Sparring Hands Song 打手歌[1]

Translated and interpreted by Sam Masich (馬希奇)

Peng, lü, ji, an must be considered in earnest.
Shang and *xia*[2] follow one another, opponents have difficulty advancing.

We task the opponent with coming to hit us with great force
Lead their movement: 'four ounces turns a thousand pounds.'

Enticed to advance, they stumble into emptiness—we engage, then immediately issue.
Zhan to connect, *nian* to follow [3] without losing uprightness.[4]

Moreover it can be said: If the other doesn't move, I don't move; If the other moves slightly. I move earlier. The *jin* seems loose, but is not loose—about to expand but not yet expanded. The *jin* terminates but the *yi* does not terminate.[5]

打手歌 Dashou Ge

掤 攦擠按須認真。上下相隨人難進。	péng lǚ jǐ àn xū rènzhēn,	shàng-xià xiāngsuí rén nán
任他聚力來打咱。 牽動四兩撥千斤。	rèn tā jù lì lái dǎ zán,	qiāndòng sì liǎng bō qiānjīn
引進落空合即出。 粘連黏隨不丟頂。	yǐn jìn luò kōng hé jí chū,	zhān lián nián suí bú diū dǐng
又曰。彼不動。己不動。彼微動。己先動。	yuē yòu: bǐ bù dòng, jǐ bù dòng,	bǐ wēi dòng, jǐ xiān dòng
勁似鬆非鬆。將展未展。勁斷意不斷。	jìn sì sōng fēi sōng, jiāng zhǎn wèi zhǎn,	jìn duàn yì bù duàn

---

[1] Dǎshǒu Gē (**打手歌**)

[2] shàng-xià(**上下**) above and below; up and down

[3] zhān (**粘**) to 'stick', 'glue' or 'paste'; lián (**連**) connect; nián (**黏**) 'adhere'; suí (**隨**) 'following'. Yijing Hexagram #17: 'following' ䷐ (suí 隨).

[4] dǐng (**頂**) 'top'. This is a reference to xū lǐng dǐng jìn (**虛領頂勁**) 'emptiness led to the top' energy.

[5] The last line, from 'Moreover…', seems to be attached to the earlier section. It is not included in all versions of the *Dashou Ge*. The 'Moreover…' section is also sometimes tagged on to the *Shisan Shi Xing Gong Xinjie* (Thirteen Powers: Explanation of Correct Core Principles)