

形意拳谱 *Xíngyìquánpǔ* 'Form Mind Fist Manual'

Excerpts of translations by Tyler J. Rowe
Completed Annotations & Commentaries to be published as a future text



六合 *Liùhé* 'Six Combinations'

身成六式	<i>Shēnchéng liùshù</i>	'The body becomes six forms
鸡腿龙身	<i>jītǔ lóngshēn</i>	rooster legs dragon body
鹰爪熊膀	<i>yīngzhǎo xióngbǎng</i>	eagle claws bear shoulders ¹
虎抱雷声	<i>hǔbào léishēng</i>	tiger embrace ² thunder clap ³

1. It is interesting to note that eagle and bear are paired here as in the 十二形拳 *Shi'èrxíngquán* 'Twelve Animal Form Fists' of *Xingyiquan*.
2. Some manuals read 虎抱头 *Hǔbàotóu* 'Tiger embrace head' or 'Tiger's head embrace'. The addition breaks the 4 character per line continuity and is largely redundant in the explanation as this does not relate to the practitioner's head but instead their chest and arms.
3. Some manuals leave out these last two characters 雷声 *Léishēng* 'Thunder clap' or 'The sound of Thunder', again breaking the 4 character per line continuity, likely due to difficulty in interpretation. The result of which is only five combinations and therefore incorrect.

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六合 *Liùhé* 'Six Harmonies'¹

手与足合	<i>Shǒuyǔzú hé</i>	'Hands with feet harmonise
肩与胯合	<i>jiānyǔkuà hé</i>	shoulders with hips harmonise
肘与膝合	<i>zhǒuyǔxī hé</i>	elbows with knees harmonise
心与意合	<i>xīnyǔyì hé</i>	heart with mind harmonises
意与气合	<i>yìyǔqì hé</i>	mind with qi harmonises
气与力合	<i>qìyǔlì hé</i>	qi with power harmonises'

1. The word 'harmony' is used here in translation of Chinese 合 *hé*. Previously this was translated as 'combination' in the *Liùhé* 'Six Combinations' to differentiate the two songs with identical names. Often the two are written together as one.

三节说 *Sānjiéshuō* Three Joints Theory

臂为梢节	<i>Bìwéi shāojié</i>	'Arms are the tip joints
身为中节	<i>shēnwéi zhōngjié</i>	body is the middle joint
腿为根节	<i>tuǐwéi gēnjié</i>	legs are the root joints'
手为梢节	<i>Shǒuwéi shāojié</i>	'Hands are the tip joints
肘为中节	<i>zhǒuwéi zhōngjié</i>	elbows are middle joints
肩为根节	<i>jiānwéi gēnjié</i>	shoulders are the root joints'
脚为梢节	<i>Jiǎowéi shāojié</i>	'Feet are the tip joints
膝为中节	<i>xīwéi zhōngjié</i>	knees are the middle joints
胯为根节	<i>kuàwéi gēnjié</i>	hips are the root joints'
头为梢节	<i>Tóuwéi shāojié</i>	'Head is the tip joint
心为中节	<i>xīnwéi zhōngjié</i>	heart is the middle joint
丹田为根节	<i>dānwéi gēnjié</i>	elixir field is the root joint'

八要说 *Bāyàoshuō* Eight Essential Teachings

一内要提	<i>Yīnèi yàotí</i>	'The internal must be lifted
三心要并	<i>sānxīn yàobìng</i>	three centres must merge
三意要连	<i>sānyì yàolián</i>	three minds must be linked
五行要顺	<i>wǔxíng yàoshùn</i>	five elements must flow
四梢摇齐	<i>sìshāo yáoqí</i>	four tips must move uniformly
一心要暇	<i>yīxīn yàoxiá</i>	whole heart must be at ease
三尖要对	<i>sānjiān yàoduì</i>	three points must be aligned
眼要毒也	<i>yǎnyào dúyě</i>	eyes must be fierce also'

九数歌 Jiǔshùgē 'Number Nine Song'

身	Shēn	'Body'
前俯后仰	Qiánfǔ hòuyǎng	'Bowing forward or backward
其步不劲	qíbù bùjìn	this stance will have no strength
左侧右倚	zuǒcè yòuyǐ	inclining to the left or leaning to the right
皆身之病	jiēshēn zhībìng	the whole body will be defective
正而似斜	zhèngér sìxié	therefore upright but appearing slanted
斜而似正	xiéér sìzhèng	oblique but appearing straight'
肩	Jiān	'Shoulder'
头宜上顶	Tóuyí shàngdǐng	The head should push upwards
肩宜下垂	jiānyí xiàchuí	the shoulders should drop down
左肩成拗	zuǒjiān chéngǎo	the left shoulder turns
右肩自随	yòujiān zìsuí	the right shoulder naturally follows
身力到手	shēnlì dào shuǒ	the body's power arrives at the hands
肩之所为	jiānzhī suǒwèi	the shoulder's position supports this'
臂	Bì	'Arms'
左臂前伸	Zuǒbì qiánshēn	'The left arm extends forward
右臂在肋	yòubì zàilèi	the right arm rests by the ribs
似曲非曲	sìqū fēiqū	appearing bent without being crooked
似直非直	sìzhí fēizhí	appearing straight without being stiff
过曲不远	guòqū bùyuǎn	too bent will not go far
过直少力	guòzhíshǎolì	too straight will have less power'
手	Shǒu	'Hands'
右手在肋	Yòushǒu zàilèi	'The right hand rests by the ribs
左手齐胸	zuǒshǒu qíxiōng	the left hand is level with the chest
后者微塌	hòuzhě wēitā	the rear hand is slightly sunken
前手力伸	qiánshǒu lìshēn	the front hand extend strongly
两手皆复	liǎngshǒu jiēfù	both hands each turn over
用力宜匀	yònglì yíyún	exertion of power should be even
指	Zhǐ	'Fingers'
五指各分	Wǔzhǐ gèfēn	'The five fingers are each separated
其形似钩	qíxíng shìgōu	their shape like hooks
虎口圆满	hǔkǒu yuánmǎn	the tiger's mouths completely rounded
似刚似柔	sìgāng sìróu	seeming hard but appearing soft
力须到指	lìxū dào zhǐ	power must arrive at the fingers
不可强求	bùkě jiàngqiú	but should not strive for unyielding'

股	Gǔ	'Thighs'
左股在前	Zuǒgǔ zàiqián	'The left thigh rests in front
右股后撑	yòugǔ hòuchēng	the right supports the rear
似直不直	sìzhí bùzhí	appearing to straighten but not straight
似弓不弓	sìgōng bùgōng	appearing to bow but not bowed
虽有直曲	suīyǒu zhìqū	although there is straightness there is crookedness
每见鸡行	měixiàn jīxíng	each looking like the shape of the chicken'
足	Zú	'Feet'
左足直前	Zuǒzú zhíqián	'The left foot is straight forward
斜则皆病	xiéze jiēbìng	all tilting from the standard is defective
右足势斜	yòuzú shìxié	the right foot's configuration is oblique
前踵对胫	qiánzhǒng duìjìng	the front heel is aligned with the shin
随人距离	suírén jùlí	distance apart is proportional to the individual
足趾扣定	zúzhǐ kòudìng	the toes of the foot grip for stability'
舌	Shé	'Tongue'
舌为肉梢	Shéwéi ròushāo	'The tongue is the extremity of the flesh
卷则气降	juǎnzé qìjiàng	when it is curled the qi normally descends
目张发耸	mùzhāng fāsǒng	when the eyes are open and the hair stands up
丹田愈沉	dāntián yùchén	the elixir field becomes heavy
肌容似铁	jīróng sìtiě,	when the muscles hold like iron
内坚脏腑	nèijiān zàngfǔ	inside the internal organs are solid
臀	Tún	'Buttocks'
提起臀部	Tíqǐ túnbù	'Raise up the buttocks
气贯四梢	qìguàn sìshāo	the qi flows to the four tips
两腿缭绕	liǎngtuǐ liáorǎo	if both legs wind around
臀部肉交	túnbù ròujiāo	the flesh of the buttocks meet
低则式散	dīzé shìsǎn	if this drops below standard the posture is lost
故宜较高	gùyí jiàogāo	therefore it is appropriate to be relatively higher'

八字诀 Bāzìjué 'Eight Character Secret'¹

顶	Dǐng	'Propping' ²
头要上顶	Tóuyào shàngdǐng	'Head must prop upward
手掌要顶	shǒuzhǎng yàodǐng	palms of hands must prop outward
舌要上顶	shéyào shàngdǐng	tongue must prop upward'
扣	Kòu	'Closing'
两肩要扣	Liǎngjiān yàokòu	'Both shoulders must close
手背要扣	shǒubèi yàokòu	backs of the hands close
牙齿要扣	yáchǐ yàokòu	teeth must close'
圆	Yuán	'Rounding'
脊背要圆	Jǐbèi yàoyuán	'Back of the spine must round
前胸要圆	qiánxiōng yàoyuán	front of the chest must round
虎口要圆	hǔkǒu yàoyuán	tiger's mouth ³ must round'
敏	Mǐn	'Quickening'
一心要敏	Yìxīn yàomǐn,	'Whole heart ⁴ must be quick
两眼要敏	liǎngyǎn yàomǐn	both eyes must be quick
两手要敏	liǎngshǒu yàomǐn	both hands must be quick'
抱	Bào	'Embracing'
丹田要抱	Dāntián yàobào	'Elixir field ⁵ must be embraced
心气要抱	xīnqì yàobào	heart qì ⁶ must be embraced
两肋要抱	liǎngbèi yàobào	both ribs must be embraced'
垂	Chuí	'Hanging'
气要下垂	Qìyào xiàchuí	'Qi must downward hang
两肩下垂	liǎngjiān xiàchuí	both shoulders must downward hang
两肘下垂	liǎngzhǒu xiàchuí	both elbows must downward hang'
曲	Qū	'Bending' ⁷
两臂要曲	Liǎngbì yàoqū	'Both arms must bend
两膝要曲	Liǎngxī yàoqū	both knees must bend
手腕要曲	shǒuwàn yàoqū	both wrists must bend'
挺	Tǐng	'Extending' ⁸
颈项要挺	Jǐngxiàng yàotǐng	'Neck must be extended
脊腰要挺	jǐyāo yàotǐng	waist must be extended,
膝盖要挺	xīgài yàotǐng	knee caps must be extended'

1. 诀 *Jue* 'Secret' could also be translated here as 'formula' or 'knack'. It implies a secret way of doing something.

2. 顶 *Ding* 'Propping' could also be translated as 'Crown'

3. 虎口 *Hukou* 'Tiger's mouth' is the Chinese descriptive anatomical name of the area between the thumb and forefinger.

4. 一心 *Yixin* 'Wholehearted' this mirrors the western notion of 'heart and soul', suggesting being of one mind, the entire non-physical being.

5. 丹田 *Dantian* 'Elixir field' much could be written on this, but put simply it is the lower energy centre of the body, an area roughly three finger widths below the naval that corresponds (from a material perspective) in many ways with the modern concept of 'core stability'.

6. 心气 *Xinqi* 'Heart qì' here refers to the Chinese philosophical notion of the heart as the seat of the consciousness and housing the spirit, therefore the 'mind'.

7. 曲挺 *Qu* and *Ting* 'Bending' and 'Extending', often misleadingly translated as 'Bent' and 'Straight' although in apparent opposition these should not be confused as a paradox, merely the idea of not being overly stiff or too crooked.

8. See note 7.

四梢说 *Sìshāo shuō* 'Doctrine of the Four Tips'

血梢	<i>Xuèshāo</i>	'Blood Tip'
怒气填胸	<i>Nùqì tiánxiōng</i>	'Anger fills the chest
竖发冲冠	<i>shūfā chōngguān</i>	standing up the hair rushing to the crown
血轮速转	<i>xuèlún sùzhuàn</i>	the blood circulates quickly around
敌胆自寒	<i>dídǎn zìhán</i>	the opponent's gallbladder is cold
发毛虽微	<i>fāmáo suīwēi</i>	goosebumps even if minutely
摧敌不难	<i>cuidí bùnnán</i>	can break the opponent without difficulty'
肉梢	<i>Ròushāo</i>	'Flesh Tip'
舌卷气降	<i>Shéjuǎn qìjiàng</i>	'The tongue rolls up and the qi lowers
虽山亦撼	<i>suīshān yìhàn</i>	even if mountains also shake
肉坚似铁	<i>ròujiān sìtiě</i>	the flesh is hard like iron
精神勇敢	<i>jīngshén yǒnggǎn</i>	the essential spirit brave and courageous
一言之威	<i>yīyán zhīwēi</i>	a single word is so mighty
落魄丧胆	<i>luòlài sàngdǎn</i>	falling instinct and losing the gallbladder
骨梢	<i>Gǔshāo</i>	'Bone Tip'
有勇在骨	<i>Yǒuyǒng zàigǔ</i>	'There is bravery within bone
切齿则发	<i>qièchǐ zéfā</i>	gnashing teeth follows an impression
敌肉可食	<i>díròu kěshí</i>	that the opponent's flesh can be eaten
毗裂目突	<i>zìliè mùtū</i>	gaze narrowed eyes glaring
唯齿之功	<i>wéichǐ zhīgōng</i>	only the teeth's skill
令人恍惚	<i>lìngrén huǎnghū</i>	can cause a person to be suddenly entranced'
筋梢	<i>Jīnshāo</i>	'Sinew Tip'
虎威鹰猛	<i>Hǔwēi yīngměng</i>	'A Tiger's might and an eagle's ferocity
以爪为锋	<i>yǐzhǎo wéifēng</i>	is because of claws acting as weapon-points
手劣足踏	<i>shǒujié zútà</i>	hands seize and feet stamp
气势兼雄	<i>qìshì jiānxióng</i>	momentum doubly imposing
爪之所到	<i>zhǎozhī suǒdào</i>	a claws' place reached
皆可奏功	<i>jiēkě zòugōng</i>	all can achieve skill'