

Eight Pieces of Brocade

Marshal Yueh Fei is credited with the creation of the Eight Pieces of Brocade (*Ba Dun Gin*) in the twelfth century during the Sung dynasty (960-1279 A.D.) in order to improve the health of his soldiers. The original set consisted of 12 forms, but this has been shortened to eight.

This set was widely practiced all over China, and developed several distinct styles, all of them effective. The brocade is a cloth, usually of silk, woven into complex and colorful patterns, and is very highly prized, just as the good health produced by these simple exercises is highly prized.

When performing the set, the following rules should be observed:

Relax before and after exercising, perhaps by taking a short walk.
Breathe naturally through the nose.
Keep the back vertical, except where leaning is part of the exercise.
Practice where ventilation is good.
Perform the exercises slowly and keep relaxed.
Repeat each piece three to five times.

Perform the movements one after the other without stopping until a complete set is done, then repeat the complete set as many times as desired.





Fig. 2-54.



Fig. 2-55.



Fig. 2-56.



Fig. 2-57.



Fig. 2-58.

Piece 1 (Figs. 2-54 through 2-58):

Stand with the feet parallel and shoulder width apart. Inhale. While exhaling turn the head as far to the left as possible without moving the rest of the body and look to the rear. While inhaling return the gaze to the front. Exhale while turning the head as far as possible to the right and looking to the rear, then inhale while looking to the front again.

Piece 2 (Figs. 2-59 through 2-63):

Lace the fingers together in front of the body with the palms facing up. While exhaling, swing the arms out in front of the chest and then up until the arms are overhead with the palms facing up. Inhale while returning the hands to their starting position.



Fig. 2-59.



Fig. 2-60.



Fig. 2-61.



Fig. 2-62.



Fig. 2-63.

Piece 3 (Figs. 2-64 through 2-68):

Hold the hands in front of the body with hands facing up and the middle fingers pointing toward each other. While exhaling, simultaneously move the left hand overhead palm up and the right hand down palm down. While inhaling bring the hands to their original position. While exhaling simultaneously raise the right hand overhead palm up and move the left hand down palm down. Inhale and return to the original position.

Piece 4 (Figs. 2-69 through 2-79):

Make fists at the sides, palms up. While inhaling step to the left and assume a horse stance. While exhaling turn the body slightly to the left and cross the arms in front of the chest. Curl the three small fingers of the left hand and make a "V" with the index finger and the thumb. Look at the index finger and extend it horizontally to the left while exhaling. At the same time make



Fig. 2-64.



Fig. 2-65.



Fig. 2-66.



Fig. 2-67.



Fig. 2-68.



Fig. 2-69.



Fig. 2-70.



Fig. 2-71.



Fig. 2-72.



Fig. 2-73.



Fig. 2-74.



Fig. 2-75.



Fig. 2-76.



Fig. 2-77.



Fig. 2-78.



Fig. 2-79.

a fist with the right hand and pull it back to the right shoulder, much like drawing a bow. While inhaling bring the fists back to the sides and return to the starting position. Repeat the exercise for the right side.

Piece 5 (Figs. 2-80 through 2-84):

Step to the left and assume the horse stance. Place the palms on the thighs near the knees with the fingers inward. Lean as far to the left as possible without raising the feet, and keep the hands on the thighs. Lean to the right.

Piece 6 (Figs. 2-85 through 2-87):

Bring the feet back to shoulder width. Hold the hands in front of the body with the palms facing up and the middle fingers pointing toward each other. Straighten the legs and lock the knees, then while exhaling bend forward and touch the floor with the palms, keeping the legs straight. Do not strain.



Fig. 2-80.



Fig. 2-81.



Fig. 2-82.



Fig. 2-83.



Fig. 2-84.



Fig. 2-85.



Fig. 2-86.



Fig. 2-87.



Fig. 2-88.



Fig. 2-89.

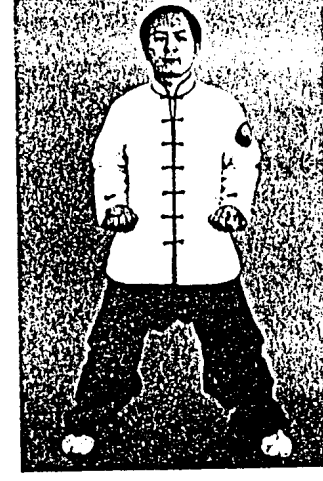


Fig. 2-90.

Stretch up to but not beyond the point of pain. Return to the original position while inhaling.

Piece 7 (Figs. 2-88 through 2-92):

Stand in a horse stance with the fists at the sides. While exhaling, slowly strike upward and to the left with the left fist. Keep the gaze on the fist throughout. Return to the starting position while inhaling and do the movement with the right fist.

Piece 8 (Figs. 2-93 through 2-95):

Stand with the feet close together and the arms hanging loosely by the sides. Stretch the legs and lock the knees, then raise the heels as high as possible while exhaling, then let yourself down while inhaling.



Fig. 2-91.



Fig. 2-92.



Fig. 2-93.



Fig. 2-94.



Fig. 2-95.