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status: derived
system: praying mantis
member: what does a form's name carry, and what happens when it travels by sound
drafted: 2026-09-01
passages: 8

> ***STATUS:*** `derived` *— generated from corpus gaps. A hypothesis, not a finding. Nobody has tried this. Promotion to* `body-validated` *is a human act and this file cannot perform it.*
>
> ***Probe provenance.*** *Northern Praying Mantis, Meihua Style —* 「落」唔係「路」 *(* `IfhO4WHa5w8` *),*
> 華藝精武 *CWS-CMA.* ***Human-written captions —*** `trust: high`*, so this is one of the few video sources*
> *that may be quoted rather than only indexed.*

What this teaches

You will be able to say what a form's name is *for* — and to recognise the specific way a martial
tradition loses information that no amount of careful movement can protect against.

Claim

The corpus teaches the mantis as mechanism in depth and says nothing about what a form's **name**
encodes. The lineage holds that the name is the instruction — that without it the movement is only
motion — and that this particular name has already been corrupted in transmission, by sound.

Evidence

The corpus covers the mechanics and only the mechanics. Eight of eight retrieved passages name the subject, and every one describes physical technique: whip-like and circular motions that deflect and re-enter [1]; circles as the total organising principle, whole, half and quarter [2]; two-man foundations of sticky elbows and hooking hands [3]. Where it approaches the non-physical it lands on lineage conduct — respect for the ancient masters, for the sifu, for the teaching [4]. **No retrieved passage says what a form's name means or why it has one.**

The lineage puts the name first. Asked why the same set is called *Plum Blossom Falling Fist* by some and *Plum Blossom Path* by others, the master gives two mechanisms, both acoustic: the northern dialect pronunciation of "falling", and the fact that 落 and 路 sit close in sound. The written characters mean different things — *falling* and *path* — but they travel through the ear.

He then makes the stronger claim. Strip the name and you are left with, in his description, a swaying motion that goes up and down and down and up. The name is what tells you the movement is plum blossoms falling; the whole set is built to carry that image, and the image is what makes the sequence legible as one thing rather than a list of positions.

Mechanism

Names are the one part of a tradition transmitted purely by sound. A posture can be watched and copied; a name can only be heard and repeated. So the failure modes differ: a movement degrades by drift across bodies, a name degrades by **homophony** — one character swapped for

another that
sounds the same and means something else.

That is why the loss is invisible from inside. Nobody notices they have swapped *falling* for
path, because they were never handling characters, only sounds. Two generations later the set has
a name that describes a route instead of a descent, and the image the form was built around is gone
while every posture in it is still correct.

The same error occurred in producing this corpus. Transcribing the CCTV mantis documentary at
Whisper `small` rendered 螳螂拳 as 唐郎拳 and 唐狼拳 — the machine heard *tángláng* correctly and
selected the wrong characters, exactly as the lineage did with 落 and 路. Machine and tradition fail
identically here, because the constraint is the same: sound underdetermines the character.

Drill

Countable, and it comes from the claim rather than from me.

Name every move you train, out loud, before you do it. Keep a list. The number that moves week
over week is **how many of your own movements you can name** — not describe, name. Where you have no
name, you have a motion you cannot check against an intention.

- Week-over-week number: **named movements, increasing.**
- Terminal condition: every move in your working set has a name you did not invent this week.
- The interesting entries are the ones you cannot name. Those are the ones nobody told you about.

Limit

- **One master, one lineage, one form.** The 落/路 account is his explanation, offered on camera; it is
  not corroborated by any text in the corpus.
- **The captions are human-written but are a translation.** The argument turns on two Chinese
  characters and reaches us in English — the least safe place for a claim about wording.
- **"No retrieved passage" is eight passages**, not the corpus. A targeted probe in Chinese for
  梅花落 has not been run.
- **The drill is untested** and is derived from the claim, not from the source.

open	what would settle it
Is 落 or 路 the older form?	probe Chinese-language mantis texts for 梅花落 vs 梅花路
Do other styles name forms for images?	scan the corpus for form names carrying nature imagery
Does naming change training?	the drill above, run for six weeks

Sources: `Northern_Praying_Mantis` *[1],* `Southern_Praying_Mantis` *[2,3,4]. Retrieval:* `kega-ask.py`*,*
ANSWERABLE, 8/8 mentioning. Probe: `IfhO4WHa5w8`*, human-written captions.*