

The Spirit of Crane

The Crane “must be light and soaring, calm and tranquil. Avoid heaviness and clumsiness.”

The Classic says: “The Crane is graceful, standing like a pine. It opens its wings and soars into the clouds. Spreading wings, it lands, poised on one leg: its qi rises and sinks with no sense of heaviness.”

Master Gallagher’s commentary on the Crane:

“The Crane is light and ethereal, and excels in flying. It is elegant and graceful, as if roaming the clouds or chasing the moon. While standing, it raises itself proudly like a lofty blue-green pine, standing eminently without moving. While practicing the Crane, one must have the far-reaching attitude of the Crane extending its wings through layered clouds without the slightest constraint. The attitude must be soft and supple, refined and leisurely. If the intent is heavy, the qi can easily stagnate and if the qi stagnates, the energy flow throughout the meridians cannot be harmonized.”¹

1. *Drawing Silk, Masters’ Secrets for Successful Tai Chi Practice*, Paul B. Gallagher, pp. 6-7.



The Spirit of Bear

The Bear “must be ponderous, solid, and stable. Avoid lightness and airiness.”

The Classic says: “The Bear appears clumsy on the outside, but is alert and spirited within. Ponderous and solid, sunken and stable, but with lightness concealed internally. Its powerful flanks shake while moving and can be used to strike. Qi sinks to the dan tian and remains in the Middle Court.”

Master Gallagher’s commentary on the Bear:

“The Bear appears clumsy, droopily shuffling along as though it had no bones. The Bear’s nature appears ponderous and solid, sunken and stable, but conceals a surprising lightness and agility. So in practicing one should not only express the Bear’s attitude of ponderous stability, but its internal alertness and agility as well. Concentrate energy in the sides and waist, while allowing qi to sink to the lower dan tian. One can also retain concentration on the Ming Men point, (between the 2nd and 3rd lumbar vertebrae). After practicing for a long time, the kidneys and legs will be greatly strengthened and spleen and stomach harmonized.”¹

1. *Drawing Silk, Masters’ Secrets for Successful Tai Chi Practice*, Paul B. Gallagher, pp. 6-7.