

Di Guoyong
on
Xingyiquan

Volume I

Foundations

Third Edition of Five Element Foundation

The 2020 Set Edition

邸国勇
形意拳械精解
2020年修订版

translated and edited
by Andrea Mary Falk

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Author	ix
Author's Preface to the English edition	x
Author's Preface to the Chinese original	xii
Translator's Preface to the Book Set	xiii
Translator's Preface to the Second Edition	xiv
Editor's Preface to the 2020 Set Edition	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND	
Historical origins of Xingyiquan	1
Introduction to the five element fists	3
CHAPTER TWO: POST STANDING	
Introduction to post standing	5
Training progression for post standing	6
Primordial post standing	7
<i>Santishi</i> post standing	9
Descend the dragon post standing	17
Subdue the tiger post standing	20
Pounding post standing	22
CHAPTER THREE: SPLIT (CHOPPING FIST)	
Introduction to split	27
Standard split	27
Fixed stance split	31
Reverse stance split	32
Old style split	34
Dodging split	34
Retreating split	35
Further discussion of split	36
CHAPTER FOUR: DRILL (DRILLING FIST)	
Introduction to drill	43
Standard drill	44
Reverse stance drill	47
Dodging drill	50
Retreating drill	52

Coiling drill	53
Further discussion of drill	55

CHAPTER FIVE: DRIVE (CRUSHING FIST, THRUSTING PUNCH)

Introduction to drive	59
Standard drive (rear foot timed)	60
Lead foot timed drive	66
Reverse stance drive	67
Further discussion of drive	69

CHAPTER SIX: CANNON (POUNDING FIST)

Introduction to cannon	75
Standard cannon	76
Aligned stance cannon	81
Dodging cannon	84
Reverse stance cannon	85
Further discussion of cannon	86

CHAPTER SEVEN: CROSSCUT (CROSSING FIST)

Introduction to crosscut	91
Standard crosscut	92
Aligned stance crosscut	96
Retreating crosscut	98
Inward crosscut	99
Further discussion of crosscut	101

CHAPTER EIGHT: SOLO FORM

Introduction to Five Elements Connected	105
Names of the movements	105
Descriptions of the movements	106
Rhythm and power generation	118

CHAPTER NINE: PARTNER FORMS

Introduction to Entangling hands	121
Names of the movements	121
Descriptions of the movements	121
Introduction to Five Phases Contend	127
Names of the movements	127
Descriptions of the movements	127

CHAPTER TEN: THE TWELVE ANIMAL MODELS

Dragon	.....	135
Description of the movements	.....	136
Further discussion of dragon	.....	143
Tiger		
Description of the movements	.....	146
Further discussion of tiger	.....	161
Monkey		
Description of the movements	.....	167
Further discussion of monkey	.....	175
Horse		
Description of the movements	.....	181
Further discussion of horse	.....	192
Alligator		
Description of the movements	.....	196
Further discussion of alligator	.....	200
Chicken		
Description of the movements	.....	203
Further discussion of chicken	.....	213
Swallow		
Description of the movements	.....	219
Further discussion of swallow	.....	225
Sparrow Hawk		
Description of the movements	.....	230
Further discussion of sparrow-hawk.....	.....	236
Snake		
Description of the movements	.....	241
Further discussion of snake	.....	246
Wedge-tailed Hawk		
Description of the movements	.....	251
Further discussion of wedge-tailed hawk .....	.....	254
Eagle		
Description of the movements	.....	257
Further discussion of eagle	.....	262

Bear	
Description of the movements	..... 265
Further discussion of bear	..... 269
Eagle and Bear	
Description of the movements	..... 272
Further discussion of eagle and bear	..... 274
Pronunciation of pinyin	..... 275
About the translator	..... 278

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Di Guoyong was born in Hebei province in 1948 and moved to Beijing in 1960. He began his wushu life in 1963 with the well-known Zhao Zhong, apprenticing in Shaolinquan and Xingyiquan to improve his poor health. Later he also apprenticed to Wu Binlou to learn Chuojiao Fanzi, and Li Ziming to learn Liang style Baguazhang. His home in Beijing has given him access to the best martial artists throughout his life, until he has become one of those men that he emulated as a youth. He glows with the health and energy that training in the internal martial arts can bring.

Di Guoyong's main emphasis has for years been Xingyiquan. The work that he does for Xingyiquan sounds like the work of many: founding member, first secretary general, and long-term president of the Beijing Xingyi Quan Research Association; national level one wushu judge; member of the official Xingyi forms development committee; organizer of national and international Xingyi and traditional wushu competitions; Xingyi teacher at Beijing University and other colleges; coach of fighting and forms champions; teacher also of students every morning in the park and of many foreign visitors; author of numerous published articles; presenter of a popular instructional video series; and presenter of an instructional Xingyi series shown on Chinese television. His love for and skill in martial arts, and particularly in Xingyiquan, stands out as a player, teacher, presenter, judge, organizer, researcher, and writer.

Di Guoyong never backs down from any question until he has reached “three levels of why ” and this book reflects that attitude. He has combined his open and inquisitive mind with his years of experience to present the reader with a complete resource for training and teaching Xingyi.

Di Guoyong loves the written word and he loves to research every aspect of Xingyi through every means possible, whether modern or traditional. He never ceases to explore any avenue to learn more about martial arts theory and practice. This book represents the result of over forty years of his love, hard work, experience, and examination. It explains the whole of Xingyiquan – the shape and the meaning, the unarmed and the weapons, the practical and the theory, the training and the teaching, with his particular emphasis always on whole body power. He has tried to present the whole picture to the reader, to combine the form – *xing* – and the intent – *yi* – of Xingyiquan.

Andrea Falk

霍安娣

Morin Heights, QC, Canada

June 2005

SPLIT

劈拳

INTRODUCTION TO SPLIT, *PI QUAN* (CHOPPING FIST)

Xingyiquan classic texts say “The element that split relates to is metal, its form is like an axe, and the internal organ that it relates to is the Lung.”⁷ This is the common view of all classic Xingyiquan texts, and is the theory respected by all traditional folk Xingyiquan. “Split relates to metal” means that split corresponds to metal from among the five elements. “Split adopts the form of an axe,” means that it splits through objects, copying the action of a metal axe splitting wood. Examining the movements of the hands during split, they really do have the appearance of chopping forward and down while holding an axe – the power is applied from above and descends in an arc towards the front. Therefore, when the old masters said, “split takes its form from an axe,” they meant that the action resembled that made while splitting wood with an axe. This is quite descriptive but still vague enough to encourage students to explore and discover the meaning for themselves through training.

There are many methods of doing split. Post standing must be done to start with. Post standing builds the foundation for split – only by doing post standing can one build the strong foundation that will enable one to get a good grasp of split. Variations in footwork include: *fixed stance split*, *moving stance split*, *aligned stance split*, *reverse stance split*, *advance to split*, and *retreating split*. A variation in handwork is *pull down split*. Variations in bodywork include: *dodging split*, and *split turn around*.

METHODS OF PERFORMING SPLIT

1. STANDARD SPLIT: ALIGNED STANCE SPLIT WITH MOVING STEP

1a Right Split

yòu pī quán

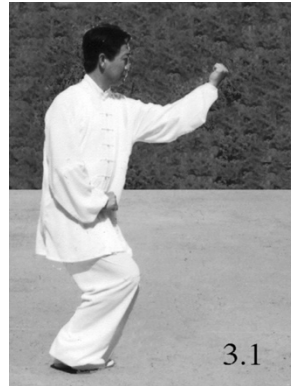
右劈拳

Start from left *santishi*. For a description of the *opening move* into *santishi*, see *santishi* post standing.

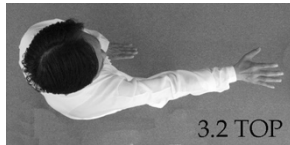
ACTION 1: Clench both hands, pulling the left fist back to meet the right fist at the belly. Hug both elbows into the ribs. Advance the left foot a half-step and

⁷ Editor’s note: See Chapter One and Volume II Chapter Four for more details.

immediately bring up the right foot parallel to the ground beside the left ankle. Keep both legs bent with the knees together. Continue on with the left fist – bring it up past the solar plexus then drill forward and up to nose height. Tuck the left elbow in, by twisting the ulnar edge [the little finger side] of the forearm up so that the fist heart is up. Do not move the right fist yet. Press the head up and look at the left fist. (image 3.1)



ACTION 2: Stride the right foot forward and follow in with the left foot a half-step. Keep most of the weight on the left leg to take a *santi* stance with the right foot leading and the left foot back. Drill the right fist up past the solar plexus, towards the left elbow, then along above the left forearm, fist heart up. As the right fist approaches the left fist, unclench both hands and inwardly rotate them, turning the palms down and forward. Pull the left palm down and back to the belly. Chop the right palm forward and down to shoulder height to split, sinking the wrist slightly so the palm faces obliquely forward and down. Keep the arm slightly bent and urge the right shoulder into the strike. Press the head up and look in the direction of the right hand. (images 3.2 and 3.2 top)



Pointers

- During the first movement of action one, the left hand should clench gradually as it moves back, and the trunk should move the left shoulder back slightly to draw the hand in. During the second movement of action one, the left fist should drill out at exactly the same time as the left foot advances, so that they work together.
- The right hand should land its split at exactly the same time that the right foot lands, so that the foot and hand enter together.
- The left foot should follow in quickly. The length of the stance should be appropriate to its height; the feet should be closer together in a higher stance and farther apart in a lower stance.
- Split strides forward into a forward and downward strike, so the stance should be slightly shorter than that of *santishi*, and the hand should finish lower than in *santishi* – at shoulder height.
- Split is a complete movement. Perform it slowly when learning, but once comfortable, actions 1 and 2 should be continuous and completed as a single action.

1b Left Split

zuǒ pīquán

左劈拳

ACTION 1: Following from *right split*, advance the right foot a half-step and bring the left foot up to the right ankle with the foot off the ground. Keep both legs bent and the knees together. Clench both hands and pull the right fist back to the belly, then drill it up past the solar plexus and out to nose height, with the ulnar edge twisted up so that the centre of the fist faces up. Keep the right elbow tucked in, the head pressed up, and the eyes on the right fist. (image 3.3)



ACTION 2: Stride the left foot forward and follow the right foot in a half-step, keeping the weight mostly on the right leg. Drill the left fist up past the solar plexus, out past the right elbow and along the top of the forearm, fist heart up. As the left fist approaches the right fist, turn both hands over and open them, and pull the right hand down and back to the belly as the left hand splits forward and down to shoulder height. The left palm faces obliquely forward and down. Press the head up and look to the direction of the left hand. (images 3.4 and 3.4 front)

**1c Split Turn Around**

pīquán zhuànrshēn

劈拳转身

Starting from the *right split* as example.

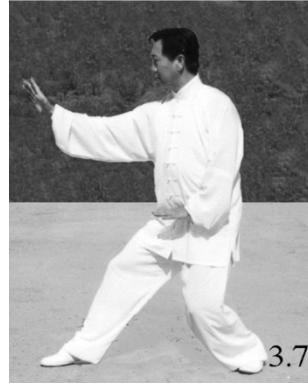
ACTION 1: Clench the right hand and pull it back to the belly. Hook-in the right foot, shift onto the right leg, and turn around 180 degrees to the left to face the direction from which you came. Swivel the left foot to get it pointing straight, so that the legs take a *santi* stance. (image 3.5)

ACTION 2: Advance the left foot a half-step and bring the right foot up beside the left ankle without touching down. Drill the left fist up from the belly past the solar plexus and out to nose height, ulnar edge twisted up. Look at the left



fist. (image 3.6)

ACTION 3: Stride the right foot forward and follow in a half-step with the left foot, keeping the weight mostly on the left leg. While doing this, bring the right fist up from the solar plexus to the left elbow then along the top of the forearm to split forward. Press the head up and look forward. This action is the same as *right split*. (image 3.7)



- The action of *split turn around* is the same whether on the right or left side, just transpose the right and left actions.

Pointers

- Pay particular attention while turning that the weight shift of the body stays stable – hook the foot in and turn the body around quickly.

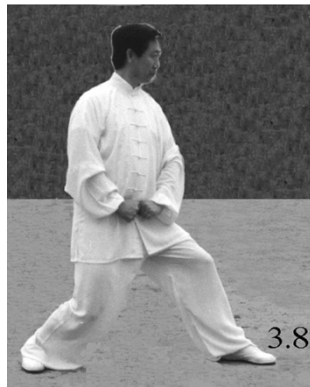
1d Split Closing Move

pīquán shōushì

劈拳收势

On arriving back at the starting point, do a *split turn around* to face the original direction, and continue on until you arrive in a *left split* – that is, continue until the left foot and hand are leading – then perform *closing move*.

ACTION 1: Clench the left hand and cock the fist to press it down at the belly, fist heart down, beside the right fist, which has stayed at the belly, also clenching the fist with the heart down. Do not move the feet, but press the left foot into the ground as the left fist pulls back. Press the head up and look forward. (image 3.8)

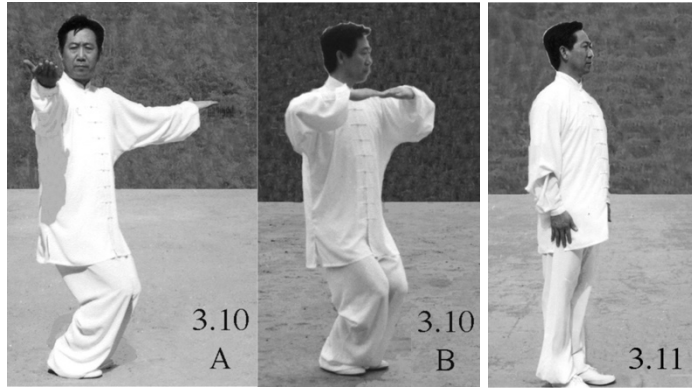


ACTION 2: Shift onto the left leg and bring the right foot up beside the left foot, keeping the legs bent to maintain the body at the same height. Keep the fists at the belly. Press the head up slightly and look forward. (image 3.9)



ACTION 3: Unclench the fists and lower the hands, then raise them in a curved route to shoulder height at the sides of the body, arms slightly bent and palms up. Then bend the arms further and bring the hands in to the face, fingers pointing to each other and palms down. Do not change the flexion of the legs during this action. (images 3.10 A and B)

ACTION 4: Lower the hands past the face, pressing down to the belly, then place them at the sides. Straighten the legs to stand up. Turn the body to face forward, and the closing movement is done. (image 3.11)



Pointers

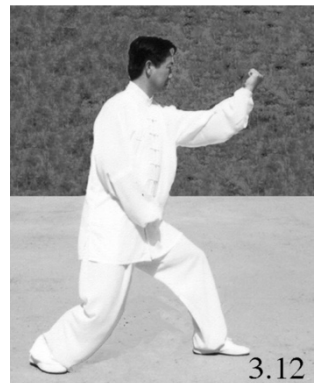
- Three actions must occur simultaneously, with full spirit: sink and bring in the left fist, press the left foot into the ground, and press the head up.
- Circle the hands up then press them down in one continuous action. Press the hands down as you stand up, so that the hands and legs act in unison.

2. FIXED STANCE SPLIT dīngbù pīquán 定步劈拳

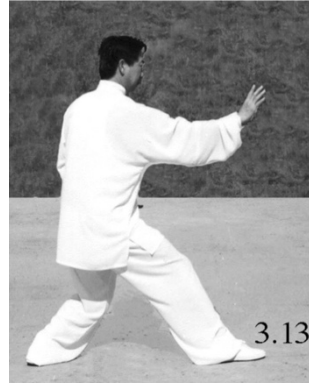
‘Fixed stance’ means that there is no half-step advance or half-step follow in. There is only one step for each split, and each action finishes in a *santi* stance. The rear hand comes through with the advance of the rear foot, in one single split action. This is a good practice for beginners, before going on to the standard *moving stance split*.

ACTION 1: Start from left *santishi*. Do not move the feet or right fist. Clench both hands and pull the left fist back to the belly, then bring it up past the solar plexus and drill forward and up to nose height. Keep the left elbow tucked in and the ulnar edge turned over. Press the head up and look forward. (image 3.12)

ACTION 2: Advance the right foot but do not follow in with the left foot. As the right foot lands and grabs the ground, let the left foot swivel for forty-five degrees to take a *santi* stance with the right foot leading and the left foot back, most of the weight on the left leg. Drill the right fist up past the solar plexus and out to the left elbow, then along above the left forearm, then, as the right fist approaches the left fist, rotate them inward and unclench the hands. Split the right



hand forward and down to chest height and bring the left hand back to the belly. Press the head up and look forward. (image 3.13)



- Carry on in this way, alternating right and left.

Pointers

- Do not change the height of the stance while changing position. The split must be completed as the foot lands – hands and feet combining with integrated power and timing.
- Turn around and closing move for fixed stance split are similar to those of the standard split, see description 1d.

3. REVERSE STANCE SPLIT àobù pīquán 拗步劈拳

3a Reverse Stance Right Split àobù yòu pīquán 拗步右劈拳

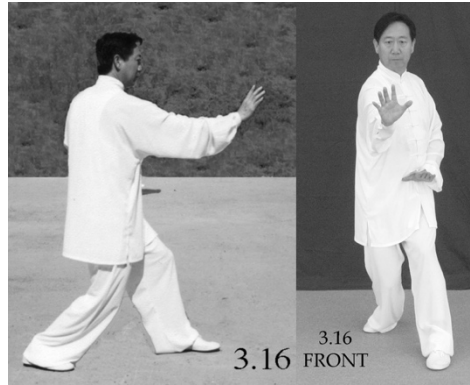
Start from left *santishi*.

ACTION 1: Withdraw the left foot back to beside the right foot and touch down to shift onto the left leg. Clench fists and pull the left fist back to join the right fist at the belly. (image 3.14)

ACTION 2: Bring the left fist up past the solar plexus then drill forward and up to nose height with the ulnar edge turned up. Step the right foot a half-step forward and follow in with the left foot to nestle it by the right ankle. Press the head up and look forward. (image 3.15)



ACTION 3: Take a big step forward with the left foot and follow in a half-step with the right foot, keeping most weight on the right leg. Bring the right hand past the solar plexus, to the left elbow, then along above the left forearm to unclench and split forward. Pull the left hand back to the belly. The hand movements are identical to those of *standard split* described earlier. Press the head up and look forward. (images 3.16 and 3.16 front)



3b Reverse Stance Left Split

àobù zuǒ pīquán

拗步左劈拳

ACTION 1: Take a half-step forward with the left foot and follow in with the right. Clench the right fist, pull it back to the belly, and then drill it forward and up to nose height, ulnar edge turned over. Look forward. (image 3.17)

ACTION 2: Take a big step forward with the right foot and follow in a half-step with the left. Bring the left fist up past the solar plexus and drill forward above the right forearm. As the left fist approaches the right fist, rotate the fists inward [thumb towards palm] and unclench them, chopping the left hand forward and down and pulling the right back to the belly. (image 3.18)



Pointers

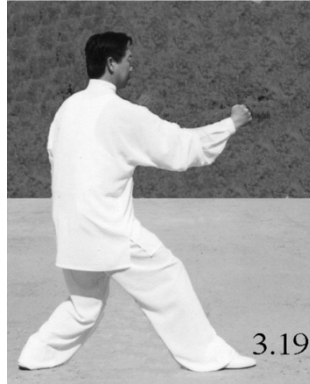
- Drill the left fist out as the right foot advances a half-step. Split the right hand forward as the left foot lands forward. The upper and lower body act together.
- Keep the lumbar and waist area lively and loose. Urge the right shoulder into the *right split*, and urge the left shoulder into the *left split*.
- The stance should have an appropriate width between the feet for stability – neither on a straight line, nor wider than the shoulders.

4. OLD STYLE SPLIT lǎoshì pīquán 老式劈拳

This method really is a splitting fist, as it uses fists throughout [although it uses a palm, the name in Chinese of split is ‘splitting fist – *piquan* ’]. One fist pulls back and the other fist strikes out and down to pound. The footwork is the same as the *standard split*, the main difference between them is in the use of fists.

ACTION 1: The actions of the feet and hands are similar to those of the first action of the standard, or moving stance, split, see description 1a.

ACTION 2: Take a big step forward with the right foot and follow in a half-step with the left foot. Bring the right fist up past the solar plexus then drill out along the left forearm. As the fist approaches the left fist, inwardly rotate both forearms slightly so that the fist eyes face up. Pull the left fist back to the belly and split forward and down with the right fist to chest height. Bend the right arm slightly, urge the shoulder forward, settle the elbow, press the head up, and look forward. (image 3.19)



- Carry on alternating right and left.

Pointers

- All points to consider are the same as *standard split*, the only difference being that *standard split* uses the palm and *old style split* uses the fist to strike. When you use the fist to split forward and down this gives a hidden pounding and punching power and intent. It uses the fist and forearm to strike, and is a pounding action forward and down. Just as the fist arrives at the point of contact, use the forward drive of the legs, the settled extension of the shoulder and elbow, and the settling of the wrist forward to create a unified whole body power.
- *Turn around* and *closing move* for *old style split* are similar to those of *standard split*, see descriptions Split 1c and 1d.

5. DODGING SPLIT yáoshēn pīquán 摇身劈拳

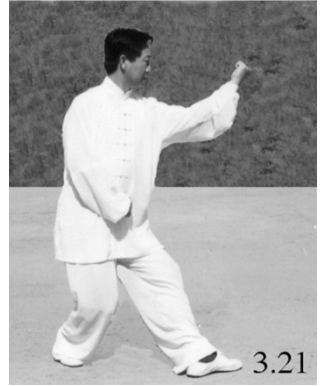
Dodging split uses body technique and positioning for evasion while the hands still perform the splitting action to counterattack. Start from left *santishi*.

ACTION 1: Clench the left hand to a fist and pull it back to the belly. Withdraw the left foot to beside the right foot and shift back to the right leg. Turn the body a bit to the right. Press the head up and look forward. (image 3.20)

ACTION 2: Advance the left foot a half-step to the forward right with the toes hooked slightly out. Drill the left fist up past the solar plexus, forward and out with the ulnar edge turned up, arm bent, and fist at nose height. Keep the right fist at the belly. Press the head up and look forward. (image 3.21)



3.20



3.21

- Follow through with a regular splitting strike. The rest of the actions are the same as the *standard split* described above.

Pointers

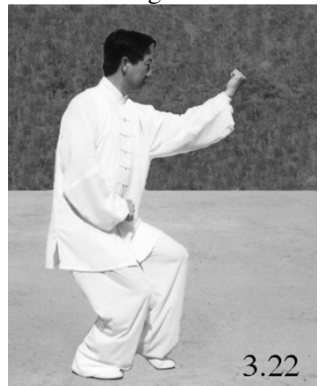
- *Dodging split* emphasizes circular footwork. First withdraw the lead foot then step forward.
- Shift the weight back when the lead foot withdraws. At this time the body should turn away and tuck in with an evasive dodging action.
- The actions should link together without hesitation.
- *Turn around* and *closing move* for *dodging split* are similar to those of *standard split*, see descriptions 1c and 1d.

6. RETREATING SPLIT tuìbù pīquán

退步劈拳

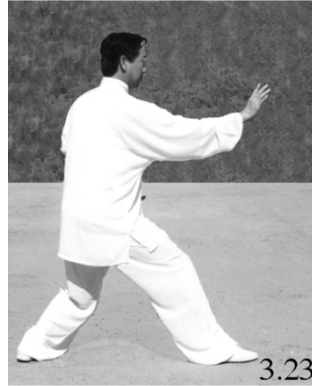
Retreating split trains retreating footwork. A characteristic of Xingyiquan's footwork is, "to advance, first advance the lead foot, and when it advances, the other foot must follow in. To retreat, first retreat the rear foot, and when it retreats, the other foot must withdraw." *Retreating split* uses this characteristic footwork – that of first retreating the rear foot then withdrawing the lead foot. Start from left *santishi*.

ACTION 1: Retreat the right foot a half-step and shift back onto the right leg, then withdraw the left foot to touch down beside the right foot. Clench the left fist and pull back to the belly, then drill forward and up past the solar plexus to nose height with the ulnar edge turned up. Press the head up and look forward. (image 3.22)



3.22

ACTION 2: Retreat a big step back with the left foot then withdraw the right foot a half-step to take a *santi* stance with the right leading and the left behind. Perform a *standard split* with the right hand and pull the left hand back to the belly. Press the head up and look forward. (image 3.23)



- Carry on, alternating right and left.

Pointers

- When retreating, the toes touch down first, then the rest of the foot. The retreating step needs to be agile, and the withdrawing step must follow smoothly. The backward weight shift should be stable.
- The first actions must work together – the left fist drills out as the right foot retreats and the left foot withdraws.
- The second actions must work together – the right hand splits as the left foot retreats and the right foot withdraws.
- Do not apply hard power when doing the *retreating split*. Keep the movement soft to work on coordination and smoothness.
- *Turn around and closing move for retreating split* are similar to those of *standard split*, see descriptions Split 1c and 1d.
- Referred to in some classics as *cat washes its face*, the technique *retreating split* is indeed similar, but emphasizes the footwork. The technique *cat washes its face* emphasizes the hand action.
- There is also another type of *retreating split* that is performed thusly – the right hand splits forward as the left foot retreats back. The left foot lands with a thump. This is just a different personal choice in technique. Everyone may choose from a variety of methods according to their experience and preference.

PROBLEMS OFTEN MET IN SPLIT

PROBLEM 1⁸: A beginner often focuses on the route that the hands and fists take in any technique that involves a drilling action [in most techniques the fists drill as they rise] and neglects to keep the elbows snug to the ribs. This causes partial power delivery because whole body power is inhibited.

CORRECTIONS: The teacher must repeatedly explain the movement requirements and the tracking line of the elbows. The teacher must work physically with the students to help them feel the difference in force between when the elbows are tucked in and when they are not. Do this by leaning into a student's hands or forearms as he holds the different postures. This will help the students to make the correction, to tuck in the elbows and keep them snug to the ribs.

PROBLEM 2: The student allows the body to rise and fall while advancing. He allows his body to come up during the half-step forward, which dissipates power.

CORRECTIONS: The problem arises because not enough attention is paid to the supporting knee. The student is not consciously controlling the height of the stance with the knees. The key lies in controlling the amount of knee flex throughout the action. The student should be sure to bend the supporting leg when advancing into the single leg stance, to keep this stance the same height as the *santishi*. A certain rise and fall cannot be avoided, but it should be limited to five percent of a person's height.

PROBLEM 3: The student's back foot follows in with the heel in a straight line with the lead foot, or even a twisted stance, making the body and stance unstable.

CORRECTIONS: The reason for this problem is incorrect placement of the rear foot as it lands from the follow-in step. As the rear foot lands, the insides of the feet should be on either side of a fist-width line. Any larger lateral distance and the groin area will be open. Any smaller and the stance will be unstable. The base must be just large enough to provide stability. More post standing will make the correct position comfortable and fixed into the body.

PROBLEM 4: The student drags the hip when bringing the back foot in, so that the rear foot lands in a stance that is too open laterally. This causes the groin area to be open.

CORRECTIONS: Weak hip action is usually the result of focusing on the lead foot and hands and forgetting or ignoring the back foot follow-in step. When stepping the back foot up, the teacher must emphasize that the knee

⁸ Editor's note: Problems 1 through 7 are common amongst beginners, and must be dealt with as they learn the first technique of splitting palm. If not, the same problems will haunt the students as they learn the next four element techniques, and affect all efforts in Xingyiquan.

brings the foot in. Roll the hip in and align the knee to bring the foot forward. The student must also be careful to place the rear foot at an angle smaller than forty-five degrees to the forward line.

PROBLEM 5: The lead foot slips forward as the student hits, when the back foot comes in.

CORRECTIONS: The main cause of this problem is that the student does not use a ‘trampling power’ when landing the lead foot – the toes do not grip the ground. When the lead foot lands it should combine a ‘stamping downward’ power with a ‘backward raking’ power. The secondary cause is overextension of the lead knee. The knee should always maintain a certain flexion when the lead leg lands, ideally a 150 degree angle between the lower leg and the thigh. The legs should also have an appropriate ‘gathering in power’ between them. That is, the lead foot should exert a raking force that pulls it back, which will prevent it from sliding forward. The cause of these mistakes is usually taking too big a step forward and keeping too low. Beginners should take an appropriately smaller step forward at first, and keep the stance relatively high. They can gradually lengthen the step as they improve.

PROBLEM 6: The student is unstable or the feet and hands do not arrive simultaneously.

CORRECTIONS: The cause of instability is often either taking too big a step forward or turning the waist too much to punch towards the midline. Focus on punching forward by using a target. Getting the timing of the feet and hands right needs a lot of practice, focusing on the timing.

PROBLEM 7: The buttocks stick out backwards when the student punches forward.

CORRECTIONS: Leaning the trunk forward and sticking the buttocks out is a big error in most styles. Pay attention to pressing the head up as if hitting the sky, and to sitting the buttocks down solid as a rock, “stable as Mount Tai”.

PROBLEM 8: The student allows the lead hand to drop or move back towards the body as the rear hand comes through to drill along the forearm. This is a common mistake among beginners.

CORRECTIONS: At all times focus on keeping the lead fist at nose height with the ulnar edge turned over – keep the three tips lined up (lead hand, lead foot, nose). The fist that is drilling out must have a forward and upward drilling power, creating an oblique upward pressing power. Wait until the rear fist approaches the leading fist before both fists unclench and pull down and back. Emphasize that a clenched fist always presses forward, and that an open hand pulls back.

PROBLEM 9: There is no whole body power in the strike; the hand slaps out with the force of the arm alone.

CORRECTIONS: Snapping or slapping with the hand and forearm results in a weak, shallow force instead of the required whole body power of Xingyiquan. Students must pay attention when applying force to maintain the elbow joint at an angle of about 135 degrees. Urge the arm forward from the shoulder and follow through by extending the elbow slightly. In this way the whole body is behind the strike. Focusing on the shoulder and elbow will keep students from slapping out with the hand alone.

POWER GENERATION FOR SPLIT

The hand action of split “rises with a drill and lands with a turn over.” There is no straight line movement as the hands rise and fall and the arms extend and return – the hands follow an elliptical route throughout. Each hand rises with a drilling fist and drops with a turning over open hand. We must focus not only on the route of the hands or fists along this elliptical track, but also on the track followed by the elbows, since the hands are pushed out directly from the elbows. The elbows must hug the ribs, whether extending or returning; they must ‘adhere to the ribs,’ ‘slide on the ribs,’ or ‘rub the ribs.’

How can Xingyi masters knock someone far away with just one splitting palm? I think that first of all, the old masters had deep skills, high technical ability, and used whole body power. In addition to hitting the right spot, applying force at the optimal angle, and applying the optimal timing, the key lies in applying force in a continuous, unbroken manner at the instant of impact. This increases the length of time of the applied force, thus giving the ability to knock someone far away.

Split should be applied with a wavelike power, but this wave must not be too large or obvious. It is more a matter of synchronizing the hands, eyes, body, and feet and adding focus. The power delivery of split is to chop downward and to push forward, with a very slight upward ‘lengthening power’ in the body to counterbalance the downward action. The application of these three forces at once with a continuous unbroken energy at the instant of impact at the opportune time is what makes split effective. When using split, first apply the downward forward power. This makes the receiver unwittingly apply an upward countering force. ‘Borrow his force to augment your own.’ Take the receiver’s upward opposition and apply an upward force from your lumbar/waist area. This makes it easy to lift his root. Once his root is lost his body is unstable and his power dissipated. A forceful push forward then will propel him a long way off.

- The downward and forward action of split comes from the settling of the elbow.
- The upward lengthening power comes from the upward press of the head and the lengthening of the lumbar area.
- The forward drive comes from the back heel driving into the ground and the body’s forward thrust with the shoulder and waist urging into the move; add a drop of the shoulder and an extension of the arm to push and deliver the

power.

- The integration of these power applications uses mainly the strength of the legs, lower back and shoulder girdle. The resulting force comes largely from the leg force and body technique. You could say that the legs, lumbar/waist area, and shoulders contribute sixty to seventy percent of the force.
- Concentrate your power and force on the last extension, synchronizing the release of force with an expulsion of breath.

Of course, the key to split is whole body power – the hands and feet arriving smoothly together, the whole body's force as one, the power integrated. When hitting with split, be sure to press the head up. When the hand chops forward and down, hold the idea of lengthening the head slightly upward. This gives greater forward and downward splitting power to the hand.

BREATHING CYCLE FOR SPLIT

You must coordinate positional breathing once you are comfortable with the movement, in order to gain whole body power.

- Inhale as the lead hand clenches and pulls back. Move slowly and focus on keeping an imposing manner.
- Pause your breath as the lead foot advances a half-step and the lead hand drills out.
- Exhale as the rear foot steps forward and the rear hand comes through to split.

See Chapter Eleven for more detail on breathing theory and techniques that apply to all Xingyi techniques.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR SPLIT

The classic texts say, “learn the set way, but there is no set way in application.” You need to act according to the actual situation; you cannot just perform actions as if performing a routine form, but must use techniques flexibly. The key to using split is to apply the power specific to the split technique.

The hands protect the centre line when they drill up. The hands should defend the midline at all times no matter whether you are advancing, retreating, or stepping around.

Analyze the utilization of split according to its structure.

- The implication of the lead hand clenching and pulling in, then drilling out, is: the lead hand grabs and pulls down the attacker's hand, grabbing clothes if they are there, otherwise grabbing 'meat.'

- The implication of the forward drill is: hit the attacker's head or defend by jamming, being aware that you can open the hand to change to a hooking pull.

When advancing, advance the whole body, so when the rear hand comes through to chop down it strikes the attacker's head or chest as you advance, using the footwork to shove the body and the hand to split through, seeking to push the attacker away.

Whether or not you can realize these goals depends on hard practice every day, how matched your strength is to your opponent, and your ability to apply the technique with the proper direction, angle, and timing. As long as you are using a technique or power approximating that of split, that is, if you strike forward and down from above using the split power, then whether you strike with open hand, fist, or forearm, it falls into the range of the 'split' technique.

THE POEM ABOUT SPLIT

劈拳歌诀

劈拳似斧性属金，
起钻落翻细推寻。
拳掌劈落头上顶，
手脚齐到方为真。

Split is like chopping with an axe. Its character is that of metal.

Initiate with a drill and land with a turnover, a little force will push an opponent eight feet away.

The head presses up as the fist or hand lands the strike,

The hands and feet arrive together and go direct to the core.