

Peaceful Dragon School



Yang Style – Short Form

Grasp Sparrow's Tail
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preparation2. Beginning3. Grasp Sparrow's Tail (GST) Ward-off Left4. GST Ward-off right5. GST Rollback / Press6. GST Push

During the first stage practitioners concentrate on learning choreographed movement and the basic principles that constitute the Form. The principles, relax, differentiate weight, proper alignment, and moving from the center, along with basic meditation techniques control and engage the cognitive aspect of the mind.

Basic Principles

Relaxation

Relaxation has an effect on many different dimensions of our well-being. In this case, relaxation refers to a state of openness and an absence of excessive physiological, psychological, emotional, and spiritual tension. Critical to learning how to monitor stress levels, overtime a practitioner develops an ability to let go and dissolve the impulse of her/his tension.

The breath is the main catalyst for understanding relaxation. A TCC practitioner starts by first learning to breathe while learning the form. The breath drives him/her back into the body and becomes the vehicle for multidimensional letting go. After a substantial time of study, the practitioner begins to realize when she/he may not be breathing. Along with not breathing, there can also be a holding of physical and mental tension.

Therefore as a practitioner reminds him/herself to breathe, she/he may also let go of tension.

Weight Distribution

Second to the breathe and relative to relaxation, clearly defining weight distribution while practicing the Form lowers a practitioner's center of gravity and increases the balance potentials. When learning clear and precise weight distribution, a practitioner reflects on how she/he is shifting the weight; feels the transition of weight from one foot to the other; and learns to align 100% of the weight on one leg before picking up the "empty" foot.

Like relaxation, balance also has an effect on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of well-being. For instance, the practitioner's experience of "place" is enhanced when he/she can feel the feet on the ground. Being aware of her/his connection to the earth and that he/she is physically propelling the body through space offers a sense of being "grounded" and present.

Being grounded is one of the first qualities of consciousness that disappears when loosing the balance. For the practitioner, the exploration of balance within the Form also lends awareness and tools for coping with the overall sense of balance in everyday activities and interactions. The practice of "seeing with the feet" in TCC becomes a visceral knowing of how to take steps from a centered place and within personal boundaries that in turn informs the conscious state of mind of the same.

Alignment

Proper alignment techniques in the Form - head upright, lower back relaxed, feet relaxed, and the chin, elbows and shoulders slightly weighted, are connected to sensing relaxation as well as being grounded, and touches the experience of moving the body as a "whole."

A saying often repeated in TCC is, "Let the spirit of vitality reach the head top." When the body posture is slumped forward or tilted, the conscious energy flow and awareness of the body as a whole is impeded. Posture often reflects how a person aligns in space, with others, sense of being present, and indicates the vitality of one's spirit. With the posture upright, a practitioner not only gains an awareness of "whole body," but also a mindfulness and alignment of being present within his/her environment.

Centered Movement

Along with the vertical center of alignment, there is the horizontal center of the waist/hips. In TCC, all centrifugal and centripetal motion of the limbs are mechanically guided by the waist/hips. No limb acts independent of the waist/hips. This body mechanic centers the movements and helps prevent disjointed movement. With this, comes the sensation of moving the body as a whole.

An everyday application of this principle is the direct relationship with, and focus on, task. With practice, a practitioner will seek to de-fragment, and reflect on the direct interconnection with objects and events in life.