

CHIANG JUNG CHIAO

Guidelines for Bagua Zhang

1. Straighten the neck; lift the crown; tuck the buttocks. Do not look up; do not look down. Do not lean right; do not lean left.
2. Relax the shoulders, sink the elbows. Strengthen the belly; open the chest. While practicing, do not lift the shoulders. The elbows embrace and form crescent moons. The belly is for nurturing qi. You must allow breathing to move deep within, down to the belly. This will fill the abdomen with qi. "Qi sinks to the dantien; internally there is a vibration." is an old saying. If the chest is pushed out it will affect the breath. Simply relax and open the chest, do not lift or depress it.
3. Rolling, Drilling, Pressing, Wrapping: opposite forces arise together. These are qing li, the action of energy encountered during practice. Rolling is a circular coiling of the arms. Drilling is a spiral forward of the hands. Pressing means pressing apart. Wrapping means to embrace within. These four types of movement contract the muscles to generate strength. They are completely circular and without linear aspects. Within rolling there must be drilling. Two contradictory forms of energy the forward moving and the outward moving are thereby brought together. This is to move like a propeller or screw. Similarly, there must be wrapping within pressing. Here there is a distance between contraction and expansion. We can say that the energy of Bagua derives from the mutual opposition of these four forces.
4. Dragon form, monkey appearance, tiger sitting, eagle over-turning. This refers to four important points in one's practice: walking, looking, sitting, overturning. The stepping should be circular, flowing without break, then you will look like a wandering dragon. And your posture will be stable.
While circling or changing the palms the eyes always pay attention to the palms. Hands and eyes follow each other. The gaze manifests the spirit. You should appear like a spritely monkey, either as he is startled or as he takes food. The spirit of a monkey is expressed by his eyes.
While circling, the legs never extend or straighten completely. Make sure you 'sit the kua' and maintain stability. This kind of squatting will make you look like a crouched tiger. In your sinking you will have strength. While turning the body, make sure you adopt the swift attitude of a hawk and eagle. They circle and spiral through the void. Overturn their bodies and gracefully descend.
5. Twist in a spiral as you circle; press the foot and scrape the calves.
While circling the waist should twist; the elbows should twist; the palms should twist; the neck should twist. This torque should give you a spiraling energy. The front foot should advance lightly; the shin-bones stick close and rub as they cross. Don't lift the foot too high or too wide.
6. Bend the legs, treading mud step; the arches of the feet are empty.
7. Lift the foot levelly; let it fall as if locking onto the ground. Your cross-wise stepping should be continuous. The intent does not break; the energy does not break; the movement does not break. All is connected by one qi.
8. The waist is like the axle; the hands are like the revolving wheel.
In Bagua the waist is the axis for all movement. For the hands to move, the body must move first. For the body to move, the waist must move first. While changing the palms, the hands should turn like a wheel. Your movements will thus be agile and continuous.
9. The fingers are separated; the palm is concave. The forearm is fixed towards the center; the shoulders are level.
10. Root like mountains and hills; step like water.
Rootedness refers to a tranquil nature of the movements. You should be firm and stable like a mountain. No force can push you away. Your stepping should be lively - quick and light like flowing water. Your stepping should neither be heavy and inert, nor floating and wild.
11. Fire above, water below; water is heavy, fire is light. The heart belongs to fire. The kidneys belong to water. Make the belly substantial and the chest empty.
12. The intent is like a waving flag or a bright lamp. In olden times the troops were guided by the banner and the light of the lamp. In Bagua intent and intention guide the movements.
13. The abdomen is the root of Qi; the qi is like floating clouds.
The breath should move slowly, like clouds in the sky. Do not force the breath.
14. The intention is clear and alert; qi moves through every pore.
15. Whether opening and discharging or closing and contracting, movement and tranquility should support each other.
16. Spirit, breath, intent, and force (shen, qi, I, li) are harmoniously coordinated.
The hands and the feet are in harmony. The shoulders and the kua are in harmony. The elbows and the knees are in harmony. The spirit and intent are in harmony. The qi and force are in harmony. Inner and outer are in harmony. (Six Harmonies).
17. The true principles of Bagua are in the above. If you do not follow them you will only learn an empty frame.