. The lower the horse stance the more physically demanding the exercise because of the tension in the quadriceps.

Some hold the hands at the waist in a open position with the fingers pointed forward. When the arm is extended, the hand moves to strike with the palm and with the fingers up. The movement is still done slowly and gently, but palm rather than fist strikes are used.

Chi Kung movements are generally done in a relaxed, soft, and gentle manner. However, if your spirit is in a Yang mode and your energy high, you might sometimes punch with a bit more gusto. If the intent is to develop speed, power, and throw the fire of anger outward, then some additional energy must be used and projected, in addition to sinking even lower in the horse stance, and opening the eyes wider. This kind of dynamic and forceful punching
is sometimes referred to as punching with *fa-jing*.

Some stand in a shoulder width stance, knees only slightly bent. They gently rise up and down as punches are made, rising up and exhaling as the punch goes out.

Right fist is at the right side of your waist. Palm strike straight in front with the left hand. Make a fist with the left hand, turn the left wrist over and backfist strike with the left fist. Pull the left arm back to left side of your waist, left fist up at side. As left arm comes back, strike forward with a right palm strike. Make a fist with the right hand, turn the right wrist over and backfist strike with the right fist. Pull the right arm back to the right side of your waist, right fist up at side. As the right arm comes back, strike forward with a left palm strike. Repeat! Repeat back and forth, alternating arms. Inhale as you turn your wrist, exhale forcefully as your backfist and then palm strike. I like this variation the best while walking.

**Health Benefits**

Horse stances strengthen the thighs, back, and cardiovascular system. Shoulders and wrists are exercised. Balance and coordination are improved. Angry and tense feelings are dispelled. Eye muscles and face muscles are exercised. Breathing is deep and frequent - additional oxygen is supplied to the blood. In traditional Chinese medical theory this movement helps stimulate and
revitalize the liver. Emulation of the fighting spirit helps engender courage and toughness.

Disclaimer.

References  (See below for reference sources.)

Clench Fists and Look Angrily to Build Up Physical Strength.

(1) Clenching the Fists Increases Strength.  (2) Screw the Fist with Fiery Eyes to Increase *Chi Li*.  (3) Grip the Swallow's Egg.  (4) Holding Fists and Opening Angry Eyes to Increase Physical Strength.  (5) Punching with Angry Gaze to Increase Qi and Strength.  (6) Punching with Angry Gaze.  (7) Punching with Angry Eyes.  (8)

Comments
This movement can be done very slowly and one can imagine sending energy outwards, or a powerful beam of chi-light from your hand. One of my teachers had us punch softly, but asked us to imagine our energy blasting through the brick wall of the *dojo*. Or, this movement can be one of really punching with some force with intense and angry eyes.

**6. Bouncing on the Toes**

**Starting Position - Wu Ji, Tadasana**

**Movement: Raising up and down on the toes.**

Assume a cat stance with the right foot forward. Place the right leg about a foot in front of the left leg. The right foot should be on the toes. Most of the bodyweight should be in the bent left leg.
Your arms should be at your hips, with your palms facing down. Press down with your palms. Keep them flexed.

Bend your knees and move your torso down. Straighten your knees and move your torso up. Always keep the knees slightly bent. Raise your body up and down. Your front heel moves up as you move up, and down as your body moves down. Your back heel stays flat on the floor. Do 8 repetitions in a slow and deliberate manner. Breathe in as you move up; breathe out as you move down. Bouncing up and down is the signature feature of this movement, in my opinion:

however, some people just stand on one foot for as long as possible.

Gaze out to infinity.
Try to relax.
Stretch and lengthen your spine as you move up on your toes.

Return to the starting position.

Assume a cat stance with the left foot forward. Place the left leg about a foot in front of the right leg. The left foot should be on the toes. Most of the bodyweight should be in the bent right leg.

Your arms should be at your hips, with your palms facing down. Press down with your palms. Keep them flexed.

Bend your knees and move your torso down. Straighten your knees and move your torso up. Always keep the knees slightly bent. Raise your body up and down. Your front heel moves up as you move up, and down as your body moves down. Your back heel stays flat on the floor. Do 8 repetitions in a slow and deliberate manner. Breathe in as you move up; breathe out as you move down. Gaze out to infinity.
Try to relax.
Stretch and lengthen your spine as you move up on your toes.
Variations of the Movement

Stand in a shoulder width stance. Your arms should be at your waist with palms down.
Move up and down with your heels seven times. Flex and stretch the calf muscles and the Achilles tendon. Most qigong teachers start beginning students with their feet in a shoulder width stance for this 6th movement of the Eight Treasures. Balancing is easier in a shoulder width stance. In this position, one is raising and lowering the heels off the ground, and not really bouncing. In the gym, with heavy weights on one’s shoulders, this exercise is called toe raises for the calves. Rise up as high as possible to stretch the calves and tendons of feet.

Some do many repetitions of the movement. They bounce up and down in a rapid manner. Arms can be held in any position that enables you to keep your balance while bouncing. Some do up to 160 repetitions. Keep your eyes focused on a point in front of you to help you keep your balance. The faster you move, bouncing and pumping up and down on your toes, the movement involves the calves and thighs more and stretching the spine less.

Some do some of the bouncing with all the weight on the back leg and the front leg raised off the floor. This is for advanced players!

Some stand on one leg and do not bounce up and down. They sink the weight.

Return to the starting position.
into the back leg, holding one knee raised high off the floor, Cheng Man-ch’ing says, "The basic method for beginners is to take three to five minutes in the morning and evening and alternatively stand on one foot. Gradually increase the time and little by little sink deeper. Pay attention to sinking the ch’i into the tan-t’ien and to the sole of the foot sticking to the ground. Do not use the least bit of force. Standing in the "post" position, use your middle and index fingers to steady yourself again a chair or table so as to provide stability and balance. After some practice, eliminate the middle and use only the index finger to support yourself. After time, you will develop greater stability and will be able to forego all support and naturally stand steadily. After this, Raise Hands or Play Guitar to continue your standing practice."

- Cheng Man-ch’ing, Advanced T’ai-Chi Form Instructions, Wile 1985, p.24

Some do only two repetitions, very slowly. They circle their arms up and back down the center of the body until they are positioned alongside the hips. They visualize the Qi energy of body and the earth interacting in a positive manner through the Bubbling Springs (Yung Chuan) points on the soles of the feet.

**Health Benefits**

The calves and thighs are exercised. Raising your heel up and down using the resistance of your bodyweight and/or
additional weights will strengthen and enlarge the calf muscles.

In Chinese medical theory, bouncing in this manner stimulates the immune system and helps rid the body of many diseases. The hips and lower back are exercised. Stretching and lengthening the spine can align and strengthen the back. The muscles in the feet and ankles are exercised and stretched. The Achilles tendons are stretched. Leg muscles are strengthened as more work is done on one leg.

Disclaimer

References  (See below for reference sources.)

Jolt Body to Keep All Illnesses Away.  (1)
Shaking the Body Wards Off All Illnesses.  (2)
Seven Disorders and Hundreds of Illnesses Disappear and are Left Behind your Back.  (3)
Lift the Rock.  (4)
Jolting the Back of the Body to Eliminate Disease.  (5)
Reaching Down to Dissipate Disease.  (6)
Bouncing on the Toes.  (7)
Raising the Heels to Keep All Illnesses Away.  (8)

Comments

Details

Return to the Main Index
7. The Big Bear Turns from Side to Side

Starting Position

Movement

Coming in April 2004.

Variations of the Movement

Details
**Health Benefits**

Details.

**References** (See below for reference sources.) (See below for reference sources.)

Shake Head and Sway Buttocks to Extinguish Fire in Heart.  (1)
Lowering the Head and Hips Removes Excess Heat from the Heart.  (2)
Sway the Head and Swing the Tail to Get Rid of the Heart Fire.  (3)

Search the Clouds.  (4)
Wagging Head and Tail to Eliminate the Heart's Flame.  (5)
Bending Over, Wagging the Tail to Calm Heart-Fire.  (6)
The Big Bear Turns From Side to Side.  (7)
Bending the Trunk and Stretching the Neck.  (8)
The Constant Bear

**Comments**

"It means "ch'ang" or constant, and refers to the constant, daily swinging to and fro of the bear's waist. So, this move should be called The Constant Bear.
The Constant Bear combines the Five Animal Frolics and t'ai chi into a single move.” p. 114
"I bequeath the Constant Bear movement to the elderly, the sick, and the frail.
It is a wonderful, traditional exercise which is both simple and easy. You can also
use it for self-defense until you are years old. All this is easily obtained.
Although my explanation is short and simple, if you understand its principles and practice
with perseverance, after as few as one hundred days of moving your chi, you
will notice a marked improvement in health and strength and no longer need to
worry about illness. It is truly a "sacred raft" to strengthen our bodies and bears no
semblance to other well known yet inferior exercises.” p. 115

Great Bear Steps

Return to the Main Index

8. Touching the Toes then Bending Backwards
Starting Position

Movement

Coming in June 2004.

Variations to the Movement

Details

Health Benefits

Details

References  (See below for reference sources.)

Touch Toes to Reinforce Kidneys.  (1)
Touching the Feet with Both Hands Reinforces the Kidneys and Loins. (2)
Two Hands Hold the Feet to Strengthen the Kidneys and Waist. (3)
Touch the Sky, Press the Earth.  (4)
Reaching Toes with Both Hands to Strengthen the Kidneys and
Waist.  (5)
Toe Touching to Strengthen the Kidneys and Waist.  (6)
Touching the Toes then Bending Backwards.  (7)
Touching the Toes and Arching the Back.  (8)

Comments

Details

Return to the Main Index

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(1)  *The Ancient Way to Keep Fit*, complied by Zong Wu and Li Mao, 1992, pp.110-127.
(7)  *The Eight Section Brocade*, Michael P. Garofalo, 2004, 325Kb+
Ending Movement Options:

Waist Training Techniques  
Cultivating and Storing Chi Techniques  
Self-Massage Techniques

Coming in September 2004.
The Eight Trigrams of the I Ching

Eight Section Brocade

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[Thanks to Tristan and Carole for sending me some good links and references.]

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Ba Duan Gin - Die Acht Brokate.  Instructional videotape in German.
Ba Duan Gin (Hachi Dan Kin)  Les huit exercices del la soie. Phillipe Munn.  
Instructions in French and photographs.

Ba Duan Jin  By Mike Symonds.  Includes some good advice and 
cautions.  23Kb.

Ba Duan Jin  Features a videoclip of Professor Craig Turner performing 
this exercise.  
From his Wu style Tai Chi website.

Ba Duan Jin  By Howard Reid.  35K  Instructions and illustrations.

Ba Duan Jin  Videotape by Andy Susanto und Lilo Ambach.  In German.

Baduanjin  Includes illustrations of the eight postures.  Brief 
descriptions.  64Kb.

Baduanjin  By Howard Choy.  60Kb.  Detailed instructions and 
photographs.

Baduanjin " Brocade" Exercises in Eight Forms  The Eight Treasures or 
Eight Sections  
(Baduan) Brocade (jin).  Seated and standing forms are explained and 
illustrated.  17K.

Ba Duan Jin: Chinesische Heilgymnastik.  Instructional videotape in 
German.

Ba Duan Jin: Eight Section Brocade.  Instructional videotape featuring 
Master Tang Lai Wei.  Qi Productions.
Ba Duan Jin - Eight Strands of the Brocade  35Kb.

Ba Duan Jin: Les Huit Pieces de Brocart.  Explanation in French.  27Kb.

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Produced by Wang, Xu-Dong.

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Mike Jacques.
Brief descriptions.

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Eight Strands of Silk Brocade Ch'i Kung (Qigong).  "Professor Mike Symonds discovered
that there are more than thirteen variations of this wonderful and
gentle exercise set.
Nowadays safety is paramount and some variations were far less
than safe for beginners.
Over several years, Professor Symonds gathered and analysed
information and came up
with the ‘Standardised Form’ of Pa Tuan Chin."

Beat Stress with the Eight Treasures.  By Faye Yip.  45 minute
instructional videotape.
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By Michael P. Garofalo. 28Kb+ List of the movements (.html and .pdf), links, bibliography, quotations, and notes.

Breathing Practices: Qigong, Taijiquan and Yoga (Pranayama)

Brocades - Artwork, banners, scrolls, mats.

El Brocado de las Trece Posiciones del Qigong. Por Alberto Navarrete López
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Comments and Praise for this Webpage


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Newsletter #11

Eight Pieces of Silk Brocade

Eight Pieces of Silk Brocade. Includes illustrations.

Eight Section Brocade. Instructional videotape by James McNeil.

Eight Section Brocade. Brief instructions with photographs of movements. By Jiawen Miao. 30K.

Eight Section Brocade - Wing Lam Kung Fu. Videotape. Song Dynasty Qigong Eight Section Brocade

Eight Section Brocade. By Jiang Jian-ye. Videotape 76 minutes. Teaches the ever popular Song Dynasty qigong system.

Eight Section Brocade Chi Kung. By Michael P. Garofalo. 325Kb+. Descriptions of the eight movements, comments, variations, links, bibliography, quotations, and charts.


Eight Sections of Silk. By Joe Hing Kwok Chu. 67K. Information on acupressure massage and stretching movements.

Eight Silk Movements. Tak Wah Kung Fu Club. Illustrations and


Eight Steps of Brocade  Instruction on a videotape by Yu Ding Hai.

Eight Strands of the Brocade  5K.

"Eight Treasures from Old China: Baduanjin - The Eight Brocade Exercises" by Foen Tjoeng Lie.  

Eight Treasures Qi Gong  By Michael P. Garofalo.  325Kb.  Descriptions of the movements, comments, links, bibliography, quotations, and charts.


Exercise Danger: 30 Exercises to Avoid plus 100 Safer and More Effective Alternatives.  By Grant Donovan, Jane McNamara, and Peter Gianoli.  Wellness
"The Eye of the Beholder." By David Life. "The practice of Drishti is a gazing technique that develops concentration- and teaches you to see the world as it really is." *Yoga Journal,* February 2002, pp. 73-76.

Feedback or complaints about this webpage?

Five Elements and Eight Brocades of Silk. Chi Kung Series, Volume 1. VHS videotape, 45 Minutes.

Gil Otto Broccati or Ba Duan Jin. Studion de un'antica pratica de qigong ancora molto diffuse in Cina. By Maria Luisa Vocca. Good instructions, with photographs, in Italian. 37Kb.

Ginnastica Cinese: Stretching e Pa Tuan Chin. In Italian. 24Kb.


Green Way Research, Red Bluff, California

How Can I Get My Product Reviewed or Listed Here?

*Knocking at the Gate of Life and Other Healing Exercises from China.*

Kuldtikandi Harjutus: Baduanjin 18Kb.

Kudos and Praise for this Webpage

Las 8 Piezas del Brocado: Ba Duan Jin. Very good Instructions in Spanish, with drawings. 35Kb.

Separating Heaven and Earth #3
Las 8 Piezas del Brocado

Las 8 Piezas del Brocado Sentado: Ba Duan Jin. Instructions in Spanish
for the seated version. 13Kb.

**Longevity Arts of Tibet and China**

**Pa Tuan Chin**  (8 Section Brocade) Information from the UCT Tai Chi Club. 4K. A list of the benefits of each movement.

**Pa Tuan Chin** Includes photos and instructions. In the German language. 15Kb.

**Pa Tuan Chin Course**  Norfork, England.

Pa Tuan Chin. By H. F. Xue. Wan Li Book Co., Hong Kong.

**Pa Tuan Chin and Pa Kua**  German language.

**Qigong**  Kodai No Bushido. 16Kb.


**Qigong and Tai Chi Chuan: Health Benefits**

**Qigong and Taoism**

Qi Gong Bibliography and Webliography.  By Michael P. Garofalo.
40Kb+

The Eight Trigrams of the I Ching

MGC. Very good photographs, clear descriptions, useful supplementary information and instruction.

Qigong for Health.  By Emilio Gonzalez and George Wedemeyer.
Instructional videotape set, 2 Volumes.

Qigong for Self-Healing 12K

Qigong Links Over 1,000 links from DMOZ/Google.

Qigong Links Compiled by Michael P. Garofalo.

Qigong Styles

Qigong Teachings of a Taoist Immortal. By Stuart Alve Olson. 12K.

Qigong Teachings of a Taoist Immortal: The Eight Essential Exercises of Master Li Ching-Yun. By Stuart Alve Olson. Heavenly Arts Press. 192 pages. ISBN: 0892819456. Excerpts "Throughout history Taoists have promoted the development and restoration of the Three Treasures - body, breath, and spirit - through the gentle practice of qigong. At the center of the qigong practice are the Eight Brocades, a series of postures that developed during the 3,000-year Taoist quest for longevity and vitality. Now qigong expert Stuart Olson translates into English Master Li Ching-yun's treasured teachings on the Eight Brocades. One of the most famous qigong masters of this century, Master Li Ching-yun is reliably chronicled to have lived more than 250 years, during which he practiced the Eight Brocades on a daily basis. His longevity and personal endorsements attest to and validate the Eight Brocades as the quintessence of Taoist health and qigong practices." The Tao of Books
Relaxation *(Sung, Song)*: Links, bibliography, quotes, notes.

**Rochester Chen Taijiquan Ba Duan Jin**  Excellent and clear instructions. 15Kb.


**Shaolin Ba Duan Jin**  In the Check language. 15Kb.

**Shaolin Ba Duan Jin.**  Brief directions for each movement and larger instructive photographs of a demonstration of the form by Shi Xing Xi, Shaolin warrior monk and head coach.
Shaolin Ba Duan Jin

Shaolin Meditation

*Simple Fitness Exercises: Traditional Chinese Movements for Health & Rejuvenation.*
Both a basic form (The Gentleman's ESB, pp. 31-54) and a more advanced form (The Warrior's ESB, pp. 55-76) taught in this book using descriptions and photographs.

*Song Dynasty Qi Gong Eight Section Brocade.* Instructional videotape featuring Shihfu Jiang Jian.


*Strength Training: Taijiquan, Qigong, Kung Fu and Yoga*
Sung (Song) - Relaxation

Sun Style Taijiquan

Tai Chi for Arthritis. DVD. Narwee, Australia, East Action Video, 1997. 80 Minutes.
DVD format. In 4 languages: English, Spanish, French, and Chinese (Mandarin).
Created by Paul Lam, M.D., a family physician in Sydney, Australia and internationally acclaimed Tai Chi Chuan teacher. This work is supported by
the Arthritis Foundation of Australia. Reviews A VHS videotape is also available. Some of the warm up exercises in this program are part of the Eight Treasures.

Taijiquan for Good Health, Fitness and Vitality

Demonstration videotape, 70 minutes.

Taoism and Taijiquan


Taoist Qigong for Health and Vitality: A Complete Program of
Movement, Meditation, and

Thirteen Treasures Walking Qigong. By Michael P. Garofalo.
Taijiquan Classics

*Tuna and Daoyin Brief Explanation*


Walking and Tai Chi Chuan Quotes, links, bibliography, and notes. By Michael P. Garofalo.

The Big Bear Turns From Side to Side, #7
Drawing by Nadezda Kotrchova
Shaking the Head and Wagging the Tail to Eliminate the Heart-Fire

The Way of Energy: Mastering the Chinese Art of Internal Strength with Chi Kung Exercise.


Where can I purchase these books and videotapes?


Yang Family Traditional Tai Chi Chuan Long Form, 108 Movements. By Michael P. Garofalo. 95Kb+ Provides a list of the movements divided into five sections for teaching (.html and .pdf versions available). Includes a bibliography, links, notes, and quotations. Provides a list comparing the Yang Long Form
108 to 85 postures sequence.

Zhong Li-quan, Zhang Liquan, (Chung Li-chüan, Zhongli Quan, Chong Li-quan):
Notes 1, Notes 2.

Zhang Liquan (Chong Li-quan)
One of the Eight Taoist Immortals
Legendary Practitioner of the Eight Treasures Qigong

Eight Section Brocade
"This exercise consists of eight sections (forms), which the ancients thought as beautiful as brocade, hence its name. To practice this exercise one must keep a tranquil mind, concentrate the mind on Dantian (elixir field), pose as if the head is suspended, keep your mouth shut with the tongue-tip resting on the palate, keep the eyes looking straight forward, relaxing the body as a whole, and breathing naturally. It's practiced in the morning and evening in fresh air for 15-30 minutes each time. In addition, Baduanjin can be used as a warm up exercise."
- Baduanjin

"Wen Ba Duan is the essential basic set of exercises practiced by Shaolin Monks both prior to, and following their daily long hours of training. The Shaolin Temple, famous as the birthplace of Chinese Martial Arts, was built in 495 AD, and this set of exercises has been documented as having a history in excess of 800 years. The exercises known as Eight Golden Treasures consist of two main parts: the standing forms (Wu Ba Duan) and the seated forms (Wen Ba Duan). Wen Ba Duan emphasizes the internal nature of these exercises in that its principle aim is the cultivation of qi without excessive physical movements of the external Wu Ba Duan. Wen Ba Duan combines the qi cultivation of the mind (yi), deep breathing (tu na), gentle exercise (dao yin) and therapeutic self massage (an mo)."
- Tai Chi Australia
"These are mainly stretching exercises coming from the Shaolin Monastery which is well known for its martial arts. They are the preliminary exercises of the martial arts, including eye exercises, massaging points, stretching, and punching. Traditionally these are not classified as neigong exercise. The name "eight sections of silk," also translated as "eight pieces of brocade," is a misnomer. The correct name is "pull and break tendons."

- Joe Hing Kwok Chu, *Eight Sections of Silk*

"Chinese medical chi-gung emphasizes soft, slow, rhythmic movements of the body synchronized with deep diaphragmic breathing. The purpose of these exercises is to stretch the tendons, loosen the joints, and tone the muscles, to promote circulation of blood, and to regulate all the vital functions of the body. The medical school adapted many forms of 'moving meditation' exercise for therapeutic use, including the ancient *dao-yin* and 'Play of the Five Beasts' forms based on animal movements, martial forms such as 'Eight Pieces of Brocade' and Tai Chi Chuan, and special exercises developed specifically to treat various internal organs."


"China's health-preserving ways of long standing - the technique of *Daoyin*, meant to activate limbs and the trunk through mind-directed exertion of inner force with simultaneous movements of body-bending and back-inclining, and the extending with withdrawing of limbs; and the technique of *Tuna* consisting of deep breathing exercises of the abdomen - are recorded in the writings of such fourth century B.C.
Many scholars attribute the development of the Eight Section Brocade to General (Marshall) Yeuh Fei in the 11th century AD. Others have a different opinion. Stuart Alve Olson, a scholar and Tai Chi Chuan master states:

"Pa Tuan Chin, the Eight Pieces of Brocade, is a very ancient form of Tao Yin (Taoist breathing exercises) attributed to Chung Li-ch'uan (also known as Han Chung-li) of the Han Dynasty. Chung Li-ch'uan was the teacher of Lu Tung-pin, one of the Eight Immortals and founder of the Complete Reality Sect. The exercises of Pa Tuan Chin have also been attributed to Chen Tuan, the teacher of the famous Taoist immortal, Chang San-feng, who is credited with inventing T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Pa Tuan Chin has both seated and standing exercises, in both hard and soft styles."

*Cultivating the Ch'i*, 1993, Stuart Alve Olson, p. 138.

Hua T'o (110-207 A.D.) is one of the famous physicians of the Han Dynasty. In *The History of the Later Han*, Hua T'o wrote:

"Man's body must have exercise, but it should never be done to the point of exhaustion. By moving about briskly, digestion is improved, the blood vessels are opened, and illnesses are prevented. It is like a used doorstep which never rots. As far as Tao Yin (bending and stretching exercises) is concerned, we have the bear's neck, the crane's twist, and swaying the waist and moving the joints to promote long life. Now I have created the art called the Frolics of the Five Animals:
the Tiger, the Deer, the Bear, the Monkey, and the Crane. It eliminates sickness, benefits the legs, and is also a form of Tao Yin. If you feel out of sorts, just practice one of my Frolics. A gentle sweat will exude, the complexion will become rosy; the body will feel light and you will want to eat."


"Down through the ages, the exercises as practised at Shaolin Temple have developed into the largest wushu school with hundreds of routines in different styles, from which many other schools have been derived. Of these mention may be made of Long boxing, "cannon and hammer" boxing, "six-in-one" boxing, baduanjin ("brocade" exercises in eight forms) which is said to have been revised by General Yue Fei (1103-1142) on the arhats' routine in 18 forms, the "stepping exercises" and "heart-and-will" school derived respectively from the dragon's and tiger's sections in Monk Bai Yufeng's routine imitating the five animals' movements, and the long-range boxing in 36 forms compiled by the First Emperor of the Song Dynasty (960-1279). The routines can be practiced solo, duet or trio, and barehand or with ancient weapons, particularly the cudgel which has earned great reputation for Shaolin Temple."

- China Sports Publications, *Shaolin Temple Wushu*

"*Ba Duan Jin* means literally "Eight Pieces of Silk Brocade." These eight exercises are elegant, graceful, and essential methods of qi cultivation. They were first described in an eight-century Daoist text, *Xiu Zhen Shi Shu* (The Ten Treatises on Restoring the original Vitality), in the Daoist Canon. Daoist tradition attributes the exercises to one of the Eight Immortals of Chinese folklore,
Chong Li-quan. Chong is frequently represented in Chinese art as a bald-headed, potbellied figure, with a white beard reaching to his navel. Chong had been a general during the Han Dynasty. When his army was defeated in a battle against the Tibetans, Chong withdrew into the mountains rather than face the Emperor's wrath. There he met a Daoist who transmitted to him dao-yin (qigong) "recipes" to create an inner elixir of long life. The Eight Brocades was one of these methods. Before he died, Chong inscribed the exercises on the walls of a cave. When another general, Lu Dong-bin, discovered the cave several centuries later, he followed the diagrams and also became a sage-Immortal. According to a statement in the Ten Treatises, it was General Lu himself who first described the exercise on stone.


Zhang Liquan (Chong Li-quan)
One of the Eight Taoist Immortals
Legendary Practitioner of the Eight Treasures Qigong
"Ba Duan Jin first appears in writing in an eighth century Taoist text, *Ten Treatises on Restoring Original Vitality.* It is also explained in an ancient Chinese text called the *Dao Shu*, compiled during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279 AD). This version is derived from still another Chinese military hero, Marshal Yeuh Fei (1103-1142 AD). He recorded each of the movements in the form of a poem that explained its execution and purpose, and taught them to his soldiers to improve their health, stamina and martial art skills."
- Stanley D. Wilson, *Qi Gong for Beginners*, 1997, p. 19

"The Eight Strands of Silk Brocade are indeed a fine suit of clothes. It has been said that Baduanjin is the most popular qigong exercise set in the world. It is plain to see why. By practising the whole set of eight exercises in a similar manner to Taijiquan one can expect to see significant changes in health and vitality within six months, more subtle changes within a year and greater changes within five years."
- Shihfu Mike Symonds, *Ba Duan Jin*

"The Eight Strands of Silk Brocade are an extremely fine set of eight Qigong exercises. They are learned and then practised as one complete, unbroken form; each movement of each of the eight exercises being repeated eight times before doing the next exercise in sequence. Like most of the best things in life they are simple, easy to learn, easy to perform and taking only 14 - 18 minutes to do every morning and night. This is the way to improve
health and well-being in a relaxed and easy manner. The only
thing which stands in anyone's way is their own
laziness or lack of self-discipline."
- The Eight Strands of Silk Brocade

"The most recent evidence of the long history of these movements
[Qigong exercises] comes from a silk book
unearthed in 1979, known as the *Dao Ying Xing Qi Fa* ("Method of
Inducing the Free Flow of Chi"). The book
dates from the Western Han Dynasty, which ran from 2064 BC to AD24,
and bears 44 drawings of men and
women in exercise positions resembling the Ba Duan Jin."

“Baduanjin”, which literally translates as “eight pieces of silken
brocade”, has always been a very popular exercise
in China. Its unusual name derives from the fact that the Chinese
character for silken brocade – ‘jin’ – also has
the archaic meaning of that of a set of exercises composed of
different movements. Hence the title “eight pieces
of silken brocade” can be interpreted more accurately as “an
exercise composed of eight sets of movements”.
Baduanjin has a written history of over 800 years. During this
period of time, many modifications and innovations
have been added to the original form. Although the variations are
numerous, they can be broadly categorised
into themes related to the seated and to the standing postures, with
the latter further sub-divided into the ‘Northern’
and the ‘Southern’ styles."
- Howard Choy, Baduanjin
The Eight Trigrams of the *I Ching*

**Eight Section Brocade**
# Eight Trigrams Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise</th>
<th>Trigram</th>
<th>Parts of the Body Stimulated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pressing the Heavens</td>
<td>Heaven, Sky, Air, Chien, South</td>
<td>Stomach, Liver, Heart, Lungs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Drawing the Bow</td>
<td>Wind, Sun, Southwest</td>
<td>Lungs, Eyes, Legs, Kidneys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Separate Heaven and Earth</td>
<td>Earth, Kun, North</td>
<td>Stomach, Pancreas, Spleen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wise Owl Gazes Backward</td>
<td>Water, Kan, West</td>
<td>Spleen, Immune System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Punching with Angry Gaze</td>
<td>Fire, Li, East</td>
<td>Liver, Blood, Heart, Eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Big Bear Turns from Side to Side</td>
<td>Mountain, Ken, Northwest</td>
<td>Heart, Waist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Touching Toes then Bending Back</td>
<td>Lake, Tui, Southeast</td>
<td>Kidneys, Waist, Legs, Back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cloud Hands - Yun shou
Michael P. Garofalo's E-mail

Valley Spirit T'ai Chi Ch'uan Club

Red Bluff, Tehama County, North Sacramento Valley, Northern Central California, U.S.A.
Cities in the area: Oroville, Paradise, Durham, Chico, Hamilton City, Orland, Willows, Corning, Rancho Tehama, Los Molinos, Tehama, Proberta, Gerber, Manton, Cottonwood, Anderson, Shasta Lake, Palo Cedro, and Redding, CA, California.

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Zen Poetry

Cuttings: Haiku and Short Poems

Cold Mountain Sages

The Spirit of Gardening
Cloud Hands: Tai Chi Chuan and Chi Kung Website

Tai Chi Chuan, Taijiquan, T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Tai Chi, Tai Ji Quan, Taiji, Tai Ji Chuan

Chi Kung, Qi Gong, Qigong, Chee Gung, Qi, Chi, Tu Na, Dao Yin, Yi, Neigong, GongFu, Kung Fu,
Ch'i gung, Ch'i Kung, Ba Dun Gin, Baduanjin, Ba Dwan Gin
Pan Dan Gum, Eight Silken Movements, Pa Tuan Chin, Pa Tin Kam (Cantonese)
Otto Pezzi di Tesoro

Eight Treasures Qigong, Eight Silken Treasures Chi Kung, Ba Duan Jin Qigong,
Ba Duan Jin Chi Kung, Eight Section Brocade Qigong, Eight Pieces of Brocade Qigong,
Eight Pieces of Silk Chi Kong

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