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Taichi Ba Fa by Master Chen Huixian

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Master Chen demonstrated Outward Reeling

Taichi Ba Fa is the fundamental technique for all Taichi styles and forms including Push-hands. It is crucial for the practitioner who prefers to use Taichi as a martial art for combat or self-defense applications to understand how it works and how to execute it correctly.

Ba is the phonetic translation of the number eight in Chinese and **Fa** means methods. In short, **Ba Fa** is eight different methods. The eight methods are grouped into two sub-categories: **Si Zheng** (aka Four Square Front methods or techniques) and Si Yu (aka Four Diagonal methods or techniques). **Si Yu** sometimes is considered the four secondary directions. During a [workshop](#) in St. Louis, Missouri, Master Chen Huixian clearly explained it and its martial art functions.

Si Zheng includes **Peng** (ward-off), **Lu** (diversion or rollback), **Ji** (Squeezing) and **An** (Pressing downwards).

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Peng represents a sense of buoyancy or uplifted spirit. Master Chen explains that the Peng movement is actually more than just ward-off vertically an incoming attacking force by spiraling upwards and outwards. Actually, *Peng* is the center of all Taichi Chuan (*quan*). The energy of Peng should be present throughout all Taichi forms. A typical example is the outward circling in Silk Reeling (see photo above) and the movement of circling the right arm during the Lazily Tying the Coat (*Lan Zha Yi*).

Lu is an oblique drawing movement which can go upwards or



Cloud Hand practice

downwards. *Lu* is a powerful method to lead an attacker to emptiness or divert his force. *Lu* is sometimes translated into “roll back”. Master Chen says that Cloud Hand is a good example of how *Peng* and *Lu* work together.

Ji has a complicated concept. It is used when an attacker is going backwards. It follows the withdrawing of energy by an attacker with a horizontal spiral movement to “squeeze” into an attacker. Oftentimes, it is used with the shoulder movement first, outside of the forearm second and complete it with a hand movement of Peng. A good example is Single Whip (*Dan Bian*) with the left shoulder leading the *Ji* effort.

An is commonly used in Taichi forms. Master Chen uses Six Sealing and Four Closing (*Liu Feng Si Bi*) as an example which we move hands close to left ear and then press downwards. An can be used in a forward direction like Double Hand Front Push (*Shuang Tui Shou*).



Master Chen demonstrated **Lie**

Si Yu is **Cai** (plucking), **Lie** (splitting), **Zhou** (elbowing) and **Kao** (bumping). These four methods assist the first four techniques.

Cai is performed with both hands to create a leverage force. It will redirect an attacker's force and can cause him to lose his balance. It is very powerful in Push Hands. Cannon Right Overhead Punch (*Dang Tou Pao*) is a good example of this method according to Master Chen.

Lie is used the power of the core or waist. It is executed with both arms and a rapid movement to cause an attacker's imbalance. Master Chen says there are many examples in Old Frame Routine Two (aka Cannon Fist).

Zhou is using the elbows to attack. It can be done horizontally, vertically, and diagonally. It can be performed with the tip of the elbow or the forearm. During the Hidden Hand Punch (*Yan Shou Gong Chuan*), the left elbow delivers a Zhou.

Kao is a close-range technique. Mostly it is performed with a shoulder but it can also be done with knees, hips or even the chest. It requires fajing and the energy from the core should be released momentarily. Master Chen says that Hit and Drape Fist Over Body (*Pie Shen Chuan*) is a good example.

Since the concept of the **Ba Fa** is hard to translate, Master Chen explained them in English but opted to use the Chinese names during the workshops so the practitioners will not fixate on certain English words. Master Huixian provided good examples during the workshops which really helped the students to grasp the ideas.



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