

Placement, Lineage, Instruction

V2 · 肆 · 八極拳 — Bajì Quan, and the three things a source can give you

TLDR / 80-20

A source gives you placement, lineage, or instruction — and only the third one teaches.

The first two are abundant and feel like learning. Knowing which you are holding saves you from mistaking a map for a lesson.

The Keys

1. Placement — where a style sits.

A neighbouring art's textbook lists Bajì Quan among the best-known northern styles, beside Taijì Quan, Xingyì Quan and Baguazhang, while introducing a classification of Chinese martial arts. That is a map for its own readers. It tells you the style is northern and significant, and nothing about what it does.

2. Lineage — who carries it, and from whom.

A documentary gives a person: a young practitioner who learned the family's Bajiquan from his grandfather and his father, and identifies himself by that inheritance. It establishes the style is alive and transmitted. **A documentary sells a person, because a person is what a viewer will follow.**

3. Instruction — what to do, and what goes wrong.

Across 1,039 words of that documentary, the technical vocabulary is **elbow twice; shoulder, stomp, strike and short once each**. For a style whose reputation rests on close-range shoulder and elbow work, that is a mention rate indistinguishable from background. The art is not in there.

4. This is not one style's problem.

Choy Li Fut sits in exactly the same state — different region, different source, same result. Both are named only from outside, by authors locating their own art against them. Neither kind of source is *trying* to teach the style, so neither does.

AI's Take

The practical value is a filter you can run before spending an evening on something. Ask what the source was **made to sell**. A taxonomy sells orientation. A documentary sells a person. A practitioner's manual sells the thing itself — and only the last one will still be useful on the mat.

Worth being honest about the measurement: only the first 15 minutes of a 28-minute documentary were counted. The back half may carry the technical content the front half lacks.

And the count measures one shelf, not the art. Bajì Quan has an extensive Chinese-language literature that none of this touches.