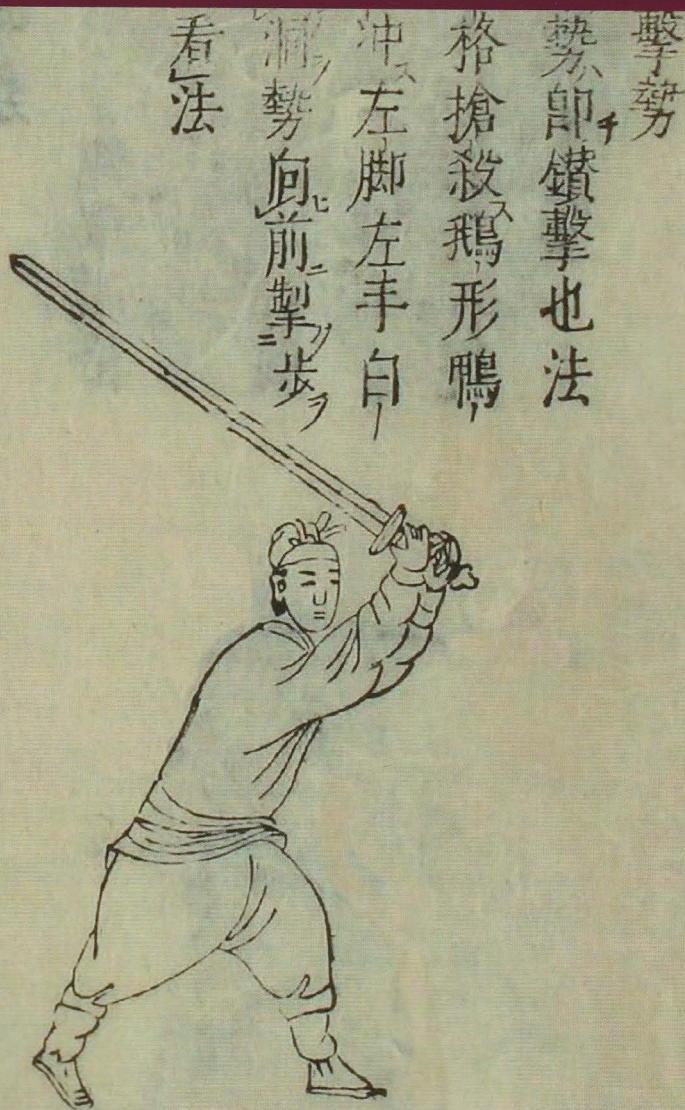


Ancient Art of Chinese Long Straight Sword

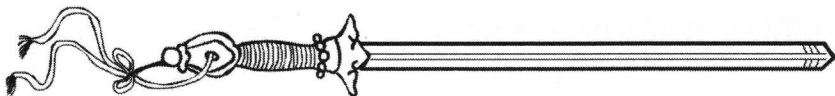
English Translation & Interpretation
Of A 400-Years-Old Martial Arts Manual



劍譜

Chinese Long Straight Sword

Translation & Interpretation
Of A 400 Years Old Martial Arts Manual



Originally written by *Mao Yuan-Yi*, Ming Dynasty China
Translated & Interpreted by Jack Chen

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武備志

wǔ bèi zhì

Military Preparation Manual

The 3rd Art, Straight-Sword, Scroll 86

〈劍〉

jiàn

The Straight-Sword

茅子曰

máo zi yuē

Mao-Zi said:

古之劍可施於戰鬥

gǔ zhī jiàn kě shī yú zhàn dòu

"In the past, swords were used in battle.

故唐太宗有劍士千人

gù táng tài zōng yǒu jiàn shì
qiān rén

*Tang-TaiZong (2nd Emperor of
Tang Dynasty) had a thousand
swordsmen."*

今其法不傳

jīn qí fǎ bù chuán

Today, these techniques are not passed on.

斷簡殘編中有訣歌

duàn jiǎn cán biān zhōng yǒu jué gē

In the bits and pieces that remained, there are songs that contained the secrets of the art.

不詳其說

bù xiáng qí shuō

Its words are unclear.

近有好事者得之朝鮮

jìn yǒu hǎo shì zhě dé zhī cháo xiǎn

Recently, it has been a great fortune to learn from the Koreans

其勢法俱備

qí shì fǎ jù bèi

Their complete stances and techniques.

固知

gù zhī

Admittedly

中國失而求之四裔

zhōng guó shī ér qiú zhī sì yì

The culture lost in China can be regained back from the Four Major Tribes.

不獨西方之等韻

bù dú xī fāng zhī děng yùn

Not only is “Deng Yun” back from the West.

Note: “Deng Yun” is a study of the pronunciation of Chinese characters.

日本之尚書也

rì běn zhī shàng shū yě

And also the “Shang Shu” back from the Japan.

Note: “Shang Shu” is China’s earliest history book.

備載於左

bèi zǎi yú zuǒ

Documentation is on the left.

Note: Historically, Chinese wrote from right-to-left, so this actually refers to the next page.

〈劍訣歌〉

jiàn jué gē

Sword Song

Note: Words in **bold** are the songs.
Non-bold words are its description.

電掣昆吾晃太陽

diàn zhì kūn wú huǎng tài
yáng

**Lightning-fast, the sword
attacks the Sun.**

Note:

- 昆吾 “Kun Wu” is a type of precious stone. In the Korean manual, Muyedobotongji, it is recorded: “Lie-Zi (author from the early Warring States period) said that in the Western Seas, there are many ‘Kun Wu’ rocks. When turned into metal and made into sabers and swords, they can cut jade as if it were mud.”

- “Sun” refers to 太陽穴 (tai yang xue), the temple on the sides of the head.

一升一降把身藏

yī shēng yī jiàng bǎ shēn
cáng

**Rising and lowering, hiding
the body behind the sword.**

左右四顧四劍

zuǒ yòu sì gù sì jiàn

**Left and right, guard the four
sides with the sword.**

搖頭進步風雷響

yáo tóu jìn bù fēng léi xiǎng

**Shake head and enter step.
The wind and thunder roars.**

滾手連環上下防

gǔn shǒu lián huán shàng xià
fáng

**Roll hands continuously,
defend high-and-low.**

開右足一劍

kāi yòu zú yī jiàn

**Right leg opens up (step
across) and make an attack.**

進左足一劍

jìn zuǒ zú yī jiàn

**Step in with left-leg and make
an attack.**

又左右各一劍收劍

yòu zuǒ yòu gè yī jiàn shōu
jiàn

**Make an attack both left-and-
right again. Resheathe sword.**

左進青龍雙探爪

zuǒ jìn qīng lóng shuāng tàn
zhuǎ

縮退二步開劍

suō tuì èr bù kāi jiàn

用右手十字撩二劍

yòng yòu shǒu shí zì liáo èr
jiàn

刺一劍

cì yī jiàn

右行單鳳獨朝陽

yòu xíng dān fèng dú cháo
yáng

用左手一刺

yòng zuǒ shǒu yī cì

跳進二步左右手各一挑

tiào jìn èr bù zuǒ yòu shǒu gè
yī tiǎo

Enter left with ***“Green-
Dragon Extends Both Claws”***

Retreat back 2 steps and
‘open’ sword.

Use right-hand to make 2
Upwards-Cut in a cross-shape
manner.

Deliver a thrust.

Move right with
***“Lone Phoenix Faces The
Sun”***.

Use left-hand to deliver a
thrust.

Jump in 2 steps. Left and right
hand, each does a “Flick”
technique.

左右手各一蓋

zuǒ yòu shǒu gè yī gài

Left and right hand, each does a "Cover" technique.

右手一門轉步

yòu shǒu yī mén zhuǎn bù

Right-hand strikes at a slight-angle, then make a turning step.

Note: "一門" refers to an angle of about 30-degrees from the front.

開劍作勢

kāi jiàn zuò shì

Open sword and make a stance.

撒花蓋頂遮前後

sǎ huā gài dǐng zhē qián hòu

"Scatter Flowers To Cover Top" to cover the front and back.

右滾花六劍開足

yòu gǔn huā liù jiàn kāi zú

Make 6 flowery deflection to the right.

Open step.

馬步之中用此方

mǎ bù zhī zhōng yòng cǐ fāng

Use this technique while in the "Horse-Stance".

蝴蝶雙飛射太陽

hú dié shuāng fēi shè tài yáng

右足進步右手來去一劍

yòu zú jìn bù yòu shǒu lái qù yī jiàn

左足進步左手一刺一晃

zuǒ zú jìn bù zuǒ shǒu yī cì yī huǎng

梨花舞袖把身藏

lí huā wǔ xiù bǎ shēn cáng

退二步從上舞下四劍

tuì èr bù cóng shàng wǔ xià sì jiàn

鳳凰浪翅乾坤少

fèng huáng làng chì qián kūn shào

**The “Butterflies Fly In Pairs”
technique attacks the Sun.**

Note: “Sun” = temple.

Step in right-leg.

Right-hand goes forth and back
to make an attack.

Step in left-leg.

Left-hand makes a thrust and
sway.

Use the

**“Pear-Flower Dances Its
Sleeves” technique to hide
body.**

Retreat 2 steps.

Dance 4 attacks from top to
bottom.

**Phoenix waves its wings.
The Universe is young.**

進右足

jìn yòu zú

Step in right-leg.

轉身張兩手仍翻手

zhuǎn shēn zhāng liǎng shǒu
réng fān shǒu

Turn around and extend both
hands flipped over.

左手一劍右手來去二劍

zuǒ shǒu yī jiàn yòu shǒu lái
qù èr jiàn

Left-hand makes an attack.
Right-hand go forth and back
to make 2 attacks.

左手又一劍開劍進右足

zuǒ shǒu yòu yī jiàn kāi jiàn
jìn yòu zú

Left-hand makes another
attack.
Open sword and enter right-
step.

掠膝連肩劈兩旁

lüè xī lián jiān pī liǎng páng

**Hunt for the knee till shoulder.
Make a splitting cut on both
sides.**

進步滿空飛白雪

jìn bù mǎn kōng fēi bái xuě

**Step in and use the “Sky Full
Of Flying Snow” technique.**

從下舞上四劍先右手

cóng xià wǔ shàng sì jiàn
xiān yòu shǒu

Dance 4 attacks from top to
bottom. Right-hand first.

回身野馬去思鄉

huí shēn yě mǎ qù sī xiāng

Turn around and do
“Wild-Horse Thinks of Home”.

右手抹眉一劍

yòu shǒu mǒ méi yī jiàn

Right-hand “wipe” (horizontal
cut) an attack to the eyebrow.

右手抹腳一劍

yòu shǒu mǒ jiǎo yī jiàn

Right-hand “wipe” an attack to
the leg.

抹眉一劍

mǒ méi yī jiàn

Make a “wipe eyebrow” attack
(horizontal cut at the eyebrow
level).

左手抹腰一劍

zuǒ shǒu mǒ yāo yī jiàn

Left-hand do a “wipe waist”
attack (horizontal cut at the
waist level).

一刺右劍一手收劍

yī cì yòu jiàn yī shǒu shōu
jiàn

Deliver a right thrust.
Keep sword.

〈朝鮮勢法〉

cháo xiǎn shì fǎ

初習

chū xí

眼法 擊法 洗法 刺法

yǎn fǎ jī fǎ xǐ fǎ cì fǎ

擊法有五

jī fǎ yǒu wǔ

豹頭擊 跨左擊 跨右擊

bào tóu jī kuà zuǒ jī kuà yòu jī

翼左擊 翼右擊

yì zuǒ jī yì yòu jī

Korean Techniques

Initial Practice

Observation Techniques.

Striking Techniques.

Deflecting Techniques.

Thrusting Techniques.

Five Striking Techniques

Leopard-Head Strike.

Step-Across Left Strike.

Step-Across Right Strike.

Left-Wing Strike.

Right-Wing Strike.

刺法有五

cì fǎ yǒu wǔ

逆鱗刺坦腹刺雙明刺

nì lín cì tǎn fù cì shuāng míng cì

左夾刺右夾刺

zuǒ jiá cì yòu jiá cì

格法有三

gé fǎ yǒu sān

舉鼎格旋風格御車格

jǔ dǐng gé xuàn fēng gé yù chē gé

洗法有三

xǐ fǎ yǒu sān

鳳頭洗虎穴洗騰蛟洗

fèng tóu xǐ hǔ xué xǐ téng jiāo xǐ

Five Thrusting Techniques

Reverse-Scales Thrust.

Flat-Stomach Thrust.

Double-Clear Thrust.

Left-Clamp Thrust.

Right-Clamp Thrust.

Three Blocking Techniques

Raise-Cauldron Block.

Whirlwind Block.

Drive-Wagon Block.

Three Deflecting Techniques

Phoenix-Head Deflect.

Tiger's Den Deflect.

Soaring Dragon Deflect.

24 Stances Of The Long Straight Sword

舉鼎勢

舉鼎，勢者卽舉鼎，
格也。法能鼎格，上
殺左腳，右手平擡，
勢向，而掣擊中殺，
退步，裙襖看，法。



1. 舉鼎勢 **Raise-Cauldron Stance**

jǔ dǐng shì

1. 舉鼎勢者即舉鼎格也

jǔ dǐng shì zhě jí jǔ dǐng gé yě

The **Raise-Cauldron Stance** is the “Raise-Top Block”.

2. 法能頂格上殺

fǎ néng dǐng gé shàng shā

This technique can block an attack from the top.

3. 左腳右手平擡勢

zuǒ jiǎo yòu shǒu píng tái shì

Left-Leg Right-Hand:
“Flat-Platform Stance”

4. 向前掣擊中殺

xiàng qián chè jī zhōng shā

Make a fast mid-region attack forward.

5. 退步裙攔

tuì bù qún lán

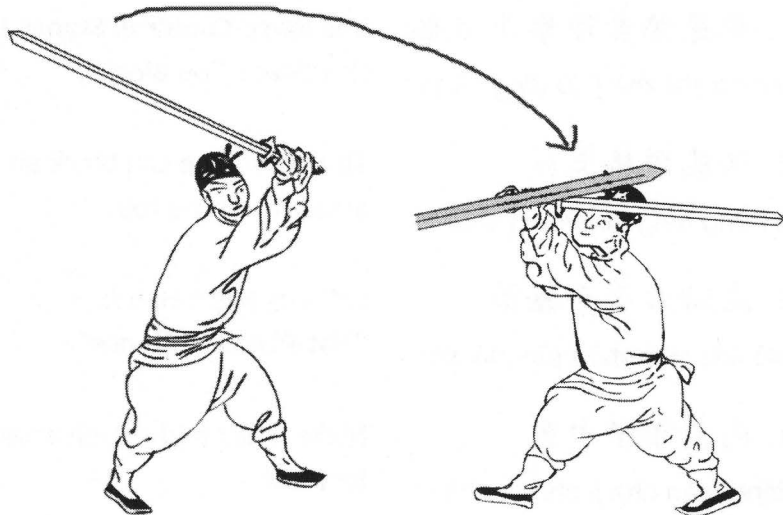
Retreat step and “swipe skirt”.

6. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Raise-Cauldron Stance”



Observably, this stance is used for blocking a downwards attack. Based on the 3rd verse, it is performed by positioning the left leg and right hand forward, and the sword is held horizontally flat.

However, you will be receiving the full blunt impact if your sword is blocking the enemy's perpendicularly. So the “block” should be only for a split second, because the 4th verse says that you must swiftly cut or attack the enemy's mid section, which is now exposed.

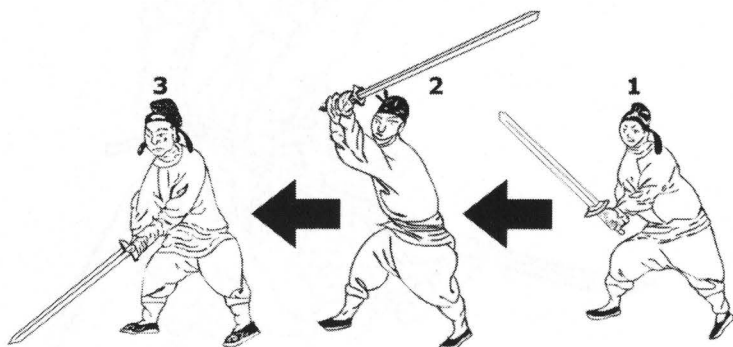


“Outer Watch Stance” – from Chinese Long Saber

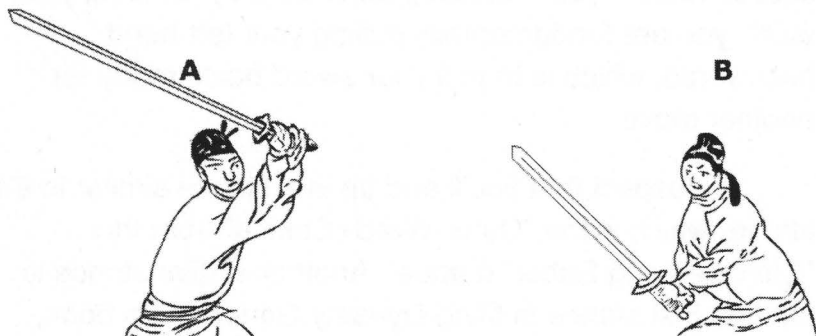
In the 5th verse, it says that after making the mid-section attack, you must step back. And by “swiping your skirt”, you are fundamentally pulling your left-hand backwards, which is to pull your sword back, ready for another move.

I suspect that you’ll end up in a stance similar to the above, which is the “Outer-Watch Stance” from the “Chinese Long Saber” manual. Another similar stance is the first Fist stance in Ming Dynasty General Qi’s book, “Casual Tuck Shirt” stance.

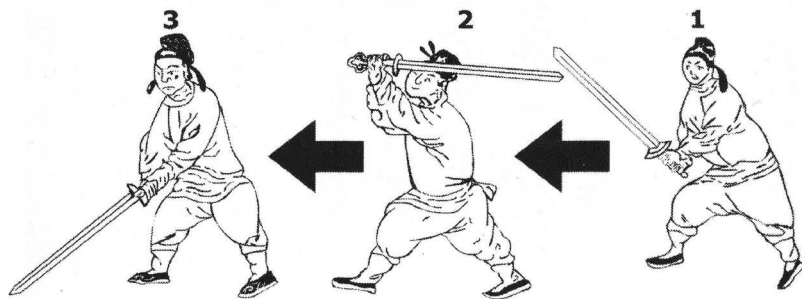
“Raise-Cauldron Stance” is the 1st stance in the manual. If this has any significance, I would think that it's because this stance represents a very important fundamental concept in sword fighting. Let me explain.



Suppose that you're in a sword fight, and you are holding your sword in front of you, like #1 above. To cut the enemy, you'd raise up your sword like #2, then cut down and end up in #3. This is how typically practice occurs too.



Now, imagine you're "B" in the depicted scenario. What do you think will happen? As you raise up your sword in stage #2, you'll be swiftly cut down by "A". You won't have the chance to reach stage #3.



The above is a better way, not only in an actual fight, but also in practice. Instead of just raising up your sword directly to make a cut, you raise your sword up to this "Raise-Cauldron Stance" instead. This will help to keep you safe as you prepare to cut down.

The footwork is synchronized with the sword too.

At Stage #1, you have your right-leg forward.

At Stage #2, you *walk* forward with your left-leg.

At Stage #3, you walk forward again with your right-leg to cut down.

Katori Shinto Ryu is a 600 years old Japanese sword style. They have a similar way of practicing their cuts, named as "*Maki-uchi*" (coiling strike).

點劍勢

點劍勢者即點劍
刺也法能偏閃奏
進搶殺右脚右手
撥草尋蛇勢向前
掣步御車格看法



2. 點劍勢

diǎn jiàn shì

Point-Sword Stance

1. 點劍勢者即點劍刺也

diǎn jiàn shì zhě jí diǎn jiàn cì yě

The **Point-Sword Stance** is the “Point-Sword Thrust”.

2. 法能偏閃奏進搶殺

fǎ néng piān shǎn zòu jìn qiǎng shā

This technique can evade to one side and enter to grab a kill.

3. 右腳右手撥草尋蛇勢

yòu jiǎo yòu shǒu bō cǎo xún shé shì

Right-Leg, Right-Hand: “Search for Snake in the Grass”.

4. 向前掣步御車格

xiàng qián chè bù yù chē gé

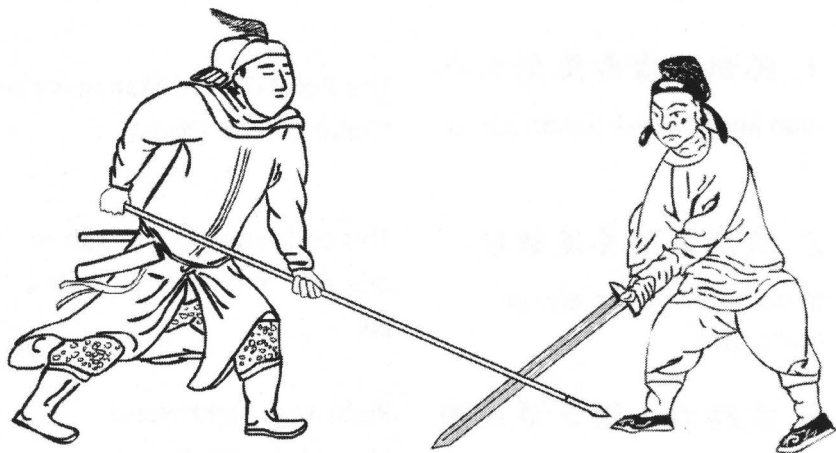
Step forward fast into **Drive-Wagon Stance**.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Point-Sword Stance”

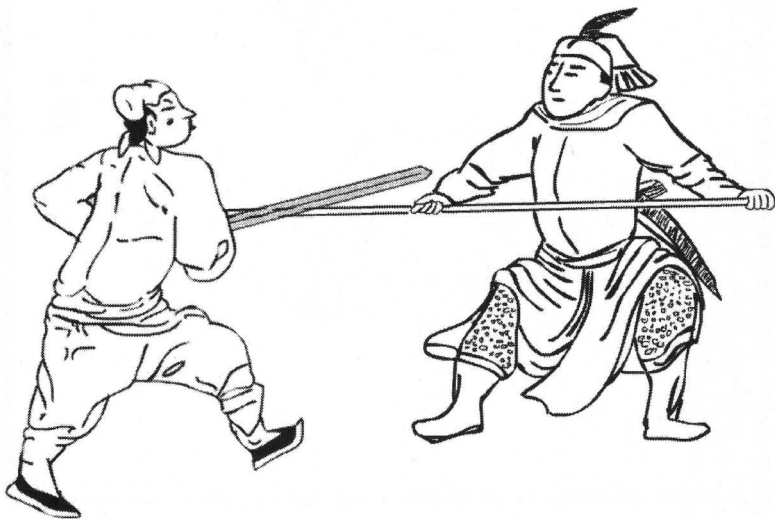


The 2nd verse states that this stance is for evading to one side. But I would not think of it as completely shifting aside without any contact with the enemy at all. That would have been too difficult. An easier, and also safer, way is to shift aside while your sword intercepts the enemy's weapon.

The 3rd verse indicates that this stance is for making and/or dealing with low attacks to the thighs or legs. Imagine you're standing and using a stick to poke at a snake crawling on the ground.

Here's a possible application:

- The enemy thrusts low, at your thighs or legs.
- You point your sword low, contacting and intercepting the enemy's weapon. At the same time, you step aside as well, which creates 2 layers of defense for yourself (sword + footwork).
- While **maintaining** contact with the enemy's weapon to keep it under control, you shift his weapon away slightly, just to create an advantageous angle for you to thrust him, using Stance #8: Drive-Wagon Stance.



左翼勢

左翼勢者卽左翼
擊也法能上挑下
壓直殺虎口右腳
右手直符送書勢
向前掣步逆鱗刺
看法



3. 左翼勢

zuǒ yì shì

Left-Wing Stance

1. 左翼勢者即左翼擊也

zuǒ yì shì zhě jí zuǒ yì jī yě

The **Left-Wing Stance** is the “Left-Wing Strike”.

2. 法能上挑下壓直殺虎口

fǎ néng shàng tiǎo xià yā zhí shā hǔ kǒu

This technique can flick upwards, press downwards, and kill straight into the “Tiger’s Den”.

3. 右腳右手直符送書勢

yòu jiǎo yòu shǒu zhí fú sòng shū shì

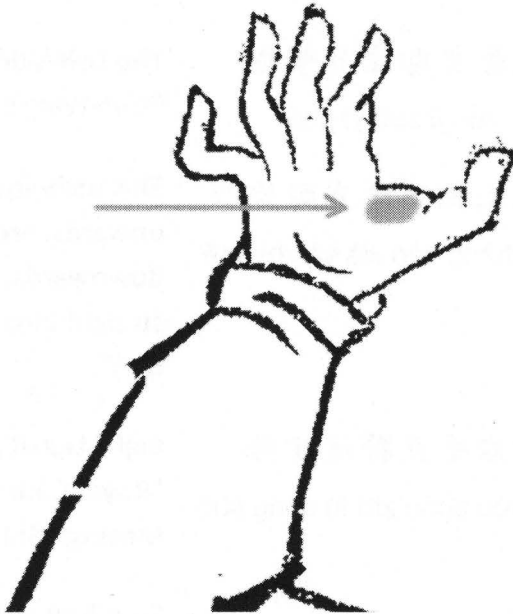
Right-Leg, Right-Hand: “Royal-Courier Delivers Message Stance”.

4. 向前掣步逆鱗刺看法

xiàng qián chè bù nì lín cì kàn fǎ

Step forward fast into **Reverse-Scales Thrust**. Watch technique.

Explanation for “Left-Wing Stance”



“Tiger’s Den” refers to the area between the thumb and index finger, as highlighted in the above picture. By cutting someone here, you’re severing his *Adductor Pollicis* muscle, effectively reducing his ability to grip his weapon properly, because now the thumb cannot exert an opposing force against the other 4 fingers.



“Royal Courier Delivers Message” – from Sword Treatise

The 3rd verse says to perform this technique using the principle of “Royal Courier Delivers Message”. Above is a drawing of it, from the “Sword Treatise” manual. This means that you must perform the cut with your arm straightened and aligned with the sword.

Why is this stance or technique called “Left Wing”, when you are performing it with your right-hand and right-leg forward?

I suspect the answer is because you’ll be cutting to the left. Assuming the enemy is also holding his weapon with his right-hand forward, then to cut his right “Tiger’s Den”, you must cut to the left, from your perspective.

豹頭勢

豹頭勢者卽豹頭
擊也法能霹擊上
殺左脚左手泰山
壓頂勢向前掣步
挑刺看法



4. 豹頭勢

bào tóu shì

1. 豹頭勢者即豹頭擊也

bào tóu shì zhě jí bào tóu jī yě

2. 法能霹靂擊上殺

fǎ néng pī jī shàng shā

3. 左腳左手泰山壓頂勢

zuǒ jiǎo zuǒ shǒu tài shān yā
dǐng shì

4. 向前掣步挑刺

xiàng qián chè bù tiāo cì

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Leopard-Head Stance

The **Leopard-Head Stance** is the “Leopard-Head Strike”.

This technique can kill with a splitting cut.

Left-Leg, Left-Hand:
“Mount-*Tai* Press Down
Stance”.

Note: *Mount-Tai is the name of a famous mountain in Shan-Dong province.*

Step forward fast and flick upwards to thrust.

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Leopard-Head Stance”



“Dragonfly Stance” – from the Japanese sword style *Jigen Ryu*

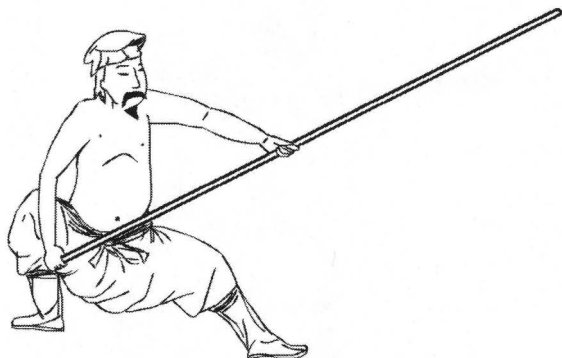
This is a stance found commonly in most, if not all, styles of swordsmanship. The sword is held up and ready to cut down in one stroke.

The Japanese sword style of *Jigen Ryu* is probably the most extreme example. They train feverishly to make a powerful downwards cut from this stance, so much so that even if you block, you'll still die. They were fearsome during the *Bakumatsu* period (mid-1800s), and swordsmen were warned that they must evade the first stroke from a *Jigen Ryu* practitioner.



“Split Mountain Stance” – from Shaolin Staff Manual

The 3rd verse implies that your cut is like a huge mountain crushing down on the opponent. Hence I would say that you’ll end up in a low stance, similar to the above “Split Mountain Stance”.



“Subdue Tiger Stance” – from Shaolin Staff Manual

If you need to make a subsequent move, you can erect your sword’s tip to thrust upwards, like the “Subdue Tiger Stance” above.

坦腹勢

坦腹勢者卽坦腹
刺也法能冲刺中
殺進如龍山石脚
右手蒼龍出水勢
向前進步腰擊看
法



5. 坦腹勢

tǎn fù shì

Flat-Stomach Stance

1. 坦腹勢者即坦腹刺也

tǎn fù shì zhě jí tǎn fù cì yě

The **Flat-Stomach Stance** is the “Flat-Stomach Thrust”.

2. 法能衝刺中殺

fǎ néng chōng cì zhōng shā

This technique can rush forward and deliver a thrust.

3. 進如崩山

jìn rú bēng shān

Enter like a collapsing mountain.

4. 右腳右手蒼龍出水勢

yòu jiǎo yòu shǒu cāng lóng chū shuǐ shì

Right-Leg, Right-Hand: “Azure-Dragon Shoots Out Of Water”.

5. 向前進步腰擊

xiàng qián jìn bù yāo jī

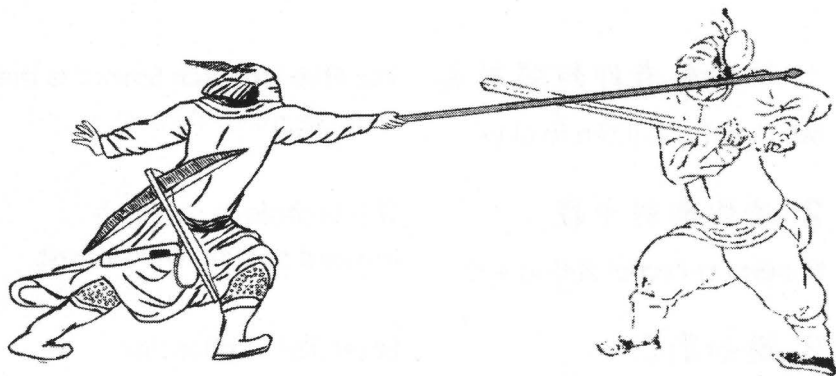
Step forward into **Waist-Strike**.

6. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

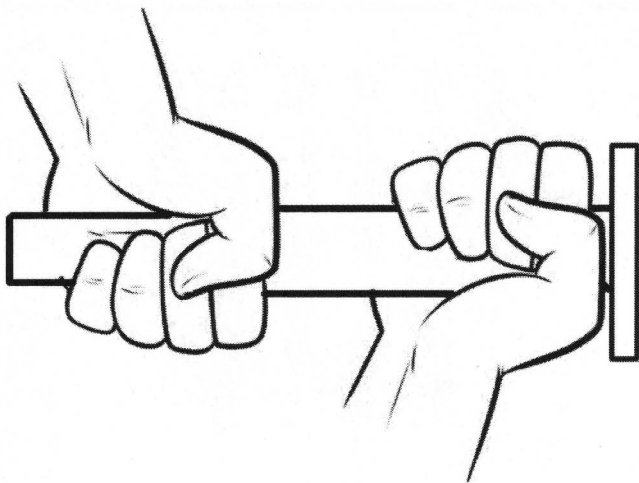
Explanation for “Flat-Stomach Stance”



Instead of just charging in blindly to thrust the enemy, the sword shifts the enemy's weapon away, allowing you to advance forward safely.

The enemy now realizes that he's in an extremely disadvantageous situation, and will definitely do something about it. Hence, the 3rd verse says you must rush in fast, like a collapsing mountain, before he can recover.

Once you're near him, you can thrust and/or slash across his mid-section horizontally.



Instead of maintaining a normal grip, which is to have both hands facing forward, I suspect you'll have to change your rear hand's grip to effectively perform this technique.

In the above diagram, you can see that both hands are facing opposite directions. Personally I prefer this grip when performing this stance, as it allows me to maintain a more neutral and/or straighter wrist joint.

跨右勢

跨右勢者卽跨右
擊也法能撩剪下
殺左腳右手綽衣
勢向前進步橫擊
看法



6. 跨右勢

kuà yòu shì

Step-Across Right Stance

1. 跨右勢者即跨右擊也

kuà yòu shì zhě jí kuà yòu jī yě

The **Step-Across Right Stance** is the “Step-Across Right Strike”.

2. 法能撩剪下殺

fǎ néng liáo jiǎn xià shā

This technique can cut upwards and “Shear” against a low attack.

3. 左腳右手綽衣勢

zuǒ jiǎo yòu shǒu chuò yī shì

Left-Leg, Right-Hand:
“Graceful Clothing Stance”.

4. 向前進步橫擊

xiàng qián jìn bù héng jī

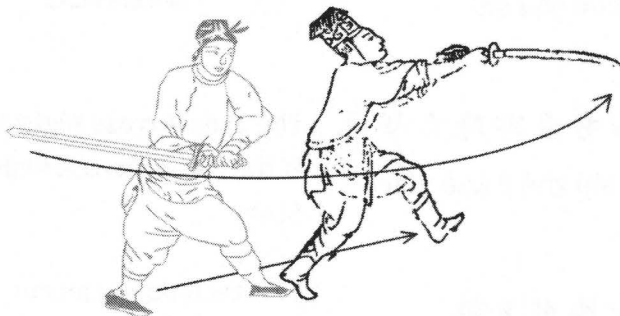
Step forward and deliver a horizontal strike.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Step-Across Right Stance”

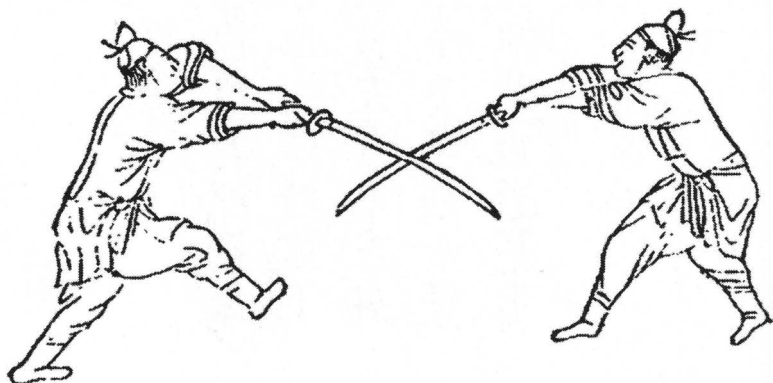


The manual's drawing shows the starting position, with your right-leg forward. As you cut upwards from lower-right to upper-left, you step forward to the left as well, ending up with your left-leg and right-hand forward, which is what the 3rd verse is saying.

Normally, the quickest cut that you can make subsequently, will be going back the same way as you came from, which is a downwards diagonal cut from the upper-left to the lower-right.

However, this technique is for fighting against an enemy who's making a low attack, aiming for your legs or thighs. Thus your upwards cut may end around the abdomen or chest region. Subsequently, a horizontal cut will make more sense, as stated in the 4th verse.

Consider the situation below, which is depicted in the Korean martial arts manual, *Muye Dobo Tongji*.



Sword fight scene, depicted in *Muye Dobo Tongji*

When the enemy makes a low-level attack at you, you cut upwards to intercept his attack and lift up his weapon at the same time.

While maintaining contact with his weapon, your blade can cut his hand, utilizing the principles of “Shear”. More explained in Stance #9: Exhibit-Flag Stance.

Because you are stepping towards the left while cutting upwards, this pushes the enemy’s weapon aside, putting you in a position to cut him across the abdomen horizontally, as stated in the 4th verse.

撩掠勢

撩掠勢者即撩掠
格也法能遮駕下
殺敵左護右左脚
左手長蛟分水勢
向前掣步錯擊看
法



7. 撩掠勢

liáo lüè shì

Lift-Pass Stance

1. 撩掠勢者即撩掠格也

liáo lüè shì zhě jí liáo lüè gé yě

The **Lift-Pass Stance** is the “Lift-Pass Block”.

2. 法能遮駕下殺蔽左護右

fǎ néng zhē jià xià shā bì zuǒ hù yòu

This can defend against low strikes, shielding the left, protecting the right.

3. 左腳左手長蛟分水勢

zuǒ jiǎo zuǒ shǒu cháng jiāo fēn shuǐ shì

Left-Leg, Left-Hand:
“Long Water-Dragon Splits Water Stance”.

4. 向前掣步鑽擊

xiàng qián chè bù zuān jī

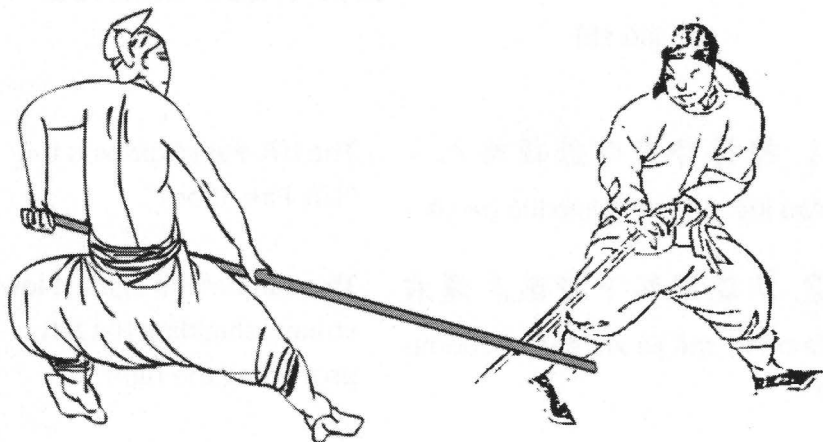
Step forward fast into the **Drill-Strike** stance.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Lift-Pass Stance”

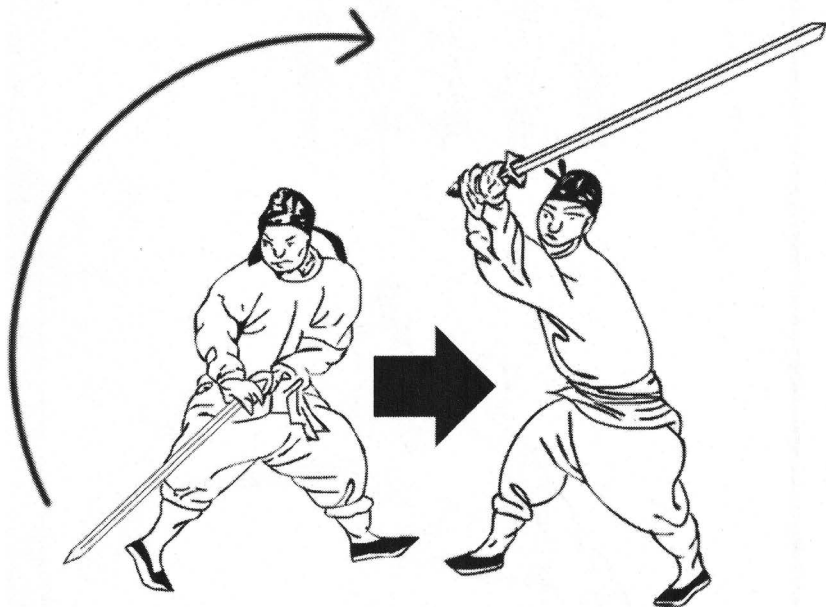


With the sword held pointing low, this stance is a natural candidate for blocking low attacks, such as strikes to the legs, knees or thighs.

The word 撩 (*liao*) in Chinese swordsmanship is to cut upwards. This stance is to cut upwards with the back edge of your sword. By doing so, you're able to defend yourself from attacks coming from the left or right.

Hence, the 2nd verse stated that this stance will help you to block low, left and right.

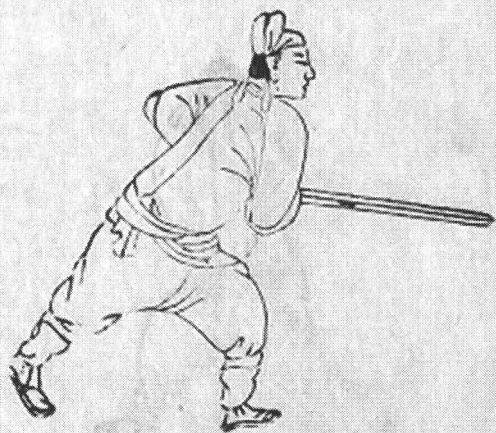
As you cut or lift your sword upwards, your sword is like a dragon splitting the sea into half, as per 3rd verse. Imagine it's something like Moses parting the red sea.



At the end of your movement, you'll end up in "Stance #12: Drill-Strike Stance". Your left-hand and left-leg will be forward, as stated in the 3rd and 4th verses.

御車勢

御車勢者即御車
格也法能駕御中
殺前殺雙手左脚
右手冲鋒勢向前
退步鳳頭洗看法



8. 御車勢

Drive-Wagon Stance

yù chē shì

1. 御車勢者即御車格也

yù chē shì zhě jí yù chē gé yě

The **Drive-Wagon Stance** is the “Drive-Wagon Block”.

2. 法能駕御中殺

fǎ néng jià yù zhōng shā

This technique defends against a mid-region attack.

3. 左腳右手衝鋒勢

zuǒ jiǎo yòu shǒu chōng fēng shì

Left-Leg, Right-Hand:
“Charge-In Stance”.

4. 向前退步鳳頭洗

xiàng qián tuì bù fèng tóu xǐ

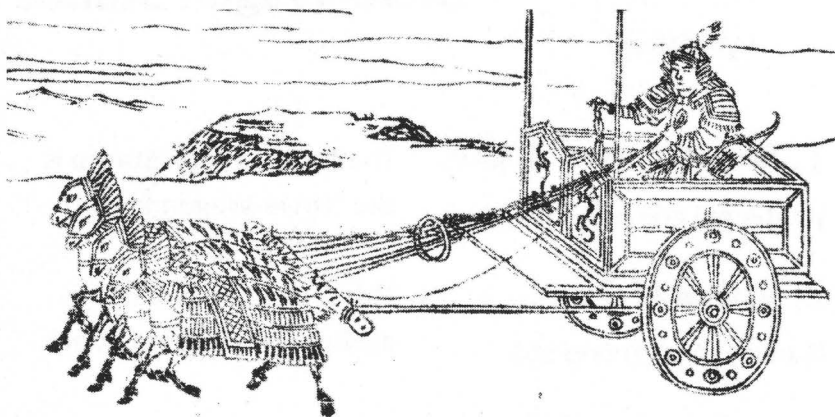
Face forward and retreat step into **Phoenix-Head** Deflect.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Drive-Wagon Stance”



Ancient drawing of warrior driving a wagon

In a medieval context, to drive a wagon is to control the horse. So you can imagine a medieval warrior pulling on the horse's reins, with his hands around his mid-section.

In case it's not apparent in the drawing, the stance is done in a 拗步 (*ao bu*), or twisted manner, because the right-hand and left-leg are forward. You will not be considered as “twisted”, if your right-hand and right-leg are forward. Hence, the 3rd verse for this stance.



What is 鳳頭洗 (*feng tou xi*), literally “Washing the Phoenix’s Head”? Here are 2 possible answers based on the 4th verse:

1. You take a step back, and go into Stance #23 - Phoenix-Head Stance.
2. Or, you retreat a step, then cut backwards in a 180 degrees turn, as shown above. This could be useful when facing multiple opponents.

展旗勢

展旗勢者卽展
旗擊也法能剪
磨上殺左腳左
手托塔勢向前
掣步點劍看法



9. 展旗勢

zhǎn qí shì

Exhibit-Flag Stance

1. 展旗勢者即展旗擊也

zhǎn qí shì zhě jí zhǎn qí jī yě

The **Exhibit-Flag Stance** is the “Exhibit-Flag Strike”.

2. 法能剪磨上殺

fǎ néng jiǎn mó shàng shā

This technique can defend against a high attack with the “Shear” or “Rub” technique.

3. 左腳左手托塔勢

zuǒ jiǎo zuǒ shǒu tuō tā shì

Left-Leg, Left-Hand:
“Support Pagoda Stance”.

4. 向前擊步點劍

xiàng qián chè bù diǎn jiàn

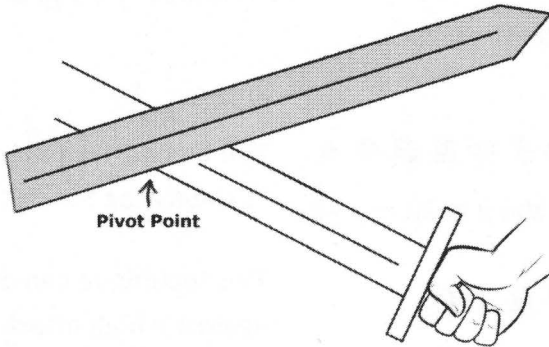
Step forward fast into
Point-Sword.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Exhibit-Flag Stance”

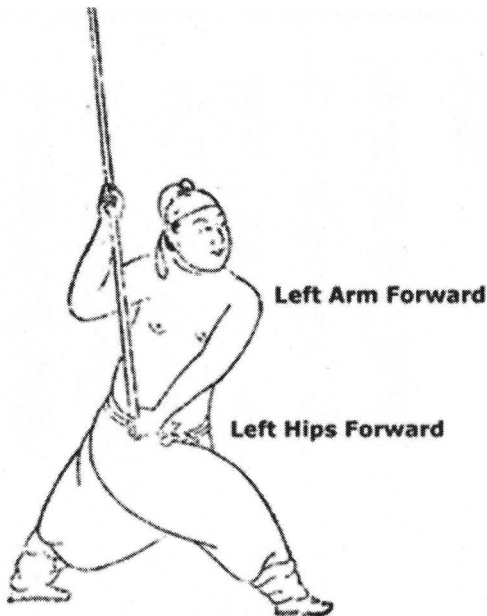


The technique of “Shear”

The word 剪 means to “cut”, specifically with a pair of scissors or a similar tool. I’ve translated it as “Shear”, just to differentiate it from a normal “cut”.

When you cut with a pair of scissors, notice that there is an immovable pivot point between the 2 blades. To perform a “Shear”, your sword must contact with the enemy’s weapon, and this contact becomes the pivot point which you must not move away from.

This pivot point allows you to stay in control of the enemy’s weapon, while you pivot your sword around this point to cut him. This is how you perform a “Shear” technique.



“Chen Xiang Splits Mount Hua” – from Shaolin Staff Manual

An identical stance found in the Shaolin Staff manual is the “*Chen Xiang Splits Mount Hua Stance*”, as shown above.

The 3rd verse states that the left leg is forward, even though the figure is drawn evidently with the left leg behind. If you observe closely, the stance is performed with your left hip forward, which means your legs are in a somewhat crossed manner.

Note also that your body weight is more on the left leg. Hence this fits the description in the 3rd verse.

看守勢

看守勢者卽看守
擊也法能看守諸
器攻刺守定諸器
難進相機隨勢滾
殺左脚右手虎蹲
勢向前進步腰擊
看法



10. 看守勢

Stand-Guard Stance

kān shǒu shì

1. 看守勢者即看守擊也

kān shǒu shì zhě jí kān shǒu jī yě

The **Stand-Guard Stance** is the “Stand-Guard Strike”.

2. 法能看守諸器攻刺守定

fǎ néng kān shǒu zhū qì gōng cì shǒu dìng

This technique can guard against various weapons' strikes and thrusts.

3. 諸器難進相機隨勢滾殺

zhū qì nán jìn xiāng jī suí shì gǔn shā

It is difficult for various weapons to enter. At the opportune moment, flow with the situation and kill.

4. 左腳右手虎蹲勢

zuǒ jiǎo yòu shǒu hǔ dūn shì

Left-Leg, Right-Hand:
“Crouching-Tiger Stance”.

5. 向前進步腰擊看法

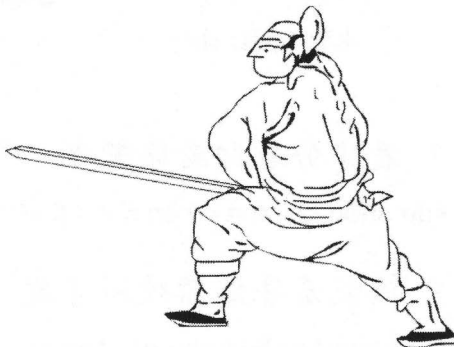
xiàng qián jìn bù yāo jī kàn fǎ

Step forward into
Waist-Strike.
Watch technique.

Explanation for “Stand-Guard Stance”



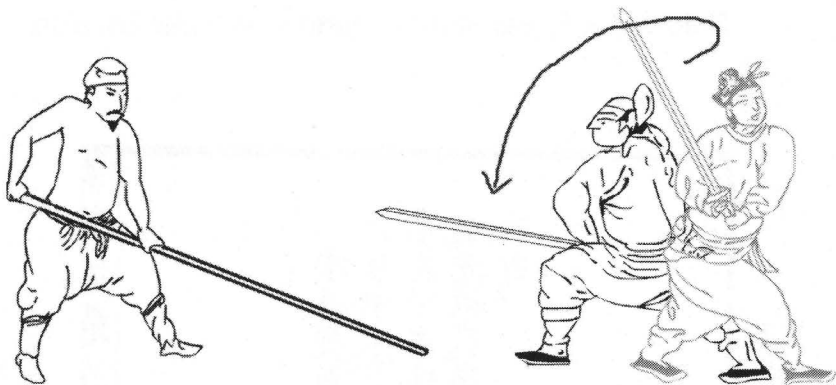
Drive-Wagon



Stand-Guard

Before this, the “Drive-Wagon Stance” looks like a similar stance. Let’s explore the differences:

- Drive-Wagon is a block. You’re pushing your sword to the left. Stand-Guard is a strike, or an on-guard stance. Hence your sword is in the center, or more to the right.
- In Drive-Wagon, your hips are more-or-less squared to the front. In Stand-Guard, your left-hip is forward.
- In Stand Guard, it appears that your left-hand may not be gripping the hilt so firmly, so that you have more flexibility to maneuver the sword, in order to “flow with the situation” as stated in the 3rd verse.



Possible application: You were in the “Exhibit-Flag Stance”, when someone thrusts you from behind. Your body weight’s already on the left-leg, so as you turn 180-degrees around to the left, it remains on the left-leg.

As you turn, you strike down the enemy’s weapon, and end up in the “Stand Guard Stance”.

In the 4th verse, it says “Crouching Tiger Stance”. This has 2 meanings:

- 1) The stance is performed low. Which means, as you strike, you must sink down, putting your body’s weight into the sword.
- 2) A crouching tiger has its body low, and ready to pounce. This is the mindset to have when performing this stance. You will “pounce” forward by using the “Waist-Strike Stance”, as mentioned in the 5th verse.

Below is a Spear stance found in *Wu Bei Zhi* also.



Do you notice that it is the same? Other than the figure is shown holding a Spear instead.

The name of this Spear stance is “Agile Cat Catches Rat”. Firstly, tigers and cats belong to the same family. Secondly, when a cat wants to catch a rat, it will **pounce** on the rat in an agile manner, which is what we’ve discussed.

The verses for this stance states that you can press your Spear down on the enemy’s weapon, then flick upwards into the “Skyward Stance” and rush forward to hit him (like an agile cat). I believe we can easily adopt the same principles when using a straight sword.



銀蟒勢

銀蟒勢者，卽銀蟒格也。法能四顧周身，又能掠殺四面。向前則左手左脚向後，則右手右脚動，則左右旋風掣電殺看法。



11. 銀蟒勢

Silver-Python Stance

yín mǎng shì

1. 銀蟒勢者即銀蟒格也

yín mǎng shì zhě jí yín mǎng gé yě

The **Silver-Python Stance** is the “Silver-Python Block”.

2. 法能四顧周身又能掠殺四面

fǎ néng sì gù zhōu shēn yòu néng lüè
shā sì miàn

This technique can defend from all sides, and kill from all sides.

3. 向前則左手左腳

xiàng qián zé zuǒ shǒu zuǒ jiǎo

If facing forward, then left-hand, left-leg.

4. 向後則右手右腳

xiàng hòu zé yòu shǒu yòu jiǎo

If facing behind, then right-hand, right-leg.

5. 動則左右旋風掣電殺

dòng zé zuǒ yòu xuàn fēng chè diàn
shā

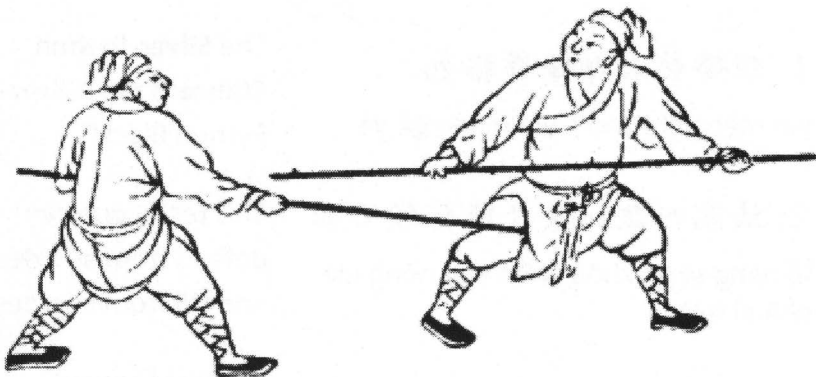
Move like whirlwind left and right, kill like a flashing lightning.

6. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Silver-Python Stance”



”Retreating Horse Looks Back” – From Sword Treatise

Notice that this “Silver-Python Stance” is drawn with the face looking forward at the enemy, but both feet are drawn facing the opposite direction.

In ancient Chinese martial arts drawings, this is found in stances which are meant for retreating away from the enemy while defending yourself at the same time.

Or, it can also be used to display a state of defeat, or lack of fighting will, to the enemy, so as to lure him to attack you, which you can then counter against.

Below is another Spear stance found in *Wu Bei Zhi*.

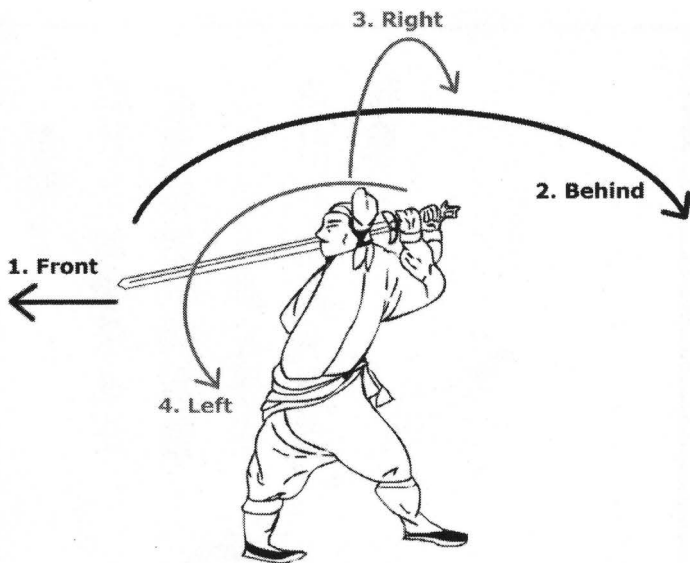
白猿拖刀勢
乃伴輸詐回鎗法逆
轉硬上騎龍順步纏
攔崩靠迎鋒接進弄
花鎗就是中平也破



The name of this Spear stance is “White Ape Drags Saber”. You appear to be dragging your Spear with its tip on the ground, while walking away from the enemy, hence the name. Notice that it looks exactly like this “Silver-Python Stance”, just that the weapon is a Spear instead of a sword.

The verses state that this stance is to feign a defeated appearance to the enemy, to lure him to attack you. When the enemy does attack you, you may counter him with the “Ride Dragon Stance”, as I’ve drawn below. I believe the same principle can be applied with the sword.





The 2nd verse is a very important verse, describing the unique characteristics of this stance is effectively guarding / attacking from all sides.

1. Enemy from the front. Your sword is effectively shielding your head, and you can thrust forward too.
2. Enemy from behind. Simply turn your head 180 degrees and cut down.
3. Enemy from the right. Similar to #2, but just turn 90 degrees and cut down.
4. Enemy from the left. Turn your body to the left, simultaneously making a diagonal or horizontal cut.

鑽擊勢

鑽擊勢卽鑽擊也法
能鑽格搶殺鵝形鴨
步奔沖左腳左手自
猿出洞勢向前擊步
腰擊看法



12. 鑽擊勢

zuān jī shì

1. 鑽擊勢即鑽擊也

zuān jī shì jí zuān jī yě

2. 法能鑽格搶殺

fǎ néng zuān gé qiǎng shā

3. 鵝形鴨步奔冲

é xíng yā bù bēn chōng

4. 左腳左手白猿出洞勢

zuǒ jiǎo zuǒ shǒu bái yuán
chū dòng shì

5. 向前擊步腰擊

xiàng qián chè bù yāo jī

6. 看法

kàn fǎ

Drill-Strike Stance

The **Drill-Strike Stance** is the “Drill-Strike”.

This technique can do a “Drilling-Block” and kill.

Dash in with the “Goose & Duck Footwork”.

Left-Leg, Left-Hand:
“White-Ape Exits Cave Stance”.

Step forward fast, and deliver a **Waist-Strike**.

Watch technique.

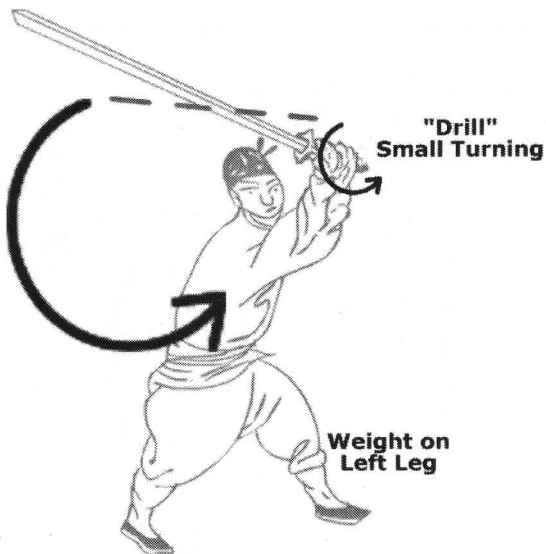
Explanation for “Drill-Strike Stance”

There are 3 animals mentioned in this stance: Goose, Duck and Ape. The similarity in these 3 animals is that they are all 2-legged bipedal animals, just like humans.

When a bipedal creature walks, its body weight is constantly transferring from left leg to right leg, and vice versa. This is the 1st important point to note when performing this stance.

The 2nd important point to note is the first word of this stance's name, which is 鑽 (*zuan*), which means “Drill”. Imagine a typical electrical fan: it has blades which are spinning because of a drill-like device in the middle.

When the drill rotates by 1cm, the fan-blades may have rotated by 100cm, depending on it's wing-span. If we can apply this type of magnification effect, we will be able to perform a powerful “Drill-Strike”.



Begin with your body weight on the left-leg, and the sword near the left-side of your head. As you step forward with your right-leg, thus transferring your body weight there, your hands turns and your sword cuts from right-to-left.

This could be similar to German Swordsmanship's *Zwerchhau* technique, which is to use the sword like a helicopter's rotors.

You may do this continuously, cutting from left-to-right and vice-versa with minimum movements from your arms, while transferring your body's weight from left-to-right.

腰擊勢

腰擊勢者卽腰擊也
法能橫冲中殺身步
手劍疾若迅雷此十
擊者劍中之首擊也
右腳右手斬蛇勢向
前進步逆鱗看法



13. 腰擊勢

yāo jī shì

Waist-Strike Stance

1. 腰擊勢者即腰擊也

yāo jī shì zhě jí yāo jī yě

The **Waist-Strike Stance** is the “Waist-Strike”.

2. 法能橫冲中殺

fǎ néng héng chōng zhōng shā

This technique can deliver a mid-region attack by a horizontal dash.

3. 身步手劍疾若迅雷

shēn bù shǒu jiàn jí ruò xùn léi

Body, Footwork, Hands, Sword, are to be fast like a thunderbolt.

4. 此一擊者劍中之首擊也

cǐ yī jī zhě jiàn zhōng zhī shǒu jī yě

This strike is the primary attack in using the sword.

5. 右腳右手斬蛇勢

yòu jiǎo yòu shǒu zhǎn shé shì

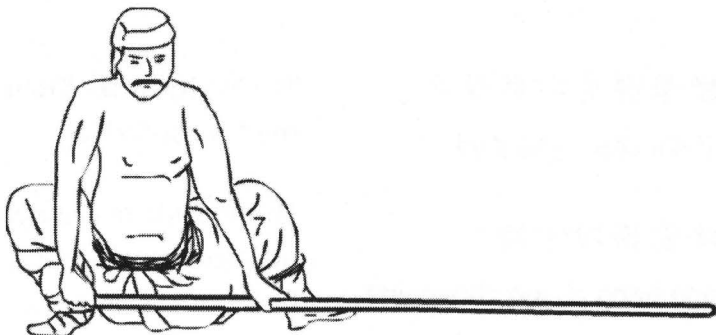
Right-Leg, Right-Hand: “Kill-Snake Stance”.

6. 向前進步逆鱗看法

xiàng qián jìn bù nì lín kàn fǎ

Step forward into **Reverse-Scales Stance**. Watch technique.

Explanation for “Waist-Strike Stance”



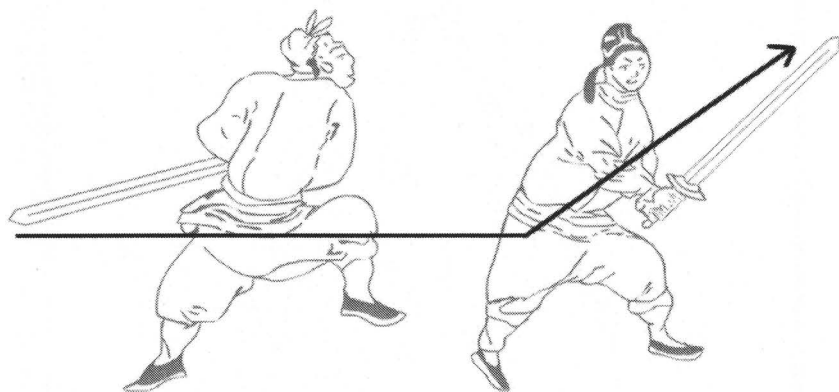
“Ground-Snake Stance” – From Shaolin Staff

If we were to take the metaphorical cue from the 5th verse, “Kill Snake Stance”, it will mean that this technique is performed by making a horizontal cut, and doing it with a low stance. Only then, you can behead a snake that is on the ground and erecting its neck.

Start with the sword held at your left-waist, then cut across horizontally, ending up with your right-hand and right-leg forward. This looks similar to a typical move found in Japanese *Iaijutsu*, drawing the sword and cutting at the same time. Except that now you start with both hands on the sword.



Seen from the other side, using figures from the Chinese Long Saber manual, you make a low horizontally cut, targeting enemy's mid-section area.



The black line above tracks the movement of your sword. Based on the 6th verse, after making a horizontal cut, you can step forward into the "Reverse-Scales Stance", ending up with your left-leg in front.

展翅勢

展翅勢者即展翅
擊也法能絞格上
殺撩掠下殺右脚
右手偏閃勢向前
掣步舉鼎格看法



14. 展翅勢

Spread-Wings Stance

zhǎn chì shì

1. 展翅勢者即展翅擊也

zhǎn chì shì zhě jí zhǎn chì jī yě

The **Spread-Wings Stance** is the “Spread-Wings Strike”.

2. 法能絞格上殺撩掠下殺

fǎ néng jiǎo gé shàng shā liáo lüè
xià shā

This technique can defend against a high attack with a “Twisting-Block”, and or a low attack with **Lift-Pass**.

3. 右腳右手偏閃勢

yòu jiǎo yòu shǒu piān shǎn shì

Right-Leg, Right-Hand:
“Side-Evade Stance”.

4. 向前擊步舉鼎格

xiàng qián chè bù jǔ dǐng gé

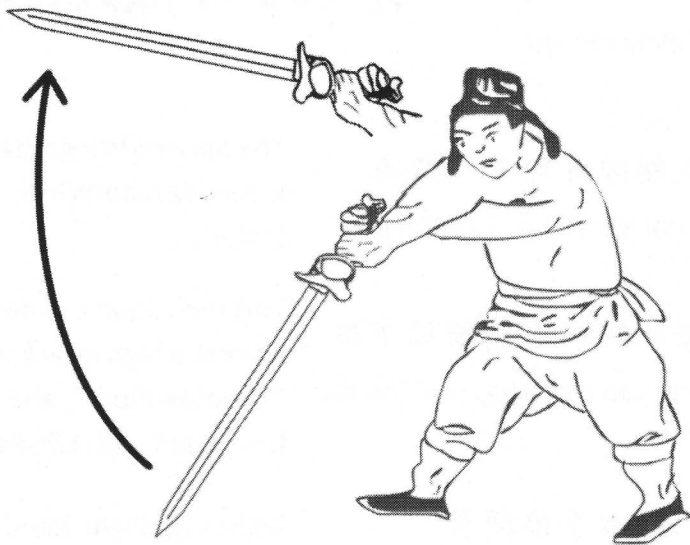
Step forward fast into the **Raise-Cauldron Block**.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Spread-Wings Stance”

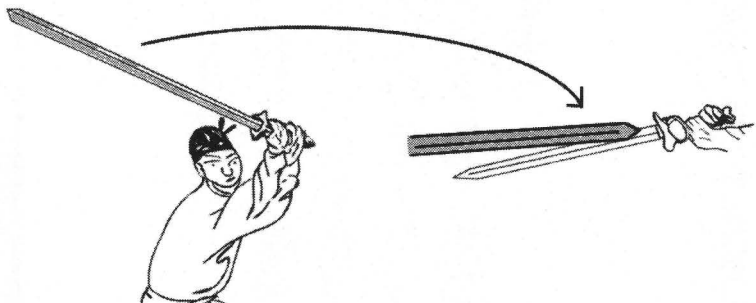


Based on the metaphorical reference that this stance is a type of attack based on “spreading wings”, we can deduce that this is an upwards cut technique.

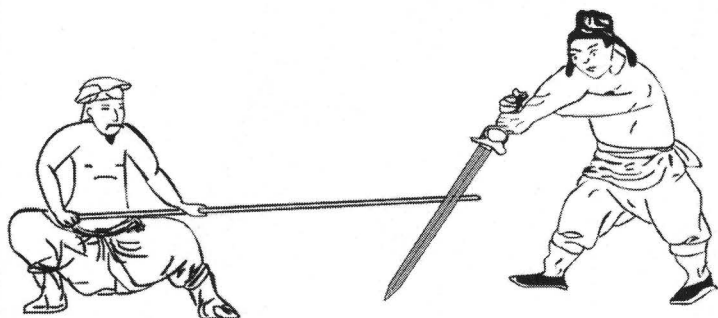
As you cut upwards, imagine that you’re like a bird spreading its wings upwards, ending up with your right-hand and right-leg forward.

Based on the 3rd verse, you should also shift to one side as you’re doing this upwards cut.

Based on the 2nd verse, there are 2 ways you can use this as a counter-measure against the enemy's attack.



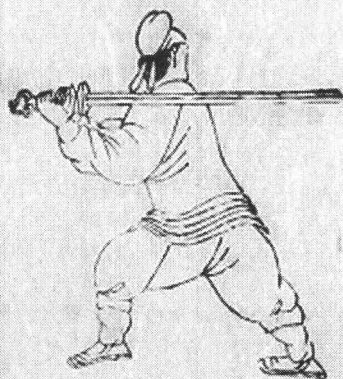
If the enemy makes a high attack, you can simply raise up your sword as it were. When the enemy's sword hits yours, you make use of that impact force to spin your sword around and cut him from right-to-left.



You can also defend against a low attack with this stance, followed by cutting upwards. You may also refer to Stance #7, the "Lift-Pass Stance" for more references.

右翼勢

右翼勢者卽右翼
擊也法能剪殺兩
翼左脚右手鴈字
勢向前掣步腰擊
看法



15. 右翼勢

yòu yì shì

Right-Wing Stance

1. 右翼勢者即右翼擊也

yòu yì shì zhě jí yòu yì jī yě

The **Right-Wing Stance** is the “Right-Wing Strike”.

2. 法能剪殺兩翼

fǎ néng jiǎn shā liǎng yì

This technique can “Shear” and kill at both wings.

3. 左腳右手鴈字勢

zuǒ jiǎo yòu shǒu yàn zì shì

Left-Leg, Right-Hand:
“Wild-Goose Stance”.

4. 向前掣步腰擊

xiàng qián chè bù yāo jī

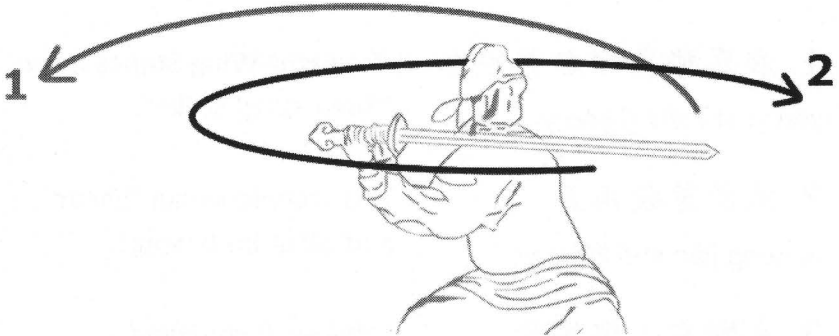
Step forward fast into the
Waist-Strike.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

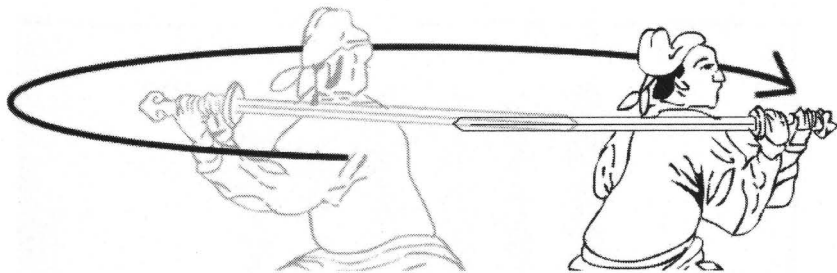
Explanation for “Right-Wing Stance”



There can be 2 possible interpretation of the 3rd verse. 1st one is, you can swing your sword cut horizontally left and right, like a pair of scissors.

The 2nd possible interpretation is the above diagram: You can cut both front and back (aka “both wings”). Whether the enemy comes from front or back, you are in a position to cut him in 1 motion.

If you cut based on #2 in the above diagram, you will end up cutting the enemy with your right-hand and left-leg forward, as stated in the 3rd verse.



As you swing your sword horizontally forward, you flow with the momentum and circle the sword to your right shoulder or arm as shown above. This serves 2 purposes:

1. Fitting the 1st interpretation earlier, this will allow you to make a subsequent horizontal cut from right-to-left.
2. With your sword positioned horizontally on your right, as shown above, with your left-leg forward, this links you to the next stance, which is Stance #16 – Open-Strike Stance.

The term 鴈字 (*yan zi*) literally means “wild-goose word”. It refers to the flying formation of geese, which can appear like a “V”, or 一 (*yi*) word which means “one” in Chinese. Could this mean we should cut left and right either in a “V” manner, or in a single straight line?

揭擊勢

揭擊勢者卽揭擊
也法能剪格上殺
步步套進左脚左
手虎坐勢向前退
步冲洗看法



16. 揭擊勢

jiē jī shì

Open-Strike Stance

1. 揭擊勢者即揭擊也

jiē jī shì zhě jí jiē jī yě

The **Open Strike Stance** is the “Open Strike”.

2. 法能剪格上殺步步套進

fǎ néng jiǎn gé shàng shā bù bù tào jìn

This technique can use the “Shear” technique against a high attack, and advance in step-by-step.

3. 左腳左手虎坐勢

zuǒ jiǎo zuǒ shǒu hǔ zuò shì

Left-Leg, Left-Hand:
“Tiger-Sitting Stance”.

4. 向前退步冲洗

xiàng qián tuì bù chōng xǐ

Face forward and retreat step to deflect the enemy's attack.

5. 看法

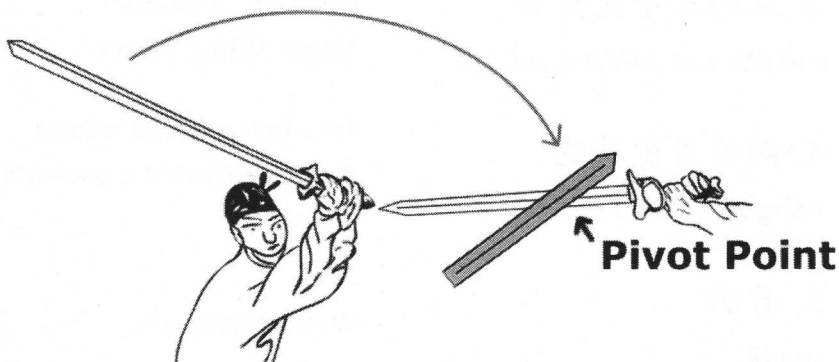
kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Open-Strike Stance”

The word 揭 (*jie*) means “to open”, but specifically in an upwards motion, such as lifting the lid of a pot to ‘open’ it. Although it is highly possible that this stance is for you to perform an upwards cut, but notice that the word 撩 (*liao*) wasn’t used, since “*liao*” is a more standard term in Chinese martial arts for an upwards cut.

So with this, I’d like to offer 2 possibilities in performing this technique. 1st one is a typical upwards cut.



You begin with your left-hand and left-leg forward, as drawn in the diagram, and as stated in the 3rd verse. When the enemy cuts down, you’ll bring your left-leg backwards

while cutting upwards at the same time, as stated in the 4th verse. The front portion of the enemy's sword contacts with the rear-portion of your sword, allowing you to perform a "Shear" technique while maintaining control of his weapon.

The 2nd possibility is to transit into the next stance, which is Stance #17 – Left-Clamp Stance, to perform the deflection.



When the enemy cuts down, you bring your left-leg backwards to deflect or "Shear" the enemy's sword with the Left-Clamp Stance.

If this is the intended way to perform this stance, it will explain why the 搨 (*jie*) was used, instead of 撩 (*liao*), since it's less of a cut.

左夾勢

左夾勢者卽左夾
刺也法能冲刺中
殺右脚右手獸頭
勢向前進步腰擊
看法



17. 左夾勢

zuǒ jiá shì

Left-Clamp Stance

1. 左夾勢者即左夾刺也

zuǒ jiá shì zhě jí zuǒ jiá cì yě

The **Left-Clamp Stance** is the “Left-Clamp Thrust”.

2. 法能冲刺中殺

fǎ néng chōng cì zhōng shā

This technique can rush in and thrust to kill in the mid-region.

3. 右腳右手獸頭勢

yòu jiǎo yòu shǒu shòu tóu shì

Right-Leg, Right-Hand:
“Beast-Head Stance”.

4. 向前進步腰擊

xiàng qián jìn bù yāo jī

Step forward into the
Waist-Strike.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Left-Clamp Stance”



“Beast-Head Stance” – From *Essentials of the Fist Manual*

In Ming Dynasty General *Qi Ji-Guang*’s “*Essentials Of The Fist*” manual, there is also a stance named as “Beast-Head”, shown above on the left. This is used to describe a stance where the fighter charges bravely to close in with the enemy, with no regard for his own life, just like a raging beast.

One possible application of this stance is that, you’re in a close-quarters situation in a sword fight, as shown above on the right. Imagine both yours and the enemy’s swords are locked, and you’re facing each other front-on. You turn your body to bring your right-shoulder forward, so as to pivot your sword around his, to thrust him while maintaining control of his sword.



Another possibility is to make use of the "Open-Strike Stance". After getting into a close-quarters situation and locking your sword with the enemy's, you pivot your hilt around to the left, and lift up the enemy's hands.

Since the word 揭 (*jie*) means "to open" by lifting upwards, this will make a lot of sense. After which, you may jab the enemy with your pommel, and follow up by cutting him across the waist, as stated in the 4th verse.

The key point here is "Close-Quarters". You must be very close to the enemy for this technique to work, or else you'll be cut by the enemy.

跨左勢

跨左勢者即跨左
擊也法能掃掠下
殺右脚右手提水
勢向前進步雙剪
看注



18. 跨左勢

kuà zuǒ shì

Step-Across Left Stance

1. 跨左勢者即跨左擊也

kuà zuǒ shì zhě jí kuà zuǒ jī yě

The **Step-Across Left Stance** is the "Step-Across Left Strike".

2. 法能掃掠下殺

fǎ néng sǎo lüè xià shā

This technique can kill by sweeping from underneath.

3. 右腳右手提水勢

yòu jiǎo yòu shǒu tí shuǐ shì

Right-Leg, Right-Hand:
"Carry-Water Stance".

4. 向前進步雙剪

xiàng qián jìn bù shuāng jiǎn

Enter step forward and
"Double-Shear".

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

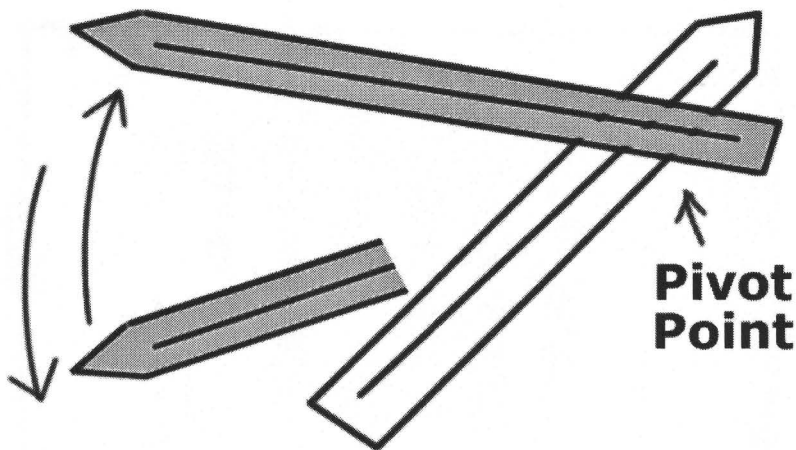
Watch technique.

Explanation for “Step-Across Left Stance”



The word 掃 (*sao*) is literally translated as “sweep”, as in sweeping the floor. It is commonly associated with an action that is horizontal in nature, and done at low heights. Hence, it is highly possible that this stance is for making a low horizontal cut at the enemy’s legs.

You can possibly make an upwards cut too, but then the author of this ancient sword manual would have used the word 撩 (*liao*) instead if that was his intention.



“Double Shear”

In the 4th verse, it says “Double Shear”, which means to perform the “Shear” twice. To do that, your sword will need to contact the enemy’s sword, and maintain that contact as a pivot point.

After which, you can make 2 cuts while making sure the pivot point is not lost during the process. Typically, you can make 2 horizontal cuts (one left, one right), or diagonal cuts (one upwards, one downwards).

In this stance, since we are targeting somewhere low, perhaps we are making a cut to each leg?

掀擊勢

掀擊勢者即掀擊
也法能掀挑上殺
槍步鑽殺左腳右
手朝天勢向前退
步坦腹刺看法



19. 掀擊勢

xiān jī shì

Flick-Strike Stance

1. 掀擊勢者即掀擊也

xiān jī shì zhě jí xiān jī yě

The **Flick-Strike Stance** is the “Flick-Strike”.

2. 法能掀挑上殺搶步鑽殺

fǎ néng xiān tiǎo shàng shā qiǎng bù zuān shā

This technique can flick upwards at a high attack, then swiftly **Drill** and kill.

3. 左腳右手朝天勢

zuǒ jiǎo yòu shǒu cháo tiān shì

Left-Leg, Right-Hand: “Skyward Stance”.

4. 向前退步坦腹刺

xiàng qián tuì bù tǎn fù cì

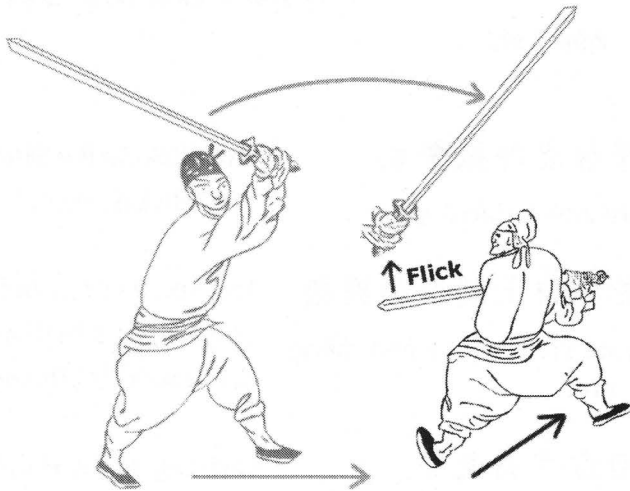
Face forward and retreat step into the **Flat-Stomach Thrust**.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Flick-Strike Stance”



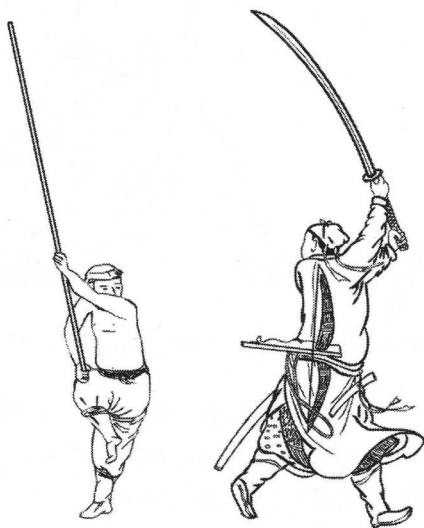
1st, the word 挑 (*tiao*) refers to a small upwards flicking motion. You can cut upwards with this technique, but it won't be a full proper cut.

2nd, notice that the figure is drawn with his right foot pointing backwards. This implies that he is retreating.

Putting these 2 points together, it is highly possible that this stance is performed by evading diagonally sideways when the enemy cuts down at you. At the same time, you'll flick your sword to cut his hands / fingers.

Supporting the interpretation that this “Flick-Strike Stance is to cut upwards, is the 3rd verse, which states “Skyward Stance”. Generally speaking, this involves pointing your weapon towards the sky, which is what will happen when:

- You’ve just finished making an upwards cut.
- You’re putting yourself in a position that’s ready to cut down in 1 stroke.



On the left, is the “Skyward Spear Stance” from the ancient Shaolin Staff manual. On the right, is the “Skyward Stance” from the ancient Chinese Long Saber manual. Notice that they look similar, but there’s still some slight differences.

The one “Skyward Stance” which I think is most possible is found in 手臂錄 (*shou bei lu*), “Records of Arms”. This is an ancient martial arts manual written by 吳叟 (*wu shu*), during late-Ming / early-Qing Dyasty period.



“Skyward Stance” – from Records Of Arms

The original drawing shows the figure facing to the right. But I’ve flipped the image, so that it’s facing the same way as this “Flick-Strike Stance”.

As you flick your sword to cut upwards, you end up looking like the above drawing: Your sword is pointing upwards, but not so vertically, so that you can still thrust forward easily if you want to.

The injury caused by the flick may not be substantial enough to stop a determined enemy. After which, you may use the principles of Stance #12 – Drill Strike Stance to make a subsequent attack, by twisting your hands to turn the blade around for a full proper cut.



As stated in the 4th verse, you can retreat a step into the Flat-Stomach Stance, as I've drawn above. This can be useful, for example, if the enemy is too close to you. Hence, by taking a step back, you'll be able to bring your sword to an appropriate distance for attacking him.

逆鱗勢

逆鱗勢者卽逆鱗
刺也法能直刺喉
頸右脚右手探海
勢向前掣步左翼
擊看法



20. 逆鱗勢

nì lín shì

Reverse-Scales Stance

1. 逆鱗勢者即逆鱗刺也

nì lín shì zhě jí nì lín cì yě

The **Reverse-Scales Stance** is the “Reverse-Scales Thrust”.

2. 法能直刺喉頸

fǎ néng zhí cì hóu jǐng

This technique can thrust straight into the throat and neck.

3. 右腳右手探海勢

yòu jiǎo yòu shǒu tàn hǎi shì

Right-Leg, Right-Hand: “Explore-Ocean Stance”.

4. 向前掣步左翼擊

xiàng qián chè bù zuǒ yì jī

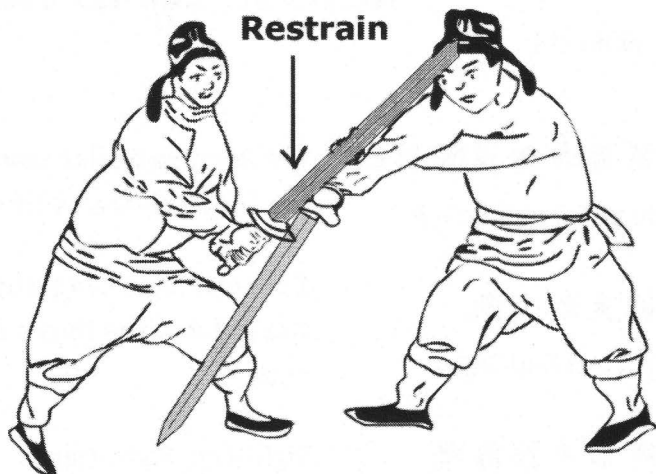
Step forward fast into the **Left-Wing Strike**.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

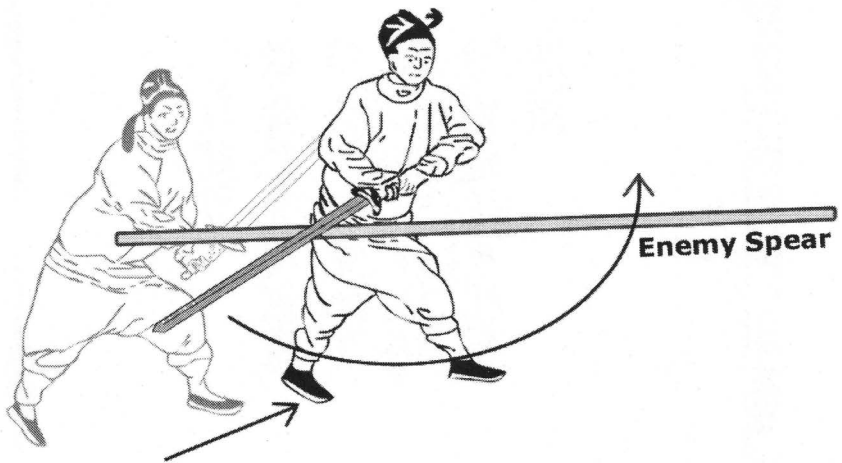
Watch technique.

Explanation for “Reverse-Scales Stance”



Instead of just thrusting straight in, we want to create circumstances which are favourable first. One way is to use the lower 1/3rd of your blade to press down and restrain the enemy's sword from moving, then thrust in.

The figure is drawn with the left-leg forward. By taking a step in to perform the thrust, you'll fulfill the 3rd verse, which states that you'll have your right-hand and right-leg forward. Subsequently, you may also flick your sword upwards, ending up in the Left-Wing Stance, as per the 4th verse, to make another attack.



Another possibility is to link up with the next stance, Stance #21 – Restrained-Wing Stance.

- You started with the Reverse-Scales Stance, intercepting the enemy's Spear. From your own perspective, the Spear is on your right.
- You advance with your right-foot, diagonally to the left. Simultaneously bringing down your sword to restrain the enemy's Spear.
- Now you're in an advantageous position to close in with the enemy Spearman, and you can attack him by making an upwards cut.

歛翅勢

歛翅勢者卽歛翅
擊也法能佯北誘
賺左右手脚拔蛇
勢倒退進步腰擊
看法



21. 斂翅勢

Restrain-Wing Stance

liǎn chì shì

1. 斂翅勢者即斂翅擊也

liǎn chì shì zhě jí liǎn chì jī yě

The **Restrain-Wing Stance** is the “Restrain-Wing Strike”.

2. 法能佯北誘賺

fǎ néng yáng běi yòu zhuàn

This technique allows one to pretend to be defeated, so as to deceive the enemy.

3. 左右手腳拔蛇勢

zuǒ yòu shǒu jiǎo bá shé shì

Left/Right Hands and Legs: “Extract Snake Stance”.

4. 倒退進步腰擊

dào tuì jìn bù yāo jī

Reverse back, to enter step into the **Waist-Strike**.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Restrain-Wing Stance”



Let's discuss 3 possible ways that you'll end up in this Restrain-Wing Stance, all of which you're faking a defeated appearance to the enemy, as per the 2nd verse:

1. You were holding your sword out, before the enemy strikes down at it, causing you to end up in this Restrain-Wing Stance.
2. The enemy uses his weapon to press down on your sword, immobilising you into this Restrain-Wing Stance, as shown above.
3. You intentionally adopt this stance, to lure the enemy to attack you.

The 4th verse states that you have to walk backwards, but yet you're advancing forward. This could mean that you're making a full 360 degrees turn, and personally, I think it's most applicable for the 2nd situation.



In the drawing, your right-leg is positioned forward. Withdraw your right-leg behind and circle it all the way around to the front, ending up in Stance #13 – Waist-Strike Stance, ready to cut the enemy horizontally.

The reason why you'd have to make a 360 degrees turn, is because the enemy is restraining you and you can't move to the front. So this is a way for you to escape and attack the enemy.

右夾勢

右夾勢者卽右夾
刺也法能絞刺中
殺左脚右手奔冲
勢向前立步舉鼎
格看法



22. 右夾勢

yòu jiá shì

Right-Clamp Stance

1. 右夾勢者即右夾刺也

yòu jiá shì zhě jí yòu jiá cì yě

The **Right-Clamp Stance** is the “Right-Clamp Thrust”.

2. 法能絞刺中殺

fǎ néng jiǎo cì zhòng shā

This technique can kill with a “Wringing-Thrust” in the mid-region.

3. 左腳右手奔冲勢

zuǒ jiǎo yòu shǒu bēn chōng shì

Left-Leg, Right-Hand:
“Sprinting-Dash Stance”.

4. 向前立步舉鼎格

xiàng qián lì bù jǔ dǐng gé

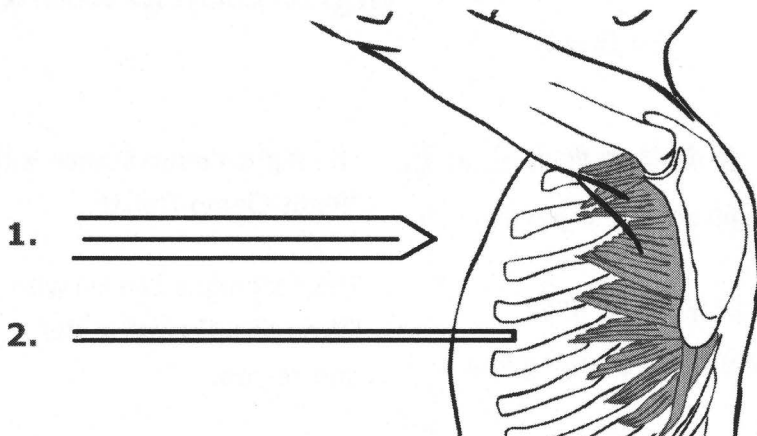
Stand forward into the **Raise-Cauldron Block**.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Right-Clamp Stance”

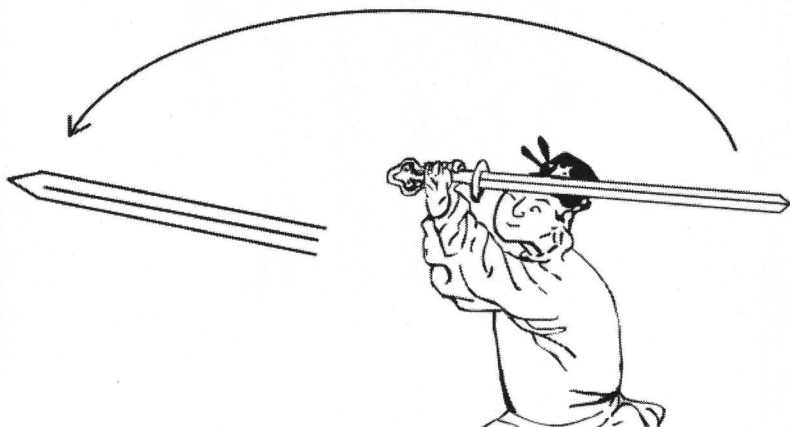


What we have discussed previously in Stance #17 – Left-Clamp Stance, can essentially be applied here too, just that it's on the opposite side.

In the drawing, the swordsman has his blade's sharp edges facing up and down, like #1 above. However, by “wringing” the blade as you thrust, stated in the 2nd verse, the blade becomes flat with the sharp edges facing left and right, like #2.

If you're thrusting into the chest region, this will allow your blade to pass through the gaps in between the ribs. Otherwise, your blade might not successfully puncture through the enemy's chest that smoothly.

The 4th verse states that this stance is “left-leg, right-hand”. This is the same for Stance #1: Raise-Cauldron Stance.



After making a thrust, you may go into the Raise-Cauldron Stance for a few reasons:

- To withdraw your sword from the enemy's chest.
- To block the enemy's attack. Though injured, he may still have the energy to make 1 last attack at you.
- To bring the sword up, so that you can make a downwards finishing blow, as shown above.

鳳頭勢

鳳頭勢者卽鳳頭
洗也法能洗刺剪
殺右脚右手白蛇
弄風勢向前掣步
揭擊看法



23. 鳳頭勢

Phoenix-Head Stance

fèng tóu shì

1. 鳳頭勢者即鳳頭洗也

fèng tóu shì zhě jí fèng tóu xǐ yě

The **Phoenix-Head Stance** is the “Phoenix-Head Deflect”.

2. 法能洗刺剪殺

fǎ néng xǐ cì jiǎn shā

This technique can deflect to thrust, and “Shear” to kill.

3. 右腳右手白蛇弄風勢

yòu jiǎo yòu shǒu bái shé nòng fēng shì

Right-Leg, Right-Hand:
“White Snake Playing with the Wind Stance”.

4. 向前掣步揭擊

xiàng qián chè bù jiē jī

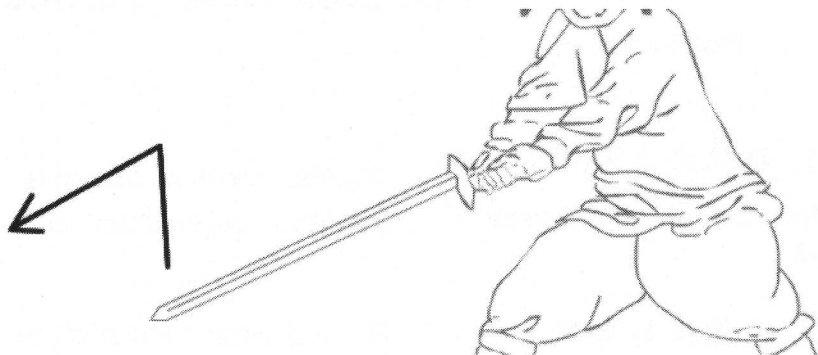
Step forward fast and deliver an **Open-Strike**.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Phoenix-Head Stance”



You start off with your sword pointing low, then flick upwards and fling the sword's tip towards the enemy. Make sure to keep your movements small.

By flicking upwards, you deflect the enemy's sword. By throwing your sword's tip towards the enemy, you can thrust him, or cut his hands.

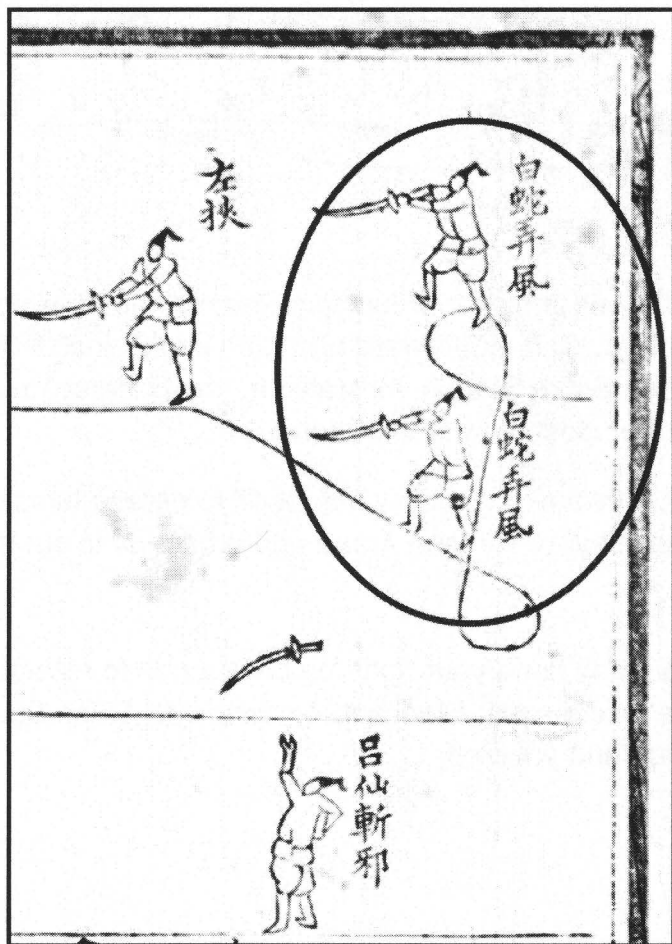
The phoenix (though it's a mythical creature) is a type of bird. Have you seen how birds bob their heads when they move? By performing this technique repeatedly while advancing forward, your sword-tip's movement is like a bird's head that is bobbing. Hence the name of this stance.



1. After performing 1 or multiple Phoenix-Head, we can bring our left-leg forward and rush into Stance #16: Open-Strike Stance, as stated in the 4th verse, to further close in with the enemy.
2. Or, let's say the enemy managed to defend himself against your Phoenix-Head and proceeds to cut down at you.

You may bring your right-leg backwards to retreat into the next stance, Stance #24: Horizontal-Dash Stance, to defend yourself.

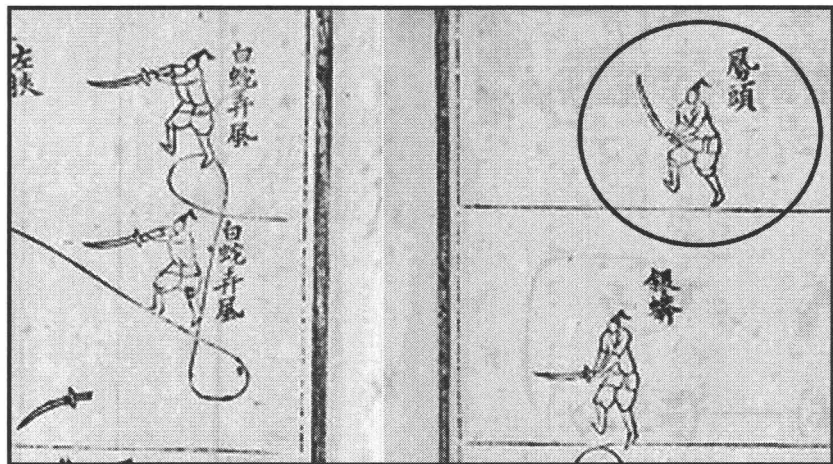
What does 白蛇弄風 (*bai she nong feng*) “White Snake Playing with the Wind”, found in the 3rd verse, means? For that, let’s look at a page from the Korean manual, *Muye Dobo Tongji*.



In the Volume 2 of *Muye Dobo Tongji*, the 2nd chapter is 銳刀, “Sharp Sword”. It is largely based on this Chinese Straight Sword manual, with the same stances and some additions, including a Practice Form which I’ve included a small segment of it on the previous page.

You can see the words 白蛇弄風 twice, and the lines indicate that you’re supposed to perform it by circling to the right and to the left, while cutting at the same time.

This is a clue to tell us what it means. Furthermore, immediately preceding it is 鳳頭勢, which is this Phoenix-Head Stance.



Below is page from the Spear chapter in *Wu Bei Zhi*. Notice the words circled is 白蛇弄風 too.

鎗你劄我我掣下你起鎗我隨鎗纏掣你攔鎗我還鎗你掣下還鎗我攔退救護掣你鎗你劄我我攔下我搖花鎗乃鳳點頭

三合先有穿指後有穿袖鷄子撲鷄鶻救護閃賺四花鎗四面是鎗法名曰白蛇弄風

四合先有白掣鎗攔退鎗救護後有白攔進步如貓捉鼠救護閃賺是花鎗名曰鐵掃箒

我白掣進步上劄你你掣鎗還鎗我攔退救護掣鎗我白攔進步上劄你攔鎗還鎗我攔鎗我白

Although this page is describing Spear techniques, I believe we can apply the same principles to any weapon.

It states that by wielding the Spear in all directions, is a technique named as 白蛇弄風 “White Snake Playing With The Wind”.

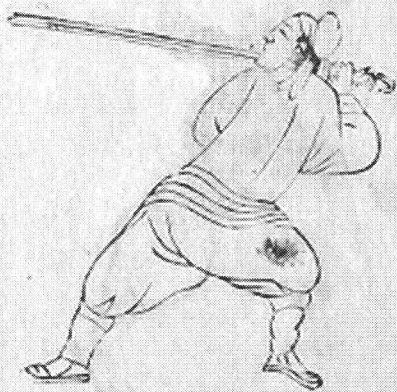
Specifically, it refers to wielding the Spear with a technique called 閃賺, which I translate it as “Evade-and-Deceive”. For example, your Spear is on the right-side of the enemy’s Spear. You move your Spear in a circular manner underneath, to thrust him on the left.

This will (hopefully) catch him by surprise, and give him no time to react. Hence this technique’s name is “Evade-and-Deceive”.

I believe we can easily apply the same concept when we perform the Phoenix-Head Stance with the straight sword.

橫冲勢

橫冲勢者卽橫冲
擊也法能疾奔額
閃滾殺進退兩手
兩脚隨勢冲進掣
步撩掠看法



24. 橫冲勢

Horizontal-Dash Stance

héng chōng shì

1. 橫冲勢者即橫冲擊也

héng chōng shì zhě jí héng
chōng jī yě

The **Horizontal-Dash Stance** is the “Horizontal-Dash Strike”.

2. 法能疾奔躲閃滾殺

fǎ néng jí bēn duǒ shǎn gǔn
shā

This technique can sprint fast to dodge, and “Roll” and kill.

3. 進退兩手兩腳

jìn tuì liǎng shǒu liǎng jiǎo

Advance and retreat with both hands and both legs.

4. 隨勢冲進擊步撩掠

suí shì chōng jìn chè bù liáo
lüè

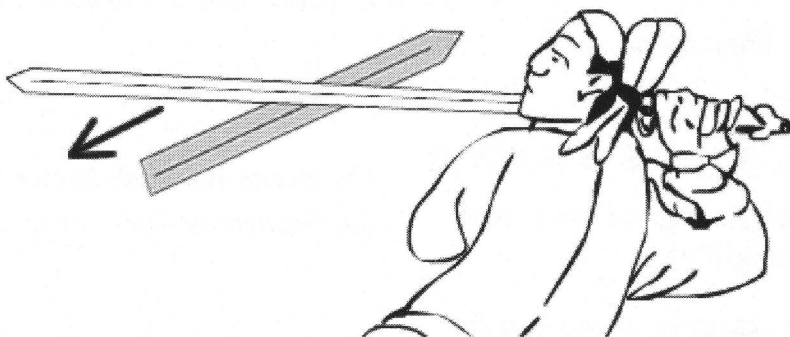
Flow with the situation to rush in with fast footwork into the **Lift-Pass Stance**.

5. 看法

kàn fǎ

Watch technique.

Explanation for “Horizontal-Dash Stance”



When the enemy cuts at you, you swiftly dash horizontally across to avoid getting cut, while at the same time raising your sword, as shown in the drawing.

Found in the 2nd verse, the word 滾 (*gun*) “Roll” is to contact the enemy’s weapon with yours, then slide down and ride along his weapon to cut at him. This “Roll” technique is found in the “Sword Treatise” manual.

Further evidence supporting this interpretation is found in the 4th verse, which says you must “flow with the situation”. As you “Roll” and ride your weapon along the enemy’s, he may move, and so you must flow with it in order to successfully cut him.



When you cut down, you'll end up in Stance #7: Lift-Pass Stance. Notice that both "Horizontal-Dash" and "Lift-Pass" are drawn with both feet facing *AWAY* from the enemy. As discussed previously, this is usually the case for stances meant for fighting while retreating, or to feign an appearance of defeat to the enemy.

1. The 4th verse says you should dash forward. After which, you may continue by performing Horizontal-Dash but on the opposite side now. For instance, if your cut didn't end the fight, and the enemy is making a subsequent attack at you.
2. The enemy is charging in strong, so you flow with his incoming energy and step back instead, while at the same time cutting him down. This seems more plausible since both stances are drawn with their feet pointing backwards.

茅子曰

máo zǐ yuē

古之言兵者必言劍

gǔ zhī yán bīng zhě bì yán jiàn

今不用于陣以失其傳也

jīn bù yòng yú zhèn yǐ shī qí
chuán yě

余博搜海外始得之

yú bó sōu hǎi wài shǐ de zhī

其式更不可緩矣

qí shì gèng bù kě huǎn yǐ

劍無今古

jiàn wú jīn gǔ

即武經之二種而圖之

jí wǔ jīng zhī èr zhǒng ér tú zhī

Mao-Zi said:

"In the past, those who talked
about martial arts, will
definitely mention the sword.

Today, it's not used in battle
and its art is lost."

Only when I searched for the
art overseas, was I able to
obtain it.

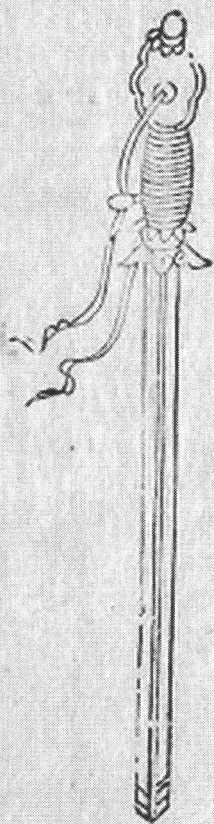
I must not be slow in sharing
this art.

There is no differences
between today's swords and
those in the past.

The following 2 types of
swords were documented in
Wu Jing, "Martial Treatise".

劔

劔



劍飾有銀鍮石銅素之品

jiàn shì yǒu yín shí tóng sù zhī
pǐn

The swords' fittings consist of
silver, brass, stone and bronze
materials.

近邊臣乞製厚脊短身劍

jìn biān chén qǐ zhì hòu jí duǎn
shēn jiàn

The state officials near the
borders requested for short
swords with thick spines

軍頗便其用

jūn pǒ biàn qí yòng

For the army to use.

About the Author 茅元儀

茅元儀 (*Mao Yuan Yi*) was a General in the late Ming Dynasty. Born in 1594, he was very well-skilled in military tactics and read widely. He authored 武備志 (*Wu Bei Zhi*) “Military Preparation Manual” and it was published in 1621. Consisting of 240 scrolls, it was considered to be the military encyclopedia of that time.

In 1640, the Qing Manchu soldiers attack southwards, and the *Dingxing* county fell to them. *Mao Yuan-Yi* expressed the desire to serve and protect the Emperor, but was impeached by the Minister of War *Zhang Feng-Yi*.

Mao Yuan-Yi was ordered to return to *Fujian* province for further investigation. *Mao* spent his last days drinking excessively in grief and indignation before passing away.

Linking Up The Stances

It is not explicitly stated, but if we were to believe the sequence of the 24 stances have some kind of logic to it, we can link them up to become a practice form.

Notice that some stances are opposites of each other, but yet they are not written beside each other in terms of page order. Examples are:

- Stance #17 – Left-Clamp Stance & Stance #22 – Right-Clamp Stance
- Stance #6 – Step-Across Right Stance & Stance #18 – Step-Across Left Stance.
- Stance #3 – Left-Wing Stance & Stance #15 – Right-Wing Stance.

In most other ancient manuals, the figures are always drawn facing one side consistently. But if you noticed, this Straight Sword manual is not consistent. Sometimes, the figure is drawn facing the left, sometimes to the right.

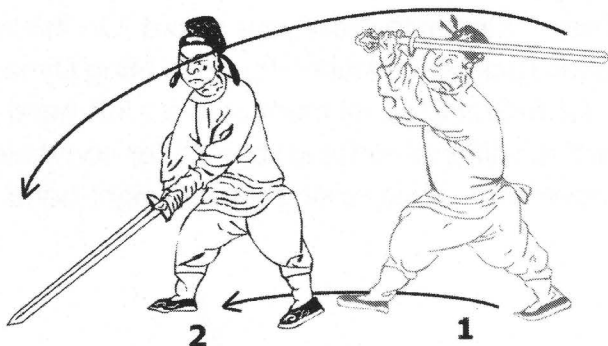
Hence, the possibility that these stances are numbered in such a sequence, for us to link them one after another, as a practice form to transit smoothly from one to the next.

The 1st step is to draw your sword. On the left, is the “Casual Tuck Shirt” stance found in Ming Dynasty General *Qi Ji-Guang*’s Fist manual. Your left-hand tucks your “skirt” (traditional clothing) behind for convenience during movement, while raising up your right-hand.

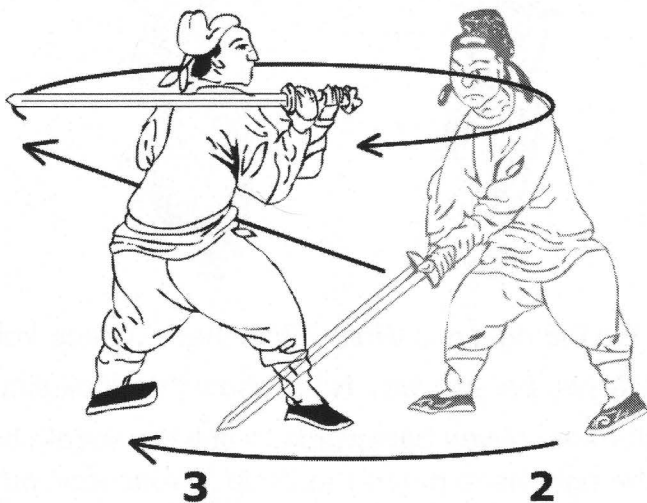


On the right is a Whip / Truncheon stance from 武備要略 (*wu bei yao lue*). Notice how they look similar? The left-hand moves backwards to pull the sheath back, while the right-hand draws the Whip / Truncheon out.

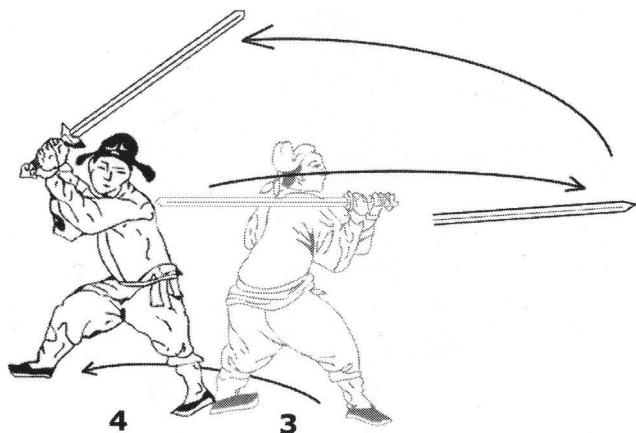
We can use this same movement for drawing out the sword too.



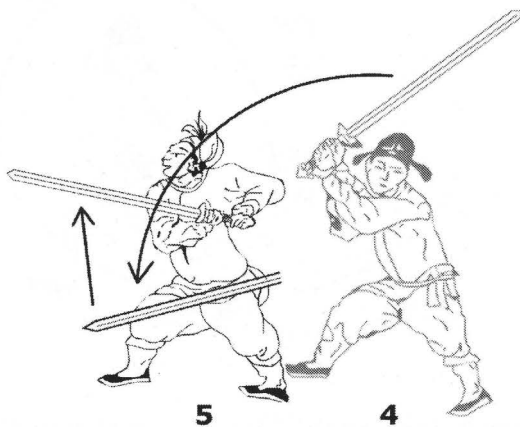
From 1: Raise-Cauldron Stance, step forward with your right-leg and cut down, into 2: Point-Sword Stance.



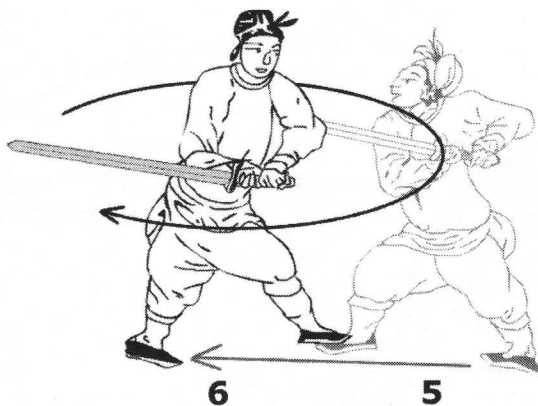
Step forward with your left-leg and thrust simultaneously. Then spin around while cutting horizontally, ending up in 3: Left-Wing Stance, with the sword at your right shoulder.



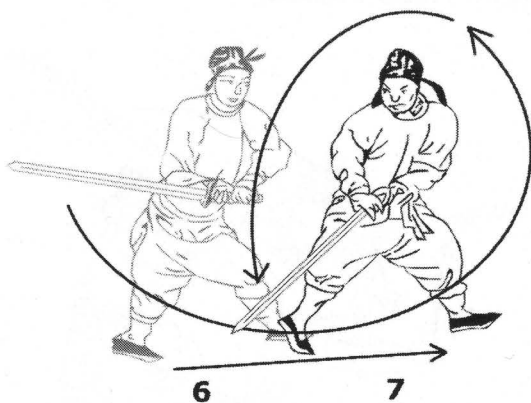
From 3: Left-Wing Stance, make a cut forward, then bring your right-leg around to the left, while lifting up your sword into 4: Leopard-Head Stance.



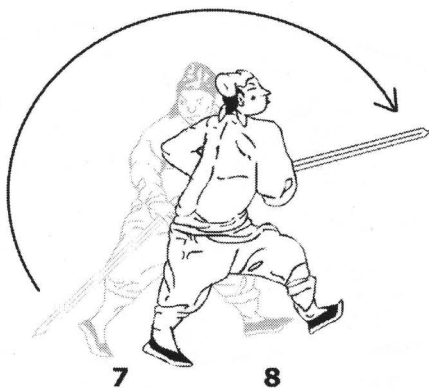
From 4: Leopard-Head Stance, cut down then swiftly bring the sword to your chest, into 5: Flat-Stomach Stance.



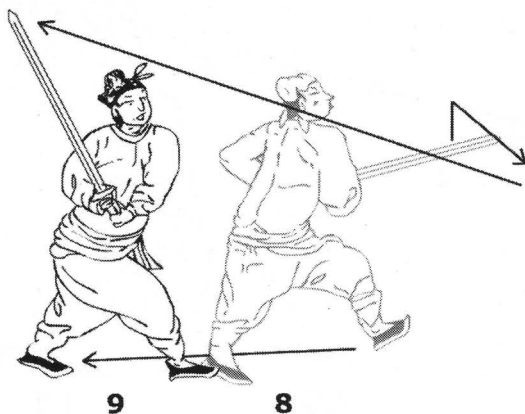
Step forward your left-foot to make a thrust. Then, both feet stay put, spin around while making a wide horizontal cut, ending up in 6: Step-Across Right Stance.



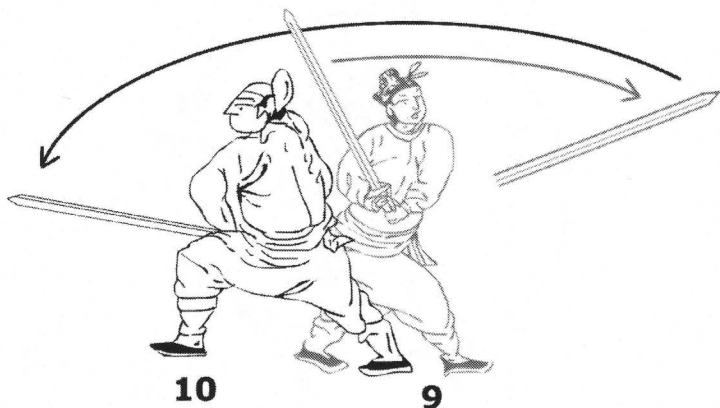
From 6: Step-Across Right Stance, cut upwards and bring down your sword, making it a full 360 degrees circle. At the same time, your left-leg crosses behind your right-leg, ending up in 7: Lift-Pass Stance.



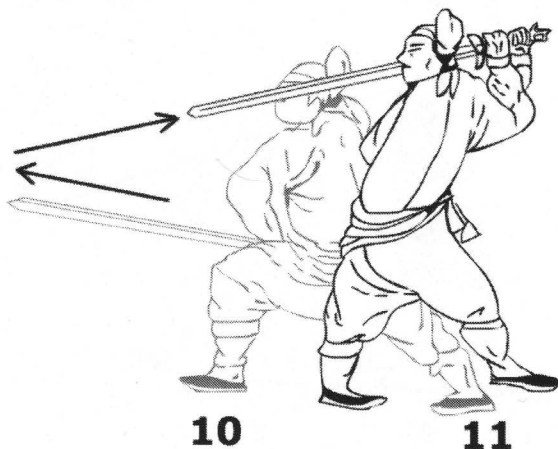
Cut upwards with the reverse-edge of your sword. Both feet stay put, turn your hips only and bring the hilt to your stomach or hip region, into 8: Drive-Wagon Stance.



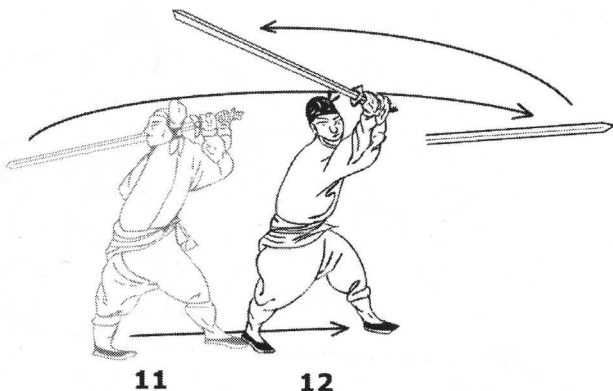
Perform a "Phoenix-Head" (small upwards flick, then small cut). Left-leg steps back and erect the sword into 9: Exhibit-Flag Stance.



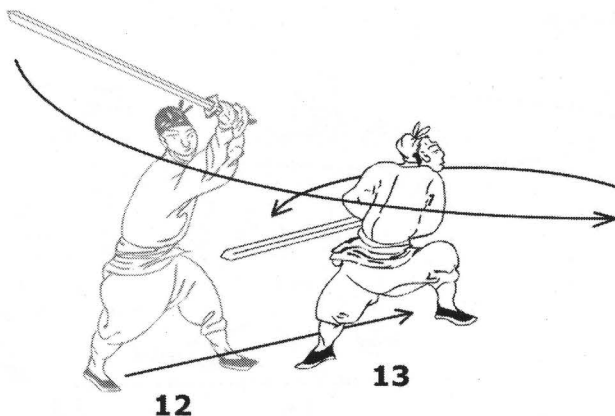
Make a cut forward first, then spin around and bring the sword down into 10: Stand-Guard Stance.



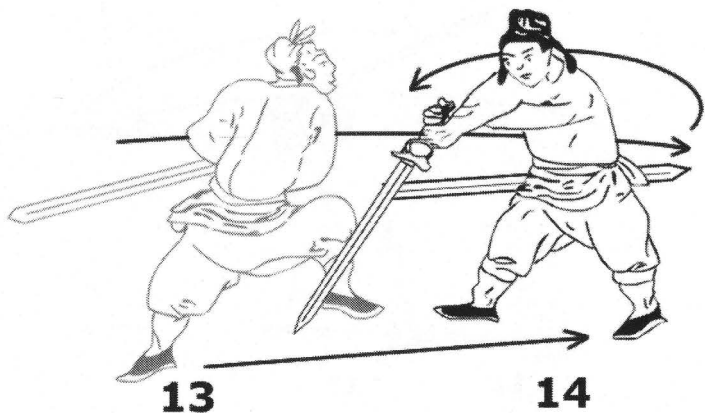
Thrust forward, then swiftly shift backwards while raising your sword up at the same time, into 11: Silver-Python Stance.



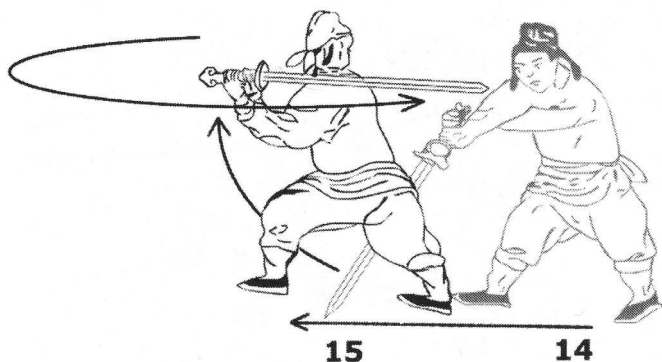
Step forward with your left-leg to cut at the enemy's temple. Then swiftly withdraw your sword to the left-side of your head, into 12: Drill-Strike Stance.



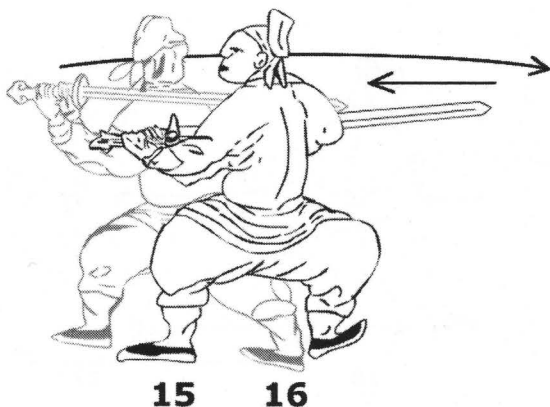
Swing the sword downwards to the right, making a right-to-left horizontal cut at the enemy's waist, while stepping diagonally to the left with your right-leg, into 13: Waist-Strike Stance.



Make a low horizontal cut first. Then spin around to the left, by bringing your left-leg behind your right-leg, while dropping the tip of your sword to the left, into 14: Spread-Wing Stance.



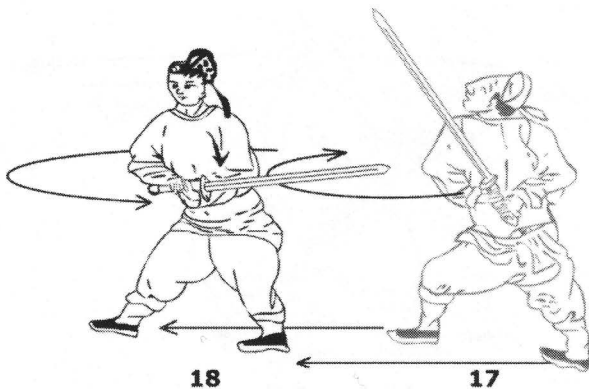
Step forward with your left-leg and cut upwards. Then make a shoulder-level horizontal cut from right-to-left with your reverse-edge, into 15: Right-Wing Stance.



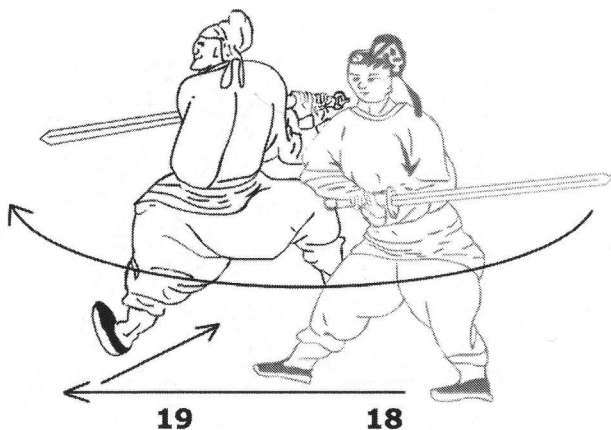
Make a 180 degrees swing, cutting horizontally from left to right. Then punch with the sword's pommel to the left, into 16: Open-Strike Stance.



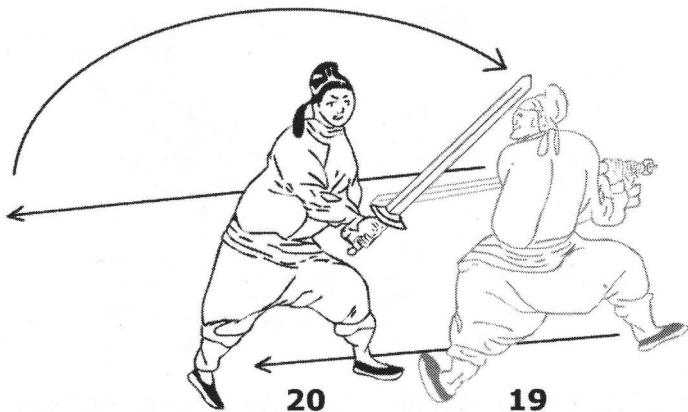
Step backwards with your left-leg, and bring the sword's tip up at the same time, into 17: Left-Clamp Stance.



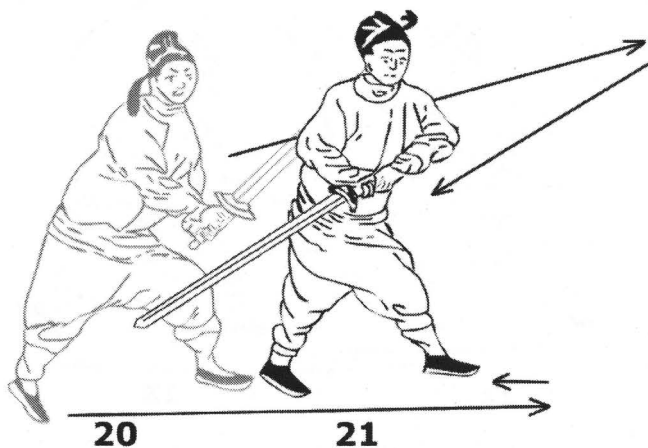
Step forward with your left-leg, and make a horizontal left-to-right horizontal cut. Then step forward with your right-leg to make a horizontal right-to-left cut with your reverse-edge, into 18: Step-Across Left Stance.



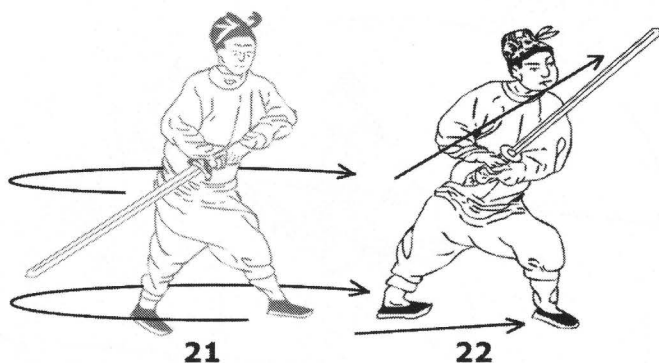
Step forward with your left-leg and make an upwards cut. Then shift diagonally backwards into 19: Flick-Strike Stance.



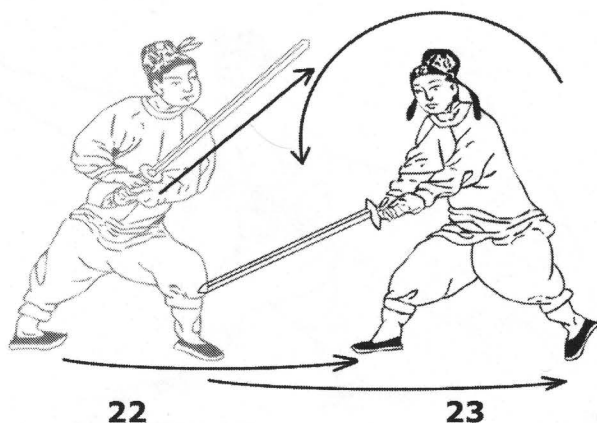
Step forward with your leg to make a mid-level thrust. Then spin around to the left to make a cut, into 20: Reverse-Scales Stance.



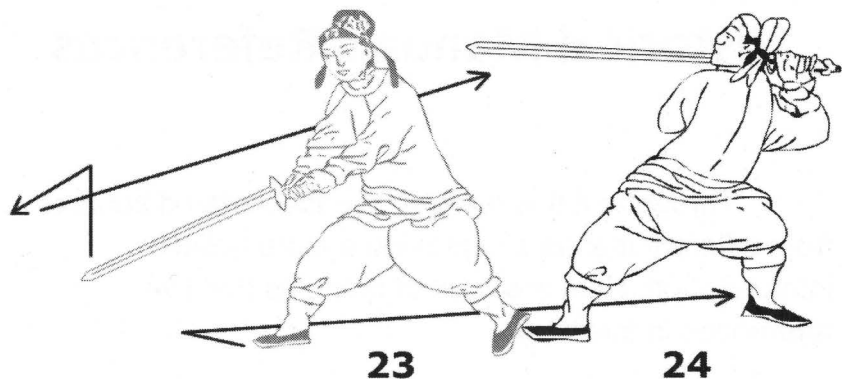
Step forward with your right-leg while thrusting forward simultaneously. Then shift slightly backwards, while lowering your sword into 21: Restrain-Wing Stance.



Make a 360 spin to the right to make a horizontal cut, ending up still with your right-leg forward. Then step forward with your left-leg and thrust forward, into 22: Right-Clamp Stance.



Step forward with your right-leg and raise up your sword to block. Then spin to the left by crossing your left-leg behind your right-leg, while making a downwards cut, into 23: Phoenix-Head Stance.



Make a small cut by flicking the sword's tip upward and dropping it down, while shifting slightly forward at the same time. Then step back diagonally and raise your sword up in 24: Horizontal-Dash Stance.



To resheath sword and complete the form, we will use a stance from the Whip / Truncheon manual again. Grip the hilt with a reverse-grip, to resheathe the sword.