

Lam Sai Wing

林世榮遺技

朱愚齋著

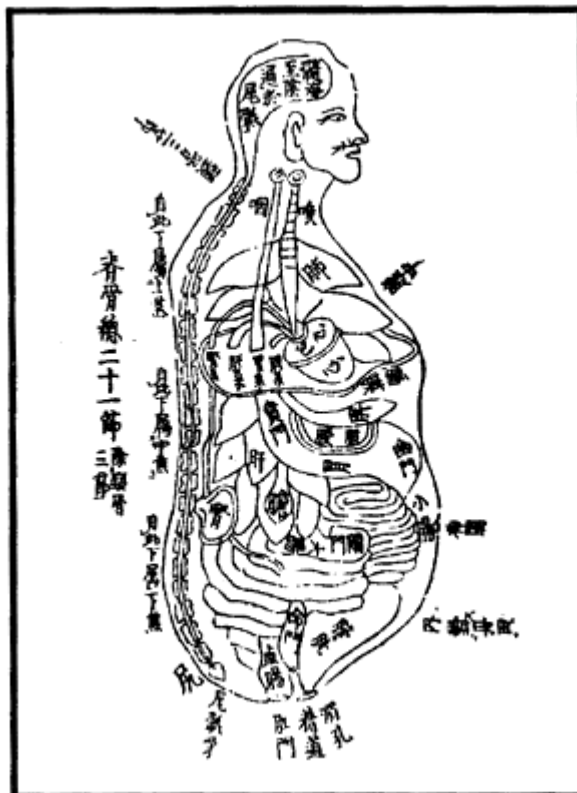


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# TIET SIN KUEN

## The Iron Thread



**Art of Tiet Sin Qi Gong inherited from the past and handed down by Lam Sai Wing.**

### Lam Sai Wing

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# 照遺生先榮世林師拳



**Master of Pugilistic Arts venerable Lam Sai Wing (1860-1943)  
The last photo (supposedly, 1940-1943)**

**“This method of Qi Gong is the best for those who practice the Fighting Arts. I myself could achieve my tutor Wong Fei Hung’s results with the use of this method and Master Fei Hung could achieve the results of honorable tutor Ling Fu Chen who in his time was the best disciple of Tiet Qiao San, the unsurpassed master...”**

**Lam Sai Wing**

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## Complete Version

book  
by

Lam Sai Wing

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# Foreword

## Li Shi Hui

TIET SIN, or the Iron Thread, is one of the Fighting Arts<sup>1</sup> inherited from Tiet Qiao San<sup>2</sup>. It is a perfect training system aiming at setting into motion body's extremities and the whole body and thanks to it to improve blood circulation and the circulation of the internal energy Qi. Bones, muscles and sinews are subjects of outer strengthened, the internal organs and the spirit Shen are subjects of internal strengthened. Therefore, the Spirit and Health are improved. A physically weak man becomes a strong one. Besides, those who practice this method of Qi Gong can prevent from falling ill with many diseases and live a long life. That's why this method is unsurpassed one among all the methods of Qi Gong.

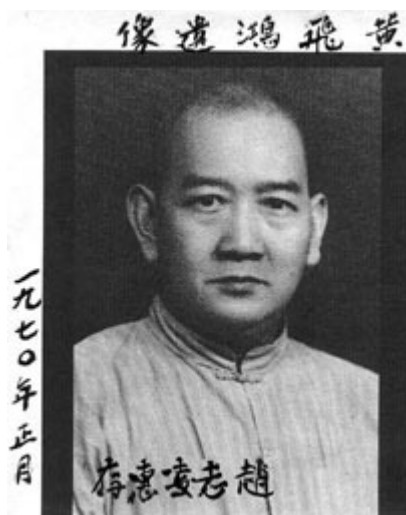
The founder of the Tiet Sin Qi Gong school is Tiet Qiao San. In his time he was called one of "Guangdong Ten Tigers". He is a well-known and esteemed master among Kung Fu followers. Tiet Qiao San, a favorite disciple of Shaolin monk Jue Yin, was famous for his mastery, he had no rivals equal to him.

.....

<sup>1</sup>According to the modern classification the method *TIET SIN* belongs to a branch of "hard", or fighting *Qi Gong*. However, the division of the Fighting Arts into *Qi Gong* and *Kung Fu* (or *WUSHU*) is rather conventional in character, it appeared only in the XX century as the result of the Western approach to the study of specific oriental phenomenon. Traditionally, *Qi Gong*, or work with the internal energy, was studied in China in the mainstream of general fighting practice, it did not form a separate branch. Therefore, the author of this article uses Chinese terms "*Quan Shou*" (literally "fist-hand") and *Quan Fa* (literally "fist technique") in relation to *TIET SIN* in their original wide meaning.

In our translation we substituted them for "*Qi Gong*", a more narrow term that can be understood by a modern reader.

<sup>2</sup>*Tiet Qiao San* is translated as "*Iron Bridge III*", it is a nickname of the great master whose real name was lost in history. He lived at the end of *XVIIIth* - the beginning of *XIXth* century and had superhuman strength, hence his nickname. He could supposedly to raise up six big men with one hand and carry them more than a hundred steps without changing his countenance (*Zhu Yu Zhai "Short Biography of Master Tiet Qiao San"*).



Wong Fei Hung  
(1847-1924)



Lam Sai Wing  
(1860-1943)

Tiet Qiao San was on friendly terms with Chen Yi and Xiu Yi Ji, monks from the Haichuang Temple<sup>3</sup>. Tiet Qiao San taught his disciples Cai Zan, Qu Zhu, Wu Xiguan, Ma Zhi Tien, Ling Fu Chen, Shi Yu Liang and some others.

Some time later Ling Fu Chen taught Wong Fei Hung his skills and the latter Wong Fei Hung taught Lam Sai Wing. Lam had about 10 000 disciples<sup>4</sup>, but only a few inherited this secret method of Qi Gong – Hu Li Feng, Pang Ji Yi, Wei Shao Bo, Su Jian Shen, Wong Ji Wen, Zhang Zhu Xiang and my tutor Zhu Yu Zhai, all in all seven men.

By now<sup>5</sup> my tutor Zhu Yu Zhai passed his skill in the Iron Thread to his son Zhu Jia Yui and his disciples – Hu ZhenYan (died), Lo Ji Yi, Tan Xing, Cheng Yun Sin (missed during the war), Zhung Wei Ming, me and some others.

<sup>3</sup>The *Haichuang Monastery* is situated not far from *Guangzhou*, the administrative center of *Guangdong* province. As a widespread legend says, after the famous monastery of Southern Shaolin was burnt to ashes (supposedly in 30-th of the XVIII century) monks who escaped spread in China “like stars in the sky”. Few of them found refuge at the *Haichuang Monastery* where they started to teach monks, and later on laymen, the Fighting Arts. This monastery is the cradle of the most famous Kung Fu styles of the Southern China – *Hung Gar Kuen*, *Fo Kuen*, *Li Gar* and some others.

<sup>4</sup>At the beginning of the XX century *Lam Sai Wing* founded *WU BEN TANG* (“The Hall of

*Fundamental Study*”) in *Guangzhou* (Canton) where he taught the Fighting Art. In the 20-th of the XX century Master *Lam* together with his closest disciples (*Zhu Yu Zhai*, *Zhang Shi Biao*, *Li Shi Hui*, and others) moved to *Hong Kong* where he taught fighting styles of Kung Fu - *Hung Gar Kuen* and *Fo Kuen*. In his life he had more than 10 000 disciples, but he taught *Tiet Sin Qi Gong*, the most secret part of training, only to a narrow circle of the closest disciples. In his declining years, being anxious about the preservation of this invaluable treasure for posterity, he wrote the book that is offered to your attention.

<sup>5</sup>The article was written in 1957.



The Iron Thread is based on twelve secret methods for “arms-bridges”<sup>6</sup>, each of them corresponds to a certain principle. Those are GAN – hardness, steadfastness; ROU – suppleness, softness; BI – constraint; ZHI – straightening; FEN – separation; DING – steadiness; CUN – quickness, brevity; TIE – lifting; LIU – restraining; YIUN – movement, motion; ZHI – suppression; DIN – change.

Besides, it is necessary to keep in mind several factors. Using Qi, or vital strength of spirit, one should be able to increase his physical strength, pay special attention to strengthening his waist and kidneys<sup>7</sup>. Exhalation is done with shouts, it is the external manifestation of such emotions as joy, anger, sorrow and gaiety.

Those are the essentials that make this method of Qi Gong different from other kinds of Fisticuff Arts. I think that the most difficult thing in acquiring TIET SIN is to control your breath and to regulate Qi, to utter sounds and to use the internal strength. At the same time the above mentioned points are key factors for successful training. A wrong practice can be useless or even harmful. Each kind of Qi Gong has its own method of training and its own secrets. This book just gives the most complete and visual guidance for correct training in TIET SIN. It is indispensable for all who like Qi Gong and Kung Fu.

From my own experience I know that the most impressive thing in TIET SIN Qi Gong is that the physical strength of those who train themselves can be increased by nine times. It is hard to believe for those who did not practice this method. Of course, the benefit of TIET SIN lies not only in bigger physical strength. The most important thing is robust health and longer life.

Li Shi Hui

Hong Kong, the summer of Din You year (1957)

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<sup>6</sup>The term *QIAO* (“bridge”) in the *Hung Gar* style means a forearm. There are 12 techniques where *QIAO* “bridges” are used. Those techniques were inherited from the Kung Fu school of the Southern Shaolin. They are also called “12 *Hung’s bridges*”.

<sup>7</sup>In accordance with postulates of the Chinese traditional medicine the kidneys are a receptacle of inherent vital energy *YUAN Qi* and a strong and flexible waist is a prerequisite for successful practice in the Fighting Arts.

## Position 1. **JIAN LI KAI QUAN**

### A greeting before the beginning of exercises.

**Translation:** This complex of exercises starts from a ritual greeting and the (self)-introduction<sup>1</sup>. The arms are in position QIAO SHOU – “Bridges Arms”<sup>2</sup>, the form of the right fist and the left palm correspond to the picture of the first position. At the same time the right leg is slightly bends (in the knee), the left foot (is like in the position) DIAO MA – “Suspended Stance”<sup>3</sup>: the toe lightly touches the earth surface. It is necessary to face south, to breathe in the air through the mouth and to “close” tightly. Both hands turn, with the centers (of the palms) up. Return back the left leg and stand “straightly”, both hands are pulled to the waist and form the position ER HU QIAN ZONG – “Two Tigers cover up their traces”.



.....

<sup>1</sup>Here and further, words in brackets are meant, they are not available in the original. The style of Chinese classical writing in which this and other Lam Sai Wing's works were written suggests broader interpretation of the text, that's why some additional words are required for the translation into European languages (particularly into English) to express the meaning adequately;

<sup>2</sup>The term QIAO (“bridge”) in the Hung Gar style means a forearm. There are 12

techniques where QIAO - “bridges” are used. Those techniques were inherited from the Kung Fu school of the Southern Shaolin. They are also called “12 Hung's bridges”.

<sup>3</sup>DIAO MA or MA DIAO JIAO – literally, “A position with a suspended foot” - the posture in which the main body weight is supported by one leg; it is known in the modern KUNG FU as the “Cat's Stance”.

## Position 2. ER HU QIAN ZONG

### Two Tigers cover up their traces

**Translation:** From the first position JIAN LI – “Greetings” continue the execution. Both hands are clenched into fists, turned before you (with the centers of palms) back. Do not stick out your breast, do not raise your shoulders, look straight forward, both legs are upright. Pay attention to concentration of force LI in both thighs, the head is as if a cap weighing 1000 jins<sup>1</sup> lies on it. The mouth is closed, breathe in and breathe out through the nose three times, maintain stable posture, (then) arms will do the next movement.

.....

<sup>1</sup>1 jin is approximately equal to 500 grammes.



**Comments:** After a greeting gesture (pos. 1) clench your left hand into fist with force, turn the fists with the centers of palms toward you and pull them to your waist. Simultaneously with hand movements the left leg is moved back to the right one. It is position ER HU QIAN ZONG – “Two Tigers cover up their traces”: the fists are on the sides of the waist, their back side faces the ground, the feet are in parallel with each other, the distance between them is about one fist.

Requirements to the coordination of different body parts are as follows:

the shoulders are lowered and slightly moved forward, the breast is bent inward, the diaphragm is in its lower position (that corresponds to “stomach” breathing), the stomach is strained and “filled”, the hands are tightly clenched into fists. The tongue should touch upper palate, the mouth is closed, the teeth are clenched without effort, the chin is slightly drawn in, the look is strictly forward. If you imagine vividly enough that you carry some weight on your head, the position of your head, neck and upper part of spine would adjust themselves correspondingly.

The lower part of the body: the thighs are strained, the buttocks are pulled in, the pelvis is put slightly forward and up, due to it the lower part of the spine is straightened and is on one vertical line with the upper part of spine and the neck. The knees are straightened, but not completely. Try to cling to the ground with your toes (however, do not bend them), it helps “to take root”. At the start it demands some conscious efforts, but after some practice you will take the right posture automatically.

After it, breathe in and breathe out

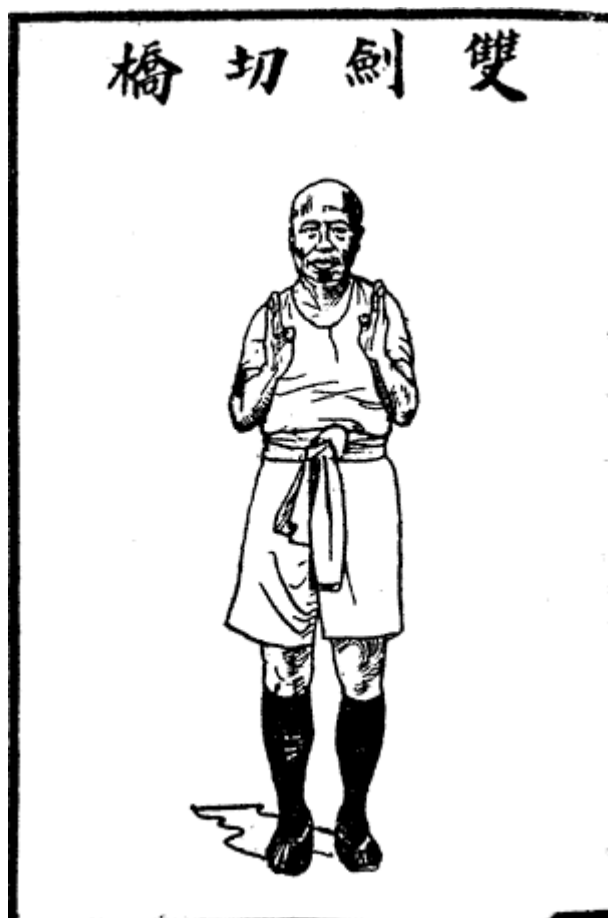
three times, at this time your fists are moved back and down at the level of the coccyx. The fists are moved through three stages when you breathe out, they are immovable when you breathe in. The movement is executed slowly and with some effort: just imagine that you try to bend a thick iron wire. At the end of the third exhalation you take **position 3**: your fists are clenched with effort, your wrists are bent towards the inner side of the forearm, the elbows are directed backward. All the above requirements to the stance are maintained.

## Position 3. **SHUANG JIAN QIE QIAO**

### Two Swords hack the Bridge

**Translation:** A straight stance as shown in the previous picture. Both fists are “pulled up” from behind, moved forward along the sides of the ribs and reach the position under armpits; (then) the fists (with palm centers) turn to face each other, unclench and form the position QIE ZHANG – “The cutting palms”. At the same time you should open your mouth and breathe out, after it the “cutting palms” move forward very slowly (and arms) stretch. (At the end of the movement) you should breathe out and utter “HE”.

.....



**Comments:** When you are in position 2 make a full inhalation through the nose. With that the breast is slightly raised up without sticking out, the shoulders remain lowered. During inhalation the hands move up and at the end of inhalation they are on the sides of ribs under the armpits, the back of the hand down. Then fists are transformed to QIE ZHANG – “Cutting palms” and do a short push forward at the breast level. That phase of the movement is shown in the picture for this position: the arms are bent, the elbows are lowered, the distance between the palms and the breast is from 20 to 25 cm.

.....  
**Explanation:**

During this exercise just imagine that you are standing close to a very big and heavy iron ball that you must push as far as possible<sup>2</sup>. At the first moment you should gather yourself up and move the ball from its place, then you gradually, with constant effort, straighten your arms

.....  
<sup>1</sup>In this TAOLU several types of breathing are used, each type relates to a certain action at the “external” level and reinforces it according to the principle “The Force Li Comes With the Breath Qi”. A sound uttered during exhalation is a manifestation of the “internal” effort and comes as if from the stomach (from the region DANTIEN), therefore one should not simulate it artificially. At first it is better to concentrate on the coordination of motion and breathing.

<sup>2</sup>At the initial stage of training mental concentration has uttermost importance,

Simultaneously with the palm push, do a short exhalation from the upper part of the lungs through the mouth, with it the thorax slightly descends; at the same time the stomach remains strained and “filled”. Without stopping in this position the arms start slowly straightening forward, the movement is executed with some effort and with gradual exhalation through the nose. At the end of the movement another short push is executed with a sharp exhalation through the mouth with the sound “HE”<sup>1</sup>. In the final phase the arms are slightly bent in the elbows, the elbows are turned downward.

.....  
 and accelerate the ball, at the end you give it a certain momentum with a push. At the external level this piece of imagination allows you to attain the right coordination of breathing with the work of muscles and sinews and at the internal level to unite the force Li with breath Qi

.....  
 it is called “The Thought Leads Qi” in the tradition of the Shaolin School of Qi Gong. After some practice any of your movements will be filled with the internal energy Qi without any effort of your consciousness. That is the final aim of Fighting Qi GONG practice in the Shaolin School. Shaolin treatises on pugilism say: “When each movement of your body is fused with the breath Qi, your arms and legs become quick and strong like those ones of a monkey. So the man moves like a lightning in the sky and joyfully he passes along as a victor in all battles”\*.

\*De Chang. Shaolin Qi Gong. Zhangzhou, 1983.

## Position 4. **LAO SENG TIAO DAN**

### The Old Monk carries a yoke

**Translation:** The straight position like that one in the previous picture. Both palms are “separated”<sup>1</sup> and turned (fingers up). Then (the palms) are turned (with fingers) down and the centers (of the palms) face up. After it you “separate three joints”<sup>2</sup>, clench fists and pull them up. Both elbows move away from the side ribs, facing down as before; both fists are “pulled up”, reach the level of both cheeks and stop. During that (movement) you straighten your breast and breathe out with uttering the sound “TI”.

.....

<sup>1</sup>Here the meaning is that the wrist joints are bent;

<sup>2</sup>“To separate three joints” means to bend an arm in shoulder, elbow and wrist joints.

**Comments:** From the previous [position 3](#) (arms are stretched forward at the shoulder breadth, palm centers face each other) rotate the palms in the wrist joints – left hand counter-clockwise, the right hand clockwise to turn palm centers upward (with this the fingers are directed forward and downward). At the time of rotation the wrist joints must be strained and bent in the extreme in the direction of the outer side of a forearm. Then slowly and with some effort clench the hands into fists with simultaneous bending the wrists toward the inner side of the forearm and pull the fists to the shoulders. This movement is slow and strained as if you pull toward



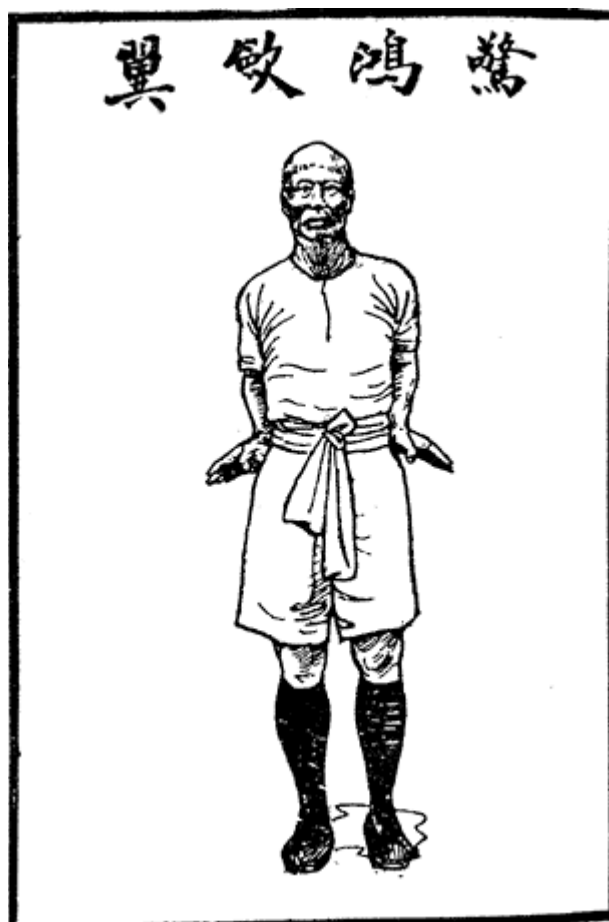
you a heavy thing. Those actions are done with a slow and deep breath-in through the nose. After a small pause raise up your fists at the cheek level and then pull them to both sides and take the position LAO SENG TIAO DAN – “The Old Monk carries a yoke”. The movement is carried out at a middle speed. Just imagine that you are in a narrow corridor and try to move aside the walls with your forearms: in the final stage the effort reaches maximum and it is accompanied by a sharp exhalation “TI” through the mouth (the lips are lightly parted, the teeth are clenched, as if you “spit out” some air from the upper part of your lungs).

## Position 5. **JING HONG LIAN YI**

### A frightened Goose flaps the wings

**Translation:** You are standing in a straight position as shown in the previous picture, both fists are raised at the level between your shoulders and cheeks. Unclench both fists simultaneously, then the palms separate and move to opposite sides from the shoulders from up to the right, to the left and downward with a “cutting” movement. When they reach the level of the waist they stop. The fingertips face outside, the wrists butt the pelvic bone, the elbows are moved back into a prop-up position. You make an exhalation with the sound “TI” through the mouth.

.....



**Comments:** The movement is carried out at the maximum speed, the palms descend along an arc: at first they move from the position above the shoulders to the center of your breast

and then descend to the left and to the right to the waist with a cutting movement. In the final phase the upper part of the body slightly bends to follow the arms.

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## Position 6. ZUO YOU CUN QIAO<sup>1</sup>

### Flash-like Bridges to the left and to the right

**Translation:** The position of the torso is straight. Both palms from the position on the waist are pulled apart at the same time, the arms are stretched (to both sides). After reaching the shoulder level (and locating) on one line they stop; at the same time the thorax expands. The movement is made with an exhalation through the mouth and a sound “SI”.

.....

<sup>1</sup>CUN QIAO is one of 12 “bridge techniques”. In fact, it is a quick strike with finger tips of an open palm. Its principle is “brevity” (quickness).



**Comments:** Without stopping in the pos. 5, deliver piercing blows aside with finger tips as shown in the picture for pos. 6. The movement is made as quick as possible,

the fingers are straight and strained. Imagine that there are paper screens on your left and on your right and you need to punch palm-wide regular holes.

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## Position 7. **SAN DU ZHU QIAO**

### Build the Pearl Bridge thrice

**Translation:** The position of the torso is straight. Your shoulders and your arms form a straight line, left and right arms sink down, both palms turn to the position ZHU QIAO – “The pearl bridge”. You strain the thorax and at once both “pearl bridges” very slowly pull to the shoulders and take place between your shoulders and ears. (Then) utter “SI”, (at the same time) “The pearl bridges” are slowly stretched to the left and to the right. The movement is made three times.

.....  
**Comments:** After delivering blows to sides, the wrists are bent toward the outer side of the forearm, at the same time the position of hands changes according to the picture for **position 7**, the arms are slightly bent in elbows, the elbows and the wrists slightly descend (“sink” in the original text). The movement is sharp: as if you jerk your hands slightly down and toward you (however, the amplitude of the movement is small, you only slightly bend your arms in elbows). Requirements to hand position: your forefingers are completely straightened and directed upward, other fingers are bent and pressed to the edge of the palm, palm centers are directed to sides; the wrists are bent in the extreme and with effort, you should feel some strain in fingers, palms and wrists. Slightly spread your fingers in this



position: the strain in the sinews will grow. Then slowly pull your hands to the shoulders, at the same time you breathe in through the nose. That phase of the movement is shown in the picture. After it draw your palms to both sides at the shoulder level slowly, with some effort. The movement is made together with an exhalation through slightly parted lips and a low hissing sound “SI”.

Imagine that you try to move apart cliffs in a narrow cleft. Then while breathing in, slowly pull “The Pearl bridges” to your shoulders. Execute it three times.  
**Warning:** Be careful with this exercise: do not strain yourself extremely, if you have higher blood pressure.

## Position 8. **DA XIAN GONG SHOU**

### To greet the Great Saint

**Translation:** The position of the body is straight and upright. The “Pearl Bridge” of the right arm transforms: the hand clenches into fist. The “Pearl Bridge” of the left (also) transforms: the hand is in the position “palm”. (After it) the right fist and the left palm simultaneously and very slowly move forward and draw together but the left palm is a little ahead of the right fist. The left palm, when its movement is in progress, clenches into fist and then both fists descend along the torso and move back, (as if you are) pulling (something) toward you. The movement is made without sound exhalation.

.....



**Comments:** After the execution of the previous exercise three times, clench your right hand into fist and transform the left hand into the position “palm”: all fingers except the thumb are straight. Then both arms stretch forward and you take **position 8**. The movement is made slowly and with some effort, exhalation is soundless, through the nose.

Then, clench the left palm into fist and slowly draw both fists to your waist. In that way you take **position 2**. This movement is accompanied by a deep and a long-drawn inhalation through the nose. Do not forget about mental concentration on the movement: imagine that your hands are bending a thick iron wire with its ends wound on your fists.

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by

Lam Sai Wing

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