

## Heaven and Earth Core

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Heaven being the upper part of the body refers to the neck and upper chest whilst Earth refers to the hips and legs.

Having a good Ma (Horse stance) and Ma Bo (footwork) is what drives and supports all our fighting tools in combat and without a continuous sure footing together with speed and flexibility we will not be maximising our fighting capability.

Traditionally a good Ma was about standing our ground but to prevent becoming a human punch bag for our opponent one has to adopt a more flexible approach to our Ma Bo.

In order to maintain maximum mobility and stability, weight is evenly distributed down through the soles of the feet rather than through the sole and heel. This has the advantage of allowing us to spring forward or backward with minimal adjustments to our feet thus increasing our reaction time.

Thus it is not necessary to be flat footed in order to maintain maximum footing.

For example when we are uprooting an opponent from a static position, it is about how we apply our Heaven and Earth core alongside centre line and favourable arm positioning. This type of uprooting incidentally should not be confused with the one where we press and lift off our hips. Though similar the former does not require any downward or upward motion thus concealing a much more subtle attack on the other person's Ma.

When moving forward we need to visualise the chest and the hips converging to result in an apex of power. In effect we have two force vectors converging to an apex and it is at this point that we concentrate our forward momentum. This power apex also coincides with our own Dan Tian, a natural concentration of energy situated at our physical centre of gravity immediately beneath our navel.

With practice and training once we have isolated this area of power we should develop extra stability and power to our Ma and Ma Bo.

Just as we can make use of these two reference points to generate extra power, they in turn can be used to remove power and mobility. By targeting control at the point where our neck joins our chest or at and hips we can inturn momentarily drain power from our opponent.