

黃百家《征南射法》

Huang Zheng-nan's Archery Method

by *Huang Bai-jia*
(其書載檀几叢書本)

(Editor's note: *Huang Bai-jia* (1634 - 1704) was a student of *Huang Zhen-nan*, promoter of the *Nei-jia* (內家) school of Chinese martial arts which spread from Shaanxi to the East coast of China at the end of the 18th Century.)

王征南先生有絕技，曰：射。余聞先生名，因裹糧至寶幢學焉。先生亦自絕憐其技，授受甚難其人，亦樂得余而傳之。

Master *Wang Zhen-nan* possesses a superlative skill, that is: archery. Hearing of the Master's reputation, I packed up my rations and made my way to study at the feet of the sage. Archery holds first place among the Masters affections, yet both studying it and teaching it put him under great pressure, so he was pleased to have me to help pass the skill on.

其射法：

一曰：利器。調弓審矢。弓必視乎己力之強弱，矢又視乎弓力之重輕。

His archery method is as follows:

First, the equipment must be optimized. That is to say, the weight of the bow must be arrived at on the basis of one's own strength, and the arrow must be selected in accordance with the draw-weight of the bow.

寧手強於弓，毋弓強於手。有四力、五力，寧挽三力、四力之弓。古者以石量弓，今以力：一個力重九斤四兩。三力、四力之弓，箭長十把，重四錢五分。五、六力之弓，箭長九把半，重五錢五分。大約射的者，弓貴窄，箭貴輕。禦敵者，弓寧寬，箭寧重。

The power of your arms must exceed the draw-weight of the bow: not the other way round. If you have the strength to draw four or five *li*, you are better off drawing three or four *li*. In the old days they measure draw-weights in stones: nowadays we use *li*. One *li* is nine catties¹ four ounces (5.5 Kg). A three to four *li* bow needs an arrow of ten *ba*² with a weight of ten 4.5 *qian* (16.65 gm.) A five to six *li* bow needs an arrow of nine-and-a-half *ba* weighing 5.5 *qian*.

¹ At the time this was written, a catty was about 597 gm and an ounce was 1/16 catty, or 37 gm.

² *Ba* is not defined, but should represent the width of a fist, say 10 cm.

On the whole, target archers prefer a bow with narrow limbs and light arrows. For shooting in battle, people prefer a broader bow with heavier arrows.³

二曰：審鵠。鵠有遠近。欲定鏃之所至，則以前手高下准之。

The second element is aiming. Target distance varies, and so if you want to control how far the arrowhead goes, you have to raise or lower the bow-hand accordingly.

箭不知所落處，是名：《野矢》。欲知落處，則以前手之高下分遠近。如靶子八十步，前手與肩對一。百步，則與眼對一。百三、四十步，則與眉對一。最遠一百七、八十步，則與帽頂相對矣。

Not knowing where the arrow will come down is called '[loosing] a wild arrow'. To know where the arrow will fall, you need to divide the distance by the elevation of your bow-hand. If you have a target at 80 paces (124m)⁴, then you need your hand level with your shoulder. At 100 paces (155m), it needs to be level with your eye; at 130 to 140 paces (about 210m), it need to be level with your eyebrow. As far out as 170 to 180 paces (about 270m), it needs to be level with the top of your cap.⁵

³ Compare the following from the 'Archery Manual' of Li Cheng-fen (李呈芬《射經》), written about the same time –

故三力之弓，用箭則長十拳。所謂，一拳，名曰一把。十把之箭，其重四錢五分。如四力之弓，則用箭九把半以長，或至十把猶為相，稱其重，則五錢五分。至於五力六力之弓，用箭亦長九拳之半。七力、八力之弓，用箭只長九把，即長至九把半亦可也。

Thus for a bow with a draw-weight of three *li*, (16.4 Kg), the arrow to use is ten *quan* in length. The term '*quan*' is equivalent to one '*ba*', and an arrow of ten '*ba*' has a weight of 4.5 *qian* (16.6 gm). A bow with a draw-weight of four *li* (21.8 Kg) uses an arrow length of between 9.5 *ba* and 10 *ba*, either of which is within the correct proportions, and the weight should come out at 5.5 *qian* (20.3 gm). Draw-weights of five to six *li* (27.3 – 32.8 Kg) also need an arrow length of 9.5 *quan*; and when you get up to draw-weights in the region of seven of eight *li* (38.2 – 43.7 Kg), you use an arrow of only 9 *quan*, and if the length is up to 9.5 *quan*, that is still acceptable.

⁴ According to 日·濱口富士雄《射經》，one pace was equal to 1.55 metres in the late *Ming* period

⁵ Compare the following from *Li Cheng-fen* –

故的分遠近而前手應之。如把子八十步，前手與前肩對。把子一百步，則前手與眼對。把子一百三、四十步，則前手與眉對。其最遠至一百七、八十步，則前手必與帽頂對矣。

For this reason, the target has to be analyzed to get the range, and then your bow-arm is positioned accordingly. Say your target is at eighty paces, then your bow-hand should be level with your shoulder. If it's at a hundred paces (155m), the bow-hand should be level with your eye. At 130 - 140 paces, it should be level with the eyebrow. When you get out to a range of up to 170 - 180 paces, then the bow-hand has to be right up level with the top of your cap.

三曰：正體。蓋身有身法，手有手法，足有足法，眼有眼法。

The third element is stance. There is a method of positioning the body, a method for positioning the hands, a method for positioning the feet and a method for using the eyes.

射雖在手，實本於身。忌腆胸偃背。須亦如拳法：蹲姓連技步，則身不動，殿不顯。肩、肘、腰、腿力萃於一處。

Although shooting is something you do with your arms, its real basis is in your body [position]. Avoid sticking out your chest or leaning backwards; You need to approach it like boxing: keep the body low and coordinate your upper limb movement with your foot-work, then your body position will remain firm and your bum will not stick out. This allows your shoulders, elbows, hips and thighs to concentrate the strain evenly in one place.

手法務要平直，必左拳與左膊、左肩及右肩、右膊節節相對。如引繩發箭時，左手不知，巧力盡用之。右手、左足尖、右足跟與上肩、手相應。眼不可單看靶子。蓋眼在靶子，則手與靶子反不相對矣。只立定時，將左足尖恰對垛，心、身、體既正，則手、足自相應。引滿時以右眼觀左手，無不中矣！

The main aim of arm method is to achieve a straight line. Every joint of the left hand, elbow and shoulder needs to be level with the right shoulder and elbow. If you are drawing and releasing, the bow hand must not react and you must make maximum use of combined strength and skill. You must achieve a consistent correspondence between the positions of the right arm, point of the left foot, heel of the right foot and the shoulder and arm above it. You can't rely on your eyes fixed on the target alone: if the eye is riveted to the target, then on the contrary, the arms will not stay level. Only when you have fixed your stance correctly, you have made the point of your left foot point directly at the target mound and your mind, you have your trunk and limbs correctly aligned, then your arms and feet will respond on their own. At full draw, you glance at your left arm with your right eye and you are sure to hit!

然此雖精詳纖悉，得專家之秘授者猶或聞之，而唯是先生之所注意，獨喜自負，迥絕乎凡技之上者。則於斗（科）室之中張弦，白矢出而注鏃，百發而無失。

This gets down to a lot of detail and those of have had training from a specialist in his secret skills may have heard it before. Yet it is the point to which this Master pays the closest attention, the one matter in which he rejoices and relies the most, and whereby his skills far surpass those commonly seen around him. Hence when drawing the bowstring in the examination ground, the

sighting arrow flies and the point where the arrowhead falls is noted, and then not one arrow in a hundred will miss its mark.

卷席作垛，以凳仰置卓上，將席開之，使極平正。以矢鏃對席心離一尺，滿彀正體射之。矢著席，看其矢鏃偏向或左或右，即時求正之。上下亦然。必使其矢從席罅無聲而過。則出而射，鏃但以左足尖對之，信手而發，自然無失。

You should roll up a sleeping mat and use a stool to prop it horizontally on a table and ensure that it is completely level. Then with the arrowhead one metre away from the centre of the rolled mat, shoot at it at full draw with your body perfectly aligned. When the arrowhead hits the rolled mat, observe whether the head had been inclined to the left or right and immediately correct the fault. Do the same for any deflection up or down. You need to do this until you can get the arrow to pass through the hole at the centre of the rolled mat without making a sound. Then go and shoot outside. Just align the arrow by pointing with your foot: let your arm follow it instinctively and release, then it will naturally go off without missing.

此則先生熟久智生，劃焉心開而獨創者也。

This then is the fruit of the mature wisdom of the Master, where he marked his target point, drew his bow and achieved his unique creation.