

Tai Chi Chuan

太極拳

#34 | Spring/Summer 2014

MASTERS *and* METHODS

2nd International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium Preview





**YANG FAMILY
TAI CHI CHUAN**



INTERNATIONAL YANG FAMILY TAI CHI CHUAN ASSOCIATION

*The International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association
is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of Traditional
Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan.*

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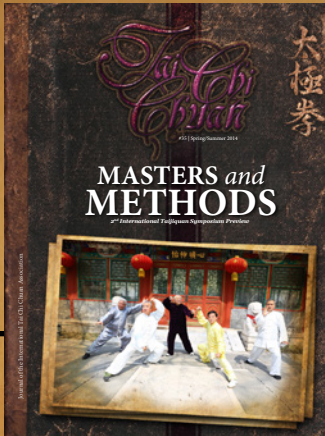
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Journal of the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association

President's Letter



Dear Member, this is the first time the International Association has published the President's Letter in a digital edition.

Historically, publications, articles, and other materials are distributed in print form. However, with the advancement of technology, we have decided to publish this letter in a digital format. This decision was made after much deliberation and consultation with our members. We believe that a digital format will allow us to reach a wider audience and provide a more convenient reading experience. We will continue to explore other digital options in the future.

The International Association continues to support the Tai Chi Chuan community through various programs and initiatives. We are committed to providing high-quality training and resources to our members. We will continue to work closely with our members to ensure that our programs meet their needs and expectations.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the Tai Chi Chuan community. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Dr. David

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Letter from the Editor



It would be hard to find the same enthusiasm over the years, the foundation, and the members who have founded our work. The foundation of our work is the foundation of our work.

We are looking for the opportunity and momentum for the Tai Chi Chuan community. We are looking for the opportunity and momentum for the Tai Chi Chuan community. We are looking for the opportunity and momentum for the Tai Chi Chuan community.

Dr. David

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A Special Invitation

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL TAI CHI CHUAN SYMPOSIUM

It is with great pleasure that we invite you to attend the Second International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium. This event will be held in a beautiful location and will feature a variety of activities, including lectures, demonstrations, and performances. We hope you will find this event to be a most enjoyable and enlightening experience.

Dr. David

A SPECIAL INVITATION

Symposium Program Overview

The Symposium program is a comprehensive overview of the Tai Chi Chuan community. It will cover a wide range of topics, including the history, philosophy, and practice of Tai Chi Chuan. The program will be presented by leading experts in the field and will provide a valuable opportunity for members to learn and grow.

Dr. David

SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

The Hardness and Softness of Chen's Taijiquan




The Hardness and Softness of Chen's Taijiquan is a unique and powerful style of Tai Chi Chuan. It combines the hard and soft aspects of Tai Chi Chuan, providing a comprehensive and balanced practice. This style is known for its emphasis on power and strength, while also maintaining the softness and flexibility of Tai Chi Chuan.

Dr. David

CHEN ZHENGLEI

Basic Training Methods

A Seminar Lecture by Grandmaster Yang Jun




This seminar lecture will provide a comprehensive overview of the basic training methods of Tai Chi Chuan. Grandmaster Yang Jun will share his insights and experiences, providing a valuable opportunity for members to learn and grow. The lecture will cover a wide range of topics, including the importance of posture, breathing, and relaxation.

Dr. David

YANG JUN

Postures, Methods and Fundamental Techniques of Wu Hao Style Taijiquan

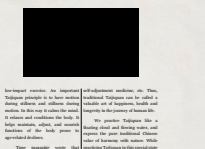


This article provides a detailed overview of the postures, methods, and fundamental techniques of the Wu Hao style of Taijiquan. It covers a wide range of topics, including the importance of posture, breathing, and relaxation. This style is known for its emphasis on power and strength, while also maintaining the softness and flexibility of Tai Chi Chuan.

Dr. David

ZHONG ZHENSHAN

Taijiquan is a Profound Art for Improving World Health



Taijiquan is a profound art that has been practiced for centuries. It is a unique and powerful style of Tai Chi Chuan that combines the hard and soft aspects of Tai Chi Chuan, providing a comprehensive and balanced practice. This style is known for its emphasis on power and strength, while also maintaining the softness and flexibility of Tai Chi Chuan.

Dr. David

SUN YONGTIAN

Principles, Methods and Characteristics of He Style Taijiquan



This article provides a detailed overview of the principles, methods, and characteristics of the He style of Taijiquan. It covers a wide range of topics, including the importance of posture, breathing, and relaxation. This style is known for its emphasis on power and strength, while also maintaining the softness and flexibility of Tai Chi Chuan.

Dr. David

HE YOULU

The Sword Pages



This section features a series of illustrations and descriptions of sword forms. Each form is accompanied by a detailed description of its movements and characteristics. This section is a valuable resource for members who are interested in learning and practicing sword forms.

Dr. David

THE SWORD PAGES

Tai Chi Chuan

All Tai Chi Chuan enthusiasts are invited to submit articles, letters, and pictures for publication. Both critical and complimentary letters concerning the form and content of this journal are welcome. Please send correspondence in electronic format to:

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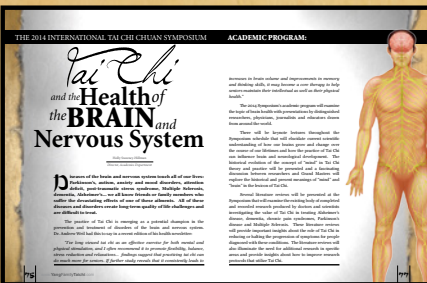
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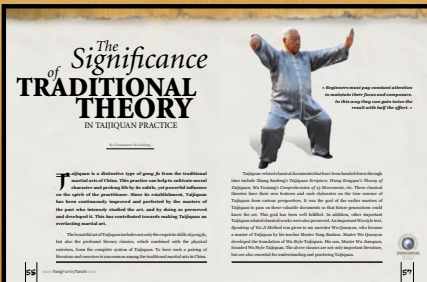
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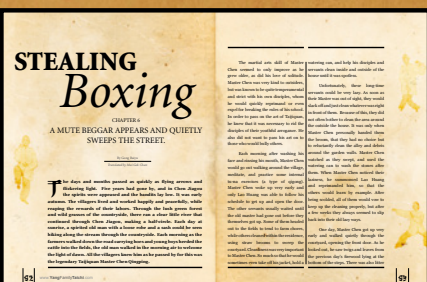
TAI CHI CHUAN IS ONE FAMILY



TAI CHI AND THE HEALTH OF THE BRAIN



MA HAILONG



STEALING BOXING Chapter 6

Journal of the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association





YANG JUN, President

Translated by Mui Gek Chan

President

Dear Member: This is the first time the International Association has published the Journal as a digital edition.

Electronic publication provides us with greater possibilities. We will integrate text, pictures, and images as an interactive whole to better serve our Tai Chi practitioners. Although we will go through a transition phase, I believe the digital version, designed by Marco Gagnon, will allow the reader to enjoy a new and improved resource for study and practice.

In 2013, through the efforts and support of Yang Cheng-fu Centers, instructors, affiliated schools and members, the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association was able to



Handwritten signature in cursive script, likely reading "Yang Jun".

continue our development. We have expanded from Western Europe into Eastern Europe. In South America, development continues to expand from centers in Brazil and Argentina to Uruguay, Venezuela, Peru, Columbia, and Chile.

The International Association continues to upgrade its website database system so that members, instructors, ranking events, and the Tai Chi Teacher Academy will receive better support and service. The Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Essentials was very well received. It is currently available online in the Members-only area of the website. With help from our volunteers, the Spanish and Italian versions are now available. The Portuguese version will soon follow. The Association will also print a small number of hard copies for sale to satisfy member requests.

In 2014, the International Association's primary focus will be on supporting the Yang Family Tai Chi Foundation's International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium. This time, the Symposium has invited the He Style Tai Chi Chuan representative, Grandmaster He Youlu, to introduce the practice methods of the He Style. We have also invited experts from the health care community for an exploration of Tai Chi Chuan's benefits with a primary focus on the nervous system and the brain.

The Symposium gathers six Tai Chi styles together and provides a platform for sharing East-West knowledge, discussion, and cultural exchange. This will give Tai Chi Chuan enthusiasts the opportunity to learn, study and exchange ideas in a cross-cultural atmosphere where everyone is part of one Tai Chi family.

Finally, I would like to wish you good health, and may all your wishes come true! I hope to see you at the 2014 Symposium in Louisville!



Handwritten signature in Chinese characters, reading "楊軍" (Yang Jun).

Letter from the Editor



Welcome to our first digital version of the Association's Journal! It is with great excitement that we also welcome the world to our first release to the general public!

We are focusing on the upcoming 2nd International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium by including essays from each of the Masters featured at this special event. For the first time, in their own words, we can appreciate their depth of knowledge and the profound principles that guide their practice.

Our mission is to create a platform for the exchange of ideas, methods, and practical advice for every style and every student of Tai Chi Chuan. Over the past 14 years it has been my privilege to work as editor of the Journal and I remember well the meeting where I volunteered to do so.

At that point, in 2000, our publication was a three-page newsletter. How hard could that be? Some thirty issues later, I can look back and say our work has been hardly work and working hard in equal measure.





I would like to thank the many contributors over the years, the translators, and the volunteers who have translated our entire back catalogue of issues into French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese.

I look forward to the promise of a digital future for the Journal. We hope to expand the boundaries of the printed page to include technologies that will inform and inspire our readers around the world. In this regard, we are very fortunate to have a visionary artist and graphic designer to guide this process.

Marco Gagnon and I had our first meeting at a Starbucks in Seattle, 14 years ago. He showed me his concept for redesigning the little newsletter. These many years later he is taking our publication forward into the digital age with the same imagination and design expertise that so impressed me back in the day.

Dave Barnett

P.S. All of our back issues are available on the Association website and all you have to do to access them is to join us by clicking here

TAI CHI CHUAN
is
ONE FAMILY

*An interview with Grandmaster
Yang Jun*

By Bill Walsh

*Bill Walsh would like to thank Holly Sweeney and Audi Peal for
their help in preparing this article.*

2014 is an important year for Tai Chi Chuan. Once again, leading exponents of the traditional styles will come together for a Tai Chi Chuan Symposium, where they will share their families' long-developed treasures. Master Yang Jun will represent the Yang Family, as his grandfather has retired. At the end of the 2009 Symposium, Master Yang was recognized as the fifth generation lineage holder of the Yang Family.

Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo has been teaching in the United States since 1991 and Master Yang Jun has assisted him. In a recent talk with Master Yang Jun, I asked him about what he has learned in this long apprenticeship and his thoughts about the gathering of the leading teachers of the traditional styles. He also discusses the importance of two primary skills necessary to advance in Tai Chi Chuan: relaxing and using the waist.





BW: *You have made a huge investment of time and energy to create and support a Tai Chi Chuan Symposium this coming July of 2014. You will be bringing together the leaders of the different styles of Tai Chi. Why is this so important to you?*

YJ: Many of today's Tai Chi meetings are centered around competitions. I would like to see more events with the emphasis on teaching. Today there is so much focus on styles because each style has a different flavor. Seventy years ago there was only one Tai Chi Chuan, just individual teachers of Tai Chi, not identified styles. As their different methods became more apparent over time, Tai Chi divided by styles. But we all come from one Tai Chi; we all come from the same root with the same principles and similar techniques. We all talk about the same energy, each style just performs differently. This diversity gives students more choices, and maybe it makes it more interesting, but it splits Tai Chi into factions. I want to create the highest level of showcase so people can see how the styles are distinct. They will meet the acknowledged representatives of these styles and realize that we are all together as one Tai Chi family.

BW: *Why would someone come to the Symposium to learn from styles other than their own style?*

YJ: There are many reasons. First, we expect that you will not be shopping for a style and that you will continue to practice your own style. You can also learn from the other styles. You will see that each style has its own flavor. Second, they perform differently and yet you can see from the principles that they have a very close similarity. Third, each style has different methods of practice. These perspectives can help you to understand your practice from a different angle.

BW: *Can you give me an example?*

YJ: For example, when we are talking about the Chen style, they use the method they call “silk reeling”. We don’t use the term silk reeling. If you look at the way thread is made from the fibers, you have to twist and you have to pull evenly or the silk will tear. The Chen style explains that you must unify straight movements with circular movements to create spiraling movements. They have a more detailed way to talk about when to have this type of coordination through the waist, through the back, through the arm rotating, which angle is inside, which angle is outside, and the balance of the positions throughout the movement. They have clearly defined this. For the rest of us, we have a simpler idea. We don’t talk about when and where, but actually, we are doing something very similar. By studying this method with the Chen family, you can gain a deeper understanding of where this exists in other forms. Our rotating and circling is similar to theirs in theory, but we do it differently. In the end, you will find out that even though we don’t have a name for it, we are working with the same idea.

BW: *What are the unique characteristics of the form in each of the different styles?*

YJ: Yang style is practiced using a large frame with slow, graceful, and even movements. Our movements are not flowery, but are designed to be simple and clear.

The Chen style moves both fast and at other times slow, with lots of circling, spiraling and the delivery of explosive energy (fajin).

The Wu/Hao style is a small frame stressing the idea of opening and closing. Their movements are small but very strong. You will feel when you practice the Wu /Hao style that it will bring your energy up.

In the Wu (Jianquan) style, they seem to have a distinct forward leaning but actually their leaning is around their center. They are very rooted. They have different requirements



for their body shape, footwork and leaning. You can compare these methods to your own footwork, and it may improve your footwork and make your practice more stable.

The last style is the Sun style. Their footwork incorporates the techniques of Xingyi, and they borrow the body turning methods from Bagua. Their hand techniques are based on the Wu/Hao style. This is all combined into one style and so you see a Tai Chi flavor from the Wu/Hao style combined with these other techniques.

All the styles can give you ideas to improve your own style. Each style has its flavor and we can learn from each, by paying attention to the techniques that each style makes prominent. Then we can decide whether to add this flavoring to our own style.

BW: *How have the teachings of your grandfather, Grandmaster Yang Zhenduo, influenced the way you teach and work with*

groups? You were an apprentice to him for many years; he taught and you observed.

YJ: My grandfather gave me calligraphy with the words: Zheng mai cheng chuan: “To receive the teachings and carry on and hand them down directly from the vein.” I feel the responsibility to pass on this body of knowledge, this transmission, but I must find my own way of delivering the information. My grandfather has influenced my thinking, my understanding of the classroom, the philosophy of my family and Tai Chi, and so many things.

For instance, in China, the Yin Yang theory suggests you need to be sensitive to both the group and the material. Also, you need to follow the timeline. As you teach, over time, you need to change the material. So, in the relationship between the teacher and student, there is always the question, what is the best way to learn?

Yes, I watched my grandfather, not thinking about how I would teach, but



observing how he interacted. I studied not only how he presented the material, but also how to be a genuine person. I learned about generosity and patience. I remind myself all the time how my grandfather expressed humility, generosity and patience.

How you organize the material should fit the level of the group you are working with. Everything is flexible, not fixed. My grandfather taught me that your success comes from your hard work but your method of teaching is individual; you need to find your own way. He would say, "Your training and the development of your skills never ends. There is no way to copy another person's teaching 100%."

Now after twenty years, we have a lot of students who can teach the movements and provide the flavor of traditional Yang style.

The population studying Tai Chi is different today in both their age and their environment. The culture is different everywhere now. Tai Chi has spread all over the world and I must adapt to the various cultures. Today, I do have more communication with the students and we use more of the question and answer methodology. I must be flexible and realize that there is no one way to teach.

When my grandfather came to the U.S.A., most people were focusing on learning just the sequence. From an external point of view, we needed to make a lot of corrections. As students learned our form, they couldn't help keeping the flavor of the form they came with. This created a need for correcting the external form. Now after twenty years, we have a lot

of students who can teach the movements and provide the flavor of traditional Yang style.

Now I am focusing more on the methods and applications. It is now more important to explain how we apply the ten principles into our practice, into our form and into our movements. If you do not have a basic understanding of the form, this kind of explanation will be hard to comprehend. From the very beginning we emphasized the importance of using your waist. Now we must explain more clearly exactly how to use the waist, how to make the upper body coordinate with the waist, how to make the middle body coordinate with the waist, and how to make the lower body coordinate with the waist. We must also explain how to connect our footwork with our waist.

Another example is that we understand the bow stance and we understand the empty stance, but do we understand exactly what is the similarity in the footwork, and what is the basic method?

My challenge is to teach these ideas. There are three requirements to experience the flavor of our style. First, we have straight/diagonal footwork. This means the front foot is straight and the back foot is diagonal and there is a space between the feet. In the bow stance, we refer to this as shoulder width apart. Second, the weight should be put in the bubbling well. And third, your crotch should be open and rounded. It doesn't matter what movements you are doing, all three elements should be present.

These concepts take time and practice to incorporate into the form. I must be patient with the process. My grandfather reminds me of the Confucian saying that you must teach to the level of the group. You cannot teach something that people cannot understand or you will frustrate them. At the same time, you cannot teach something they already know or you will bore them.

BW: *What is the most difficult concept for students to understand?*

YJ: Actually, in our method, there are two concepts that we have emphasized from the very beginning. These two ideas are a priority for the student and need to be done correctly. These ideas are relaxation and how you use your waist to make the coordination of the upper body, the lower body, and the middle body. Sometimes students are having trouble with a particular coordination and feel they cannot perform it correctly. But, actually, it is because they do not understand the first two basic requirements. They feel they cannot make this coordination and it is because they are not moving from the waist. Or they feel they cannot transfer the energy, and it is because they are not relaxed. Either they are too limp or they are too stiff. We talk about this from the beginning and we do make progress, but this is the area that causes fundamental problems.

« I remind myself all the time how my grandfather expressed humility, generosity and patience. »

**« Relaxation
sounds so
simple but is
hard to
master. »**

BW: *What do you think students need to do to relax more?*

YJ: Relaxation has two parts: solo and partner practice. First is the physical body's practice. Through the daily practice, the length of time we practice over time, conscious repetition will make your body more familiar with the style's movements and flavor. You must pay attention to how you use your body and do this in accordance with the ten principles. This is one part of the relaxation that you do by yourself. Even when you do standing meditation, this is a form of relaxation practice. Through these exercises, students become more relaxed in their solo movements. But, they still have problems when they work with somebody else. When they practice with someone else in push hands, if the other person has a different speed than they are familiar with, their coordination may not be comfortable. This is because the mind has been distracted or because they haven't had enough experience with this kind of partner. Then they tighten up and become stiff. It is important to practice by yourself, but also you should practice with someone else, with different partners, skill levels, and at different speeds.

Tai Chi follows the Ying/Yang theory. If you only do the forms by yourself, you only learn one side. So, to follow the theory, one side you do by yourself, but this does not provide an understanding of the other side. You should also understand the other side, working with others. This gives you a different experience of coordinating your movements, your position, and your energy. This kind of practice teaches how you can relax yourself so that you can be like a liquid, so you can fit into any shape, and therefore you will have balance with your opponent.

When you are pushing with your opponent, it is important to join with your opponent. You must be relaxed, so you can be soft, so you can join with your opponent. We all know that liquid has no shape. If water is in a cup, the container shapes it. If it is in a saucer, it is flat. When you practice with different partners, you will gain experience. When you are soft and relaxed and your mind is calm, you will find the balance and you can join with your opponent. If you become stiff, you develop corners and you cannot join with your opponent. Relaxation sounds so simple but is hard to master.

BW: *Can you be more specific about explaining this idea of relaxation and how it affects the different parts of the body?*

YJ: In Tai Chi, we want you to be rooted, so you can be stable and balanced. In Chinese we say Song Chen, which means you relax then sink. Chen means sink. Relaxing and sinking are important steps in unifying the energy. We unify by using the waist to lead the body. The rest of the body should be relaxed so the body can follow. It is like the whip. The waist

is like the handle of the whip and the body is the rest of the whip. We must transfer the energy to the tip. Depending on your speed, you must have the right amount of relaxation.

What is the right amount of relaxation? If one is too stiff or too limp then we are not expressing the Yin/Yang dynamic. We want balance of these forces on both sides, not too stiff, and not too limp. There is actually a range within this balance. Some people can be a little harder and softer and this is not a mistake, but a personal preference. By yourself, it is hard to know if you are doing it right. Are you agile? Is your empty and full clear? Is your breathing deep, and your energy unified? These questions help you to know if your body is unified.

You can understand more when you work with an opponent. When you are too stiff, he can push your hand and affect your root. When you are too limp, you have no guard on your circle and your opponent can move into your body and your center. When a student is too limp, they are not extending the energy into their limbs and they cannot fend off an attacker.

BW: *How can a person get feedback when they are working by themselves to know if they are working with a unified body?*

YJ: We have a method using a staff to extend your energy to the tip. This trains your delivery of energy. If you can send the energy to the tip, you can see it; it will quiver.

A staff can be very long; it can be ten for even twelve feet long. It is a spear without the tip on it.

BW: *How do the joints play a part in the body being like a whip?*

YJ: From the joints and tendons there is an extension of energy. This kind of extending is like our definition of relaxation. If the whip does not have enough speed, then the rest of the body of the whip just hangs there because it is too limp. My grandfather said this many times, "Relaxing is not limp; it is connecting the joints and tendons." Make your whole body's movements as even as you can. Do not put too much emphasis on one joint. There is an internal feeling of linking your body together when the energy is transferred.

BW: *When the whip moves, it has no joints, no folding along its length?*

YJ: Yes, no joints. That is why we want you to practice in a way that is unified, so the energy can transfer to the tip. We don't want you to put stiffness into your joints. The way is to open the joint and extend through the joint. If you put the whip down on the floor, it lays there in a heap.

BW: *You have mentioned speed several times*

YJ: Your speed must be coordinated with your movement. If you are too stiff, you won't follow the initiation from the legs and

« Relaxing is not limp; it is connecting the joints and tendons.»

waist. If you are turning quickly, your body following your waist will not respond the same as when you turning slowly. As you turn more quickly, it will more like a whip; the challenge is to get the body of the whip to coordinate the speed with the handle.

BW: *How can we create this unified coordination of the body?*

YJ: You have a center and you open in another direction, for example, extend from inside to outside. By following the ten principles, you refine your body shape: head lifting up, chest tucking in, your back rounded, and your shoulders and elbows dropped, your waist relaxing down. For instance, your head lifting up and your waist going down, gives you two directions. When your head lifts up, your spine lengthens up allowing the spine to move in two directions as the spine lengthens down. From your middle back rounded, you extend left and right. The body shape's feeling is one direction up, one direction down, one going left and one going right. You extend through the arms to round the back. Then you feel extended. Your body leading up, through your head, and the rest of your body moving down. This is how you create continuity by using opposing directions.

« By following the ten principles, you refine your body shape: head lifting up, chest tucking in, your back rounded, and your shoulders and elbows dropped, your waist relaxing down.»

Now, when the body coordinates well with the waist, this is unified movement.

BW: *If we return to the beginning student, and to people who would like to study Tai Chi so that they can teach it in a gym or a club, at a school, or in some environment where their Tai Chi students will not engage in a very long term of study but do want the experience of studying traditional Tai Chi. These institutions are asking for certified teachers. How will you respond to this need.*

YJ: This is a difficult question to give a simple answer to. Our Association has worked hard to help people to become instructors. We have a system of ranking and students study and are tested to progress through the levels. They work hard to get through the first level, which requires a specific accuracy in performing the 103 form. To progress to the fourth level and become certified teacher can take more than five or six years. This is the traditional approach.

Elsewhere, there are many teachers giving out certificates in a short time. Our family has always been interested in developing the highest quality instructors. We are struggling to maintain our standards yet respond to this demand. We have created a teachers academy to organize all our training and are now experimenting with a short form certification. At the

Symposium we are initiating a certification program in the new sixteen movement Yang form. We are encouraging all the other styles to participate in this endeavor and to produce their own certification process. I am not sure the other styles are ready yet but this is our goal. They are interested, so I think we will be able to work this out. We are trying to find a practical solution with the hope that we will stimulate the interest of these new teachers to continue on in the traditional training. We are keeping an open mind.

BW: *I have a different kind of question, which concerns people who have been practicing Tai Chi for a long time. As they age, sometimes they do not practice as much. I have heard some people say that as they get older they think about Tai Chi more than they practice Tai Chi. Is it important to continue to practice the physical forms?*

YJ: No matter how good you are you must practice. My grandfather, he still practices.

Here are the steps in learning Tai Chi: First, practice the movements until they are familiar. Extend from movements that are familiar into an understanding of energy. After you understand the energy, you reach a stage where the mind is clear. This is called Shen Ming: Shen is spirit and Ming is clear. You don't have to think about the body's coordination; your body already understands this. When you achieve this, you don't need to think, you just need to keep your mind in the center.

It is similar to driving a car. When the mechanics of driving are familiar, you just focus on what you want to do. If you have to stop suddenly you don't say, "I will now raise my right foot and put it on the brake." You just think it and the body understands and performs the task. In the scenario where the car is in a dangerous situation, and starts to slide, you must relax and stay centered until you see what should be done to solve the problem. Then, you choose an action and your body performs your intention. It is the same in Tai Chi.

« Tai Chi is alive, and flexible; it is not fixed. »

Tai Chi is alive, and flexible; it is not fixed. You can be relaxed when you push with a beginner, but when you do push hands with someone who has more experience and skill, your mind might not be so calm. If you cannot understand their energy, your mind will lose the center. So the way you continue to improve is through the physical practice. There is a Chinese saying, "Behind one mountain is another higher mountain." Gongfu means the skill you develop from the effort and time you put into your training. Therefore one day's practice equals one day's Gongfu. Whatever level you have reached you must continue practicing. There is always more. This is why my grandfather is fond of saying, "**Your Gongfu; it never ends!**"





YANG FAMILY TAI CHI CHUAN FOUNDATION

The 2014 International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium is a project of the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Foundation. The Foundation became a federally recognized 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization in 2012. Formed by Grandmaster Yang Jun, the Foundation's mission is to promote health and longevity to mankind through Tai Chi Chuan. This mission will be fulfilled in various ways.

One way is the promotion of Tai Chi Chuan through hosting high-standard events, such as the International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium. The goal is to raise awareness of Tai Chi Chuan in the general public as well as provide quality educational events for beginning and advanced practitioners. The Symposium is one example of such an event and of how support of the Foundation increases awareness of not only Yang style Tai Chi Chuan, but awareness of Tai Chi Chuan in general in the greater community.

yangfamilytaichifoundation.org



Another area of the Foundation's mission is the awareness of traditional Tai Chi Chuan culture. This includes education in traditional customs, rituals, morals, and protocols for teachers and students that have historically been part of traditional Chinese martial arts. In modern society, some teachers and students are not aware of these special traditions. The Foundation offers teachers knowledge of these cultural traditions so that teachers can pass them on to students if they choose.

Finally, the Foundation aims to create a standard curriculum for students, one that includes a traditional direction of study yet fits with modern education. This approach includes both a Chinese and a Western academic understanding of Tai Chi Chuan. The Foundation seeks support for developing such a curriculum and inviting specialized experts to teach various topics.

Donations to the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Foundation contribute to an organization dedicated to high quality Tai Chi Chuan education, the promotion of Tai Chi Chuan in the world, and ultimately the support of an art that can positively affect the health, wellness and lives of people around the world.



THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL TAI CHI CHUAN
SYMPOSIUM:

A
Special
INVITATION

By Carl Meeks

*Vice-President
International Tai Chi Chuan
Symposium*

Iwish to extend a special invitation to all of you. The entire Symposium is designed to provide everyone with the very best that the Tai Chi world has to offer. Scheduled events begin with the Pre-Symposium Workshops, and continue through the week with Academic Sessions and Grandmaster Workshops. You can look forward to a full day of studying Tai Chi Chuan. In addition, there are many special events throughout the week.

The Symposium begins right after the Independence Day celebrations. If you are arriving early there are many events to enjoy locally including the Waterfront Festival and Fireworks. The celebration includes free concerts, fireworks, and family entertainment on the Great Lawn at Waterfront Park, July 3rd and 4th. The Louisville Blues, Brews and Barbecue Festival kicks off on July 11 at the Louisville Water Tower. During the week you can also enjoy tours of Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby, and the Louisville Slugger baseball bat manufacturing facility and museum. There is something to do every day in Louisville for every interest and taste.

Special Symposium events begin with the Opening Ceremonies on July 6. We will welcome everyone and introduce you to our amazing group of volunteers. The Tai Chi Grandmasters will also introduce the traditional styles of Tai Chi Chuan.

The Symposium program and schedule will be introduced and Daniel Shulz, PhD will deliver the keynote address, “The Learning Brain”.

As we celebrate Tai Chi Chuan as one family, the Welcome Banquet at 7:15 PM on Monday, July 7 will bring everyone together for a fine dining experience at the Seelbach Hilton Hotel. Guests will enjoy great food and camaraderie at the finish of the first day of the Symposium. In addition to the superb food, Symposium guests will enjoy presentations and toasts by the Grandmasters and spend an evening with friends from all over the world.

The Symposium is an avid supporter of Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer’s Healthy Hometown Movement. A special community wide Tai Chi practice event is planned for Thursday morning to bring Symposium guests and the Louisville community together to promote the role of Tai Chi Chuan as a component of a healthy lifestyle. This special practice is planned to take place at Louisville’s Waterfront Park. The five Grandmasters will each take a turn leading all who attend in Tai Chi exercises and movements unique to their family styles.

Thursday evening’s Grand Showcase will feature martial arts performances by individuals and groups, and will be

headlined by inspirational displays of skill from each of the Grandmasters. Each performance will exemplify the beauty of Tai Chi Chuan, the uniqueness of each style and also the similarities that bind them together as one Tai Chi family.

We will celebrate the end of our week together with the informal Friendship Party at the Muhammad Ali Center. The Friendship Party is time to enjoy a relaxing evening with all of our Tai Chi friends before we depart to our homes and reflect on this extraordinary event. Symposium leaders and Grandmasters will share what this event means to them and what the future holds for Tai Chi Chuan. A light dinner is provided as we spend one last evening with old and new friends. The Ali Center will provide guests with free tickets to the Muhammad Ali museum where you can learn all there is to know about the Champ!

Each day has a full schedule of academic lectures, training in the five traditionally recognized styles of Tai Chi Chuan from representatives of the founding families and entertaining evenings to relax. The Symposium will be an educational forum that will enrich your study and practice of Tai Chi Chuan for years to come. It is truly an opportunity of a lifetime. I look forward to seeing all of you there! ☯



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SYMPOSIUM

*Health, Education and
Cultural Exchange*

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM OVERVIEW

By Pat Rice

Director, Programs

This Symposium brings you an abundance of exciting programs throughout the entire event. The theme is aptly named: *“Directly from the Source”* and not only expresses the authenticity of the presentations, but also indicates the depth of resources. These presentations bring together the wisdom of Chinese culture and the precision of modern science through master’s workshops, evidence-based literary review and academic sessions, and other special events designed to foster an exchange of knowledge and cultures.

THE GRANDMASTERS AND TAI CHI CHUAN STYLES

The Grandmasters of the family styles are the big stars of the program. These lineage holders shine each day in more than one sparkling format, generously sharing the uniqueness of their forms and revealing their traditional wisdom. As a participant, you get to meet each one several times.

All of them deliver a “keynote” speech, each presenting major components of his style and revealing his personal insights into tai chi chuan’s

philosophy and unique precepts. All the styles are linked by shared characteristics, by history, and by a common philosophy, into one “family” of Tai Chi Chuan.

Every morning and every afternoon Monday through Friday, you attend a workshop where you learn foundation exercises and movements that are distinctive to one of the styles.

In addition, you can join a daily “sunrise” practice either outdoors with a grandmaster or indoors with a selected top quality instructor.

By the end of the week, you will have been in two classes with each of the five major styles, and been introduced to a sixth major style. You will have heard keynotes from all six. You will have seen them in formal and informal settings and will have a sense not only of their place in history, but their individual personalities as well.

PRE-SYMPOSIUM WORKSHOPS

Pre-Symposium workshops, presented July 5 by an experienced and distinguished master, and July 6 by one of the grandmasters, are extra opportunities to absorb key elements and fundamentals of tai chi chuan. Notably, these four workshops are appropriate for beginners and for long-timers: there will be something valuable for everyone.

SCHEDULE

The Symposium schedule is full each day from early to late, and the whole event is packed with extraordinary sessions.

When there are two Grandmaster workshops taking place at the same time, your placement into one of two groups (A or B) ensures that you get to attend all ten grandmaster sessions without a conflict.

There's adequate time between sessions to move from one location to

another, and everything is conveniently located nearby.

Meal breaks are additional opportunities for interaction with fellow attendees, for shopping, note-taking, or resting, as well as food.

An "open" evening invites you to explore the exciting city of Louisville.

SPECIAL EVENTS

An interactive panel discussion, "*Tai Chi Brain, Tai Chi Mind*" is one of the highlights of the week. This conversation continues subject matter introduced by the Academic faculty. You may bring your questions and expect to hear answers from both the grandmasters and the academics.

The Grand Showcase is a spectacular program, performed by the grandmasters and by other experts. You'll see a full evening of exhibitions that cover the spectrum of Chinese martial arts.

A welcome banquet, a farewell friendship party, and opening and closing ceremonies—with additional keynote addresses—complete the main agenda.

This Symposium is a rare and splendid opportunity for you to meet and to learn from some of the greatest luminaries of this art. ☯



Tai Chi
and the Health of
the BRAIN and
Nervous System

Holly Sweeney-Hillman

Director, Academics Department

Diseases of the brain and nervous system touch all of our lives: Parkinson's, autism, anxiety and mood disorders, attention deficit, post-traumatic stress syndrome, Multiple Sclerosis, dementia, Alzheimer's... we all know friends or family members who suffer the devastating effects of one of these ailments. All of these diseases and disorders create long-term quality of life challenges and are difficult to treat.

The practice of Tai Chi is emerging as a potential champion in the prevention and treatment of disorders of the brain and nervous system. Dr. Andrew Weil had this to say in a recent edition of his health newsletter:

"I've long viewed tai chi as an effective exercise for both mental and physical stimulation, and I often recommend it to promote flexibility, balance, stress reduction and relaxations... findings suggest that practicing tai chi can do much more for seniors. If further study reveals that it consistently leads to

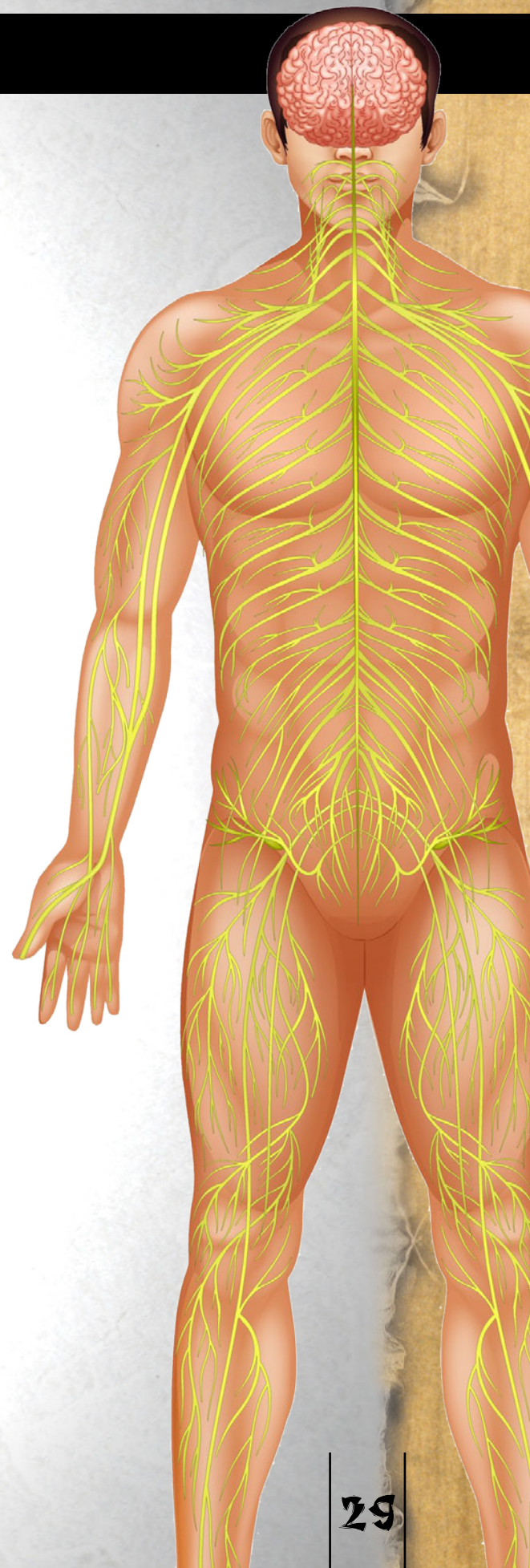
ACADEMIC PROGRAM:

increases in brain volume and improvements in memory and thinking skills, it may become a core therapy to help seniors maintain their intellectual as well as their physical health.”

The 2014 Symposium’s academic program will examine the topic of brain health with presentations by distinguished researchers, physicians, journalists and educators drawn from around the world.

There will be keynote lectures throughout the Symposium schedule that will elucidate current scientific understanding of how our brains grow and change over the course of our lifetimes and how the practice of Tai Chi can influence brain and neurological development. The historical evolution of the concept of “mind” in Tai Chi theory and practice will be presented and a fascinating discussion between researchers and Grand Masters will explore the historical and present meanings of “mind” and “brain” in the lexicon of Tai Chi.

Several literature reviews will be presented at the Symposium that will examine the existing body of completed and recorded research produced by doctors and scientists investigating the value of Tai Chi in treating Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, chronic pain syndromes, Parkinson’s disease and Multiple Sclerosis. These literature reviews will provide important insights about the role of Tai Chi in reducing or halting the progression of symptoms for people diagnosed with these conditions. The literature reviews will also illuminate the need for additional research in specific areas and provide insights about how to improve research protocols that utilize Tai Chi.



An extremely important contribution to the 2014 academic program and beyond will be a meta-analysis of existing research on Tai Chi and the health of the brain and nervous system. This meta-analysis will tell us what all research studies taken together as a whole reveal about the value of Tai Chi practice to support mental resiliency, defend against diseases of the brain, and heal damage to the nervous system.

In addition to the keynotes, literature reviews, and meta-analysis, there will be a series of practicum lectures by Tai Chi practitioners who are applying Tai Chi on the front lines of health care. These experts will explain how they conducted their work, the challenges they encountered with specific populations, the successes as well as the setbacks they encountered along the way.

It is with great pride and anticipation that we introduce the academic presenters of the 2014 International Tai Chi Chuan Symposium:

KEYNOTE:
“The Learning Brain.”
Daniel E. Shulz, M.Sc., Ph.D.

Since 2002, Dr. Shulz has served as Director of Research at the French National Center for Scientific Research. He is presently director of the Somatosensory Processing and Sensory Plasticity laboratory and co-director of the Department of Neuroscience,

Information and Complexity in Gif sur Yvette, France.

Dr. Shulz’s current research interest includes the study of sensory processing and plasticity and the neural basis of learning. He has published more than 50 scientific papers and book chapters on these subjects. Dr. Shulz teaches Sensory Physiology at several French universities and regularly participates in international conferences, summer schools and seminars. He is a member of the Societies of Neuroscience of Argentina, France, Israel and USA.

Dr. Shulz began the study and practice of Tai Chi Chuan eleven years ago at the Yang Chengfu Paris Center under the tutelage of Duc and Carole Nguyen Minh, where he is now a teaching assistant.

KEYNOTE: “*Emotional Resiliency in a Challenging World; the role of Tai Chi.*” *Karen L. Grantz, Psy.D.*

Dr. Karen Grantz holds a Bachelor of Science from Cal Poly University, San Luis Obispo, CA; a Master of Arts and a Doctorate of Psychology from Spalding University, Louisville, KY.

Dr. Grantz currently serves as Senior Supervisory Psychologist and Facility Psychology Executive at the Veteran’s Administration Medical Center, Louisville, KY and is responsible for

TAI CHI AND THE HEALTH OF THE BRAIN AND NERVOUS SYSTEM.

all issues pertinent to the profession of psychology at the facility.

Dr. Grantz brings unique insights regarding the role of Tai Chi in survivors' recovery and developing research into why some individuals seem to have greater emotional resiliency to trauma than others. Drawn initially to Tai Chi for its healing qualities for her patients, she now maintains her own personal practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW: “Cognitive Deficit, Alzheimer’s Disease and Vascular Dementia: Tai Chi based research.”

*Ramon Suarez Zaldu, MD, Clinical
Laboratory Director of National
Institutes of Rheumatology, Uruguay*

Associated Professor Suarez is trained as a Medical Doctor in Uruguay University of Medicine and completed his studies in Germany. He is Clinical Laboratory Director of National Institute of Rheumatology in Uruguay & Clinical Laboratory Director of British Hospital in Uruguay. His area of expertise is the diagnosis of degenerative diseases, clinical research and health technology.

He is currently Vice-president of External Relations of Latin American Society of Clinical Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. He coordinates and participates in many national and international research collaborations and

has served on the project management team of several research programs including patient safety.

Dr. Suarez began the study and practice of Tai Chi Chuan twelve years ago and in 2012 became an instructor in the Yang Chengfu Center Sao Paulo-Brasil under the tutelage of Angela Soci and Roque Severino.

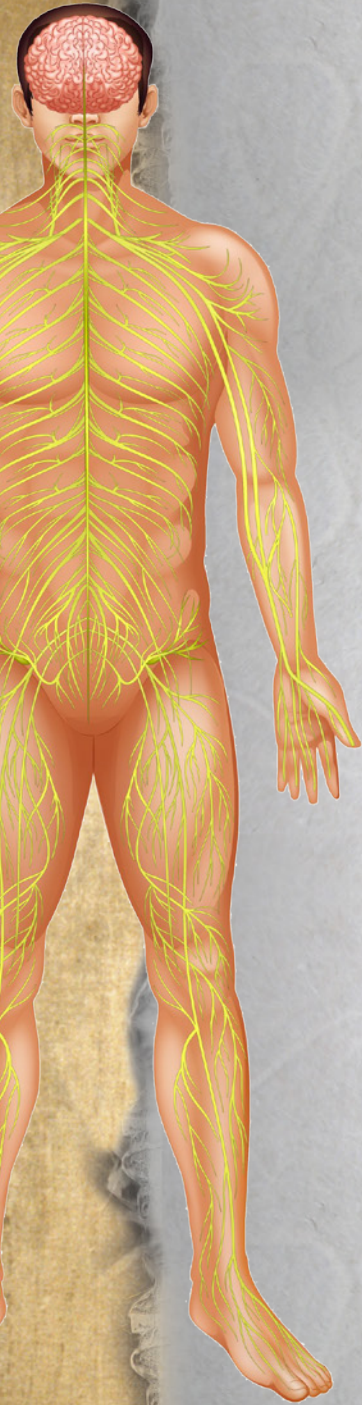
PRACTICUM: “Tai Chi and Management of Chronic Inflammatory Diseases.”

Ramon Suarez Zaldu, MD

PRACTICUM: *Clinical Application of Tai Chi for Pain Management.*” Kristi Hallisy, PT, DSc, OCS, CMPT, CTI

Dr. Hallisy is an assistant professor at the UW-Madison and her teaching responsibilities include musculoskeletal coursework, health promotion and wellness, orthotics and prosthetics. Her clinical appointment includes patient care at University Health Services (student health) and professional staff development at UW-Health Princeton Club East Outpatient PT Clinic. As part of the multi-disciplinary pain management clinic, Dr. Hallisy developed UW-Health’s Movement Awareness and Exercise Class for Patients with Chronic Conditions based on tai chi mind-body principles.





Dr. Hallisy also serves as a faculty member, instructor and mentor for the Post-Professional Orthopedic Clinical Residency Program offered at the UW-Health and Meriter hospitals. Professionally, Dr. Hallisy provides service to the Wisconsin Physical Therapy Association (WPTA) as a member of the WPTA Board of Directors, Co-Chair of the Health Promotion and Wellness Committee and special liaison to the WPTA Continuing Education Committee.

KEYNOTE: *Trauma-informed Tai Chi instruction: Opportunities for growth and healing.*

Karen L. Grantz, Psy.D.

PRACTICUM: *“Tai Chi Fundamentals® for Veterans and VA Staff across the Health Care Continuum: From Rehabilitation to Wellness.”* *Patricia Corrigan Culotti, CTI, MTF and Tricia Yu, MA*

Patricia Corrigan Culotti, BSA, CTI, MTF is co-founder of Enhancing Balance and consults with local hospitals and health care organizations to introduce and integrate ancient healing arts into mainstream medicine. Pat has been teaching and studying traditional Yang style tai chi and qigong since 1977.

Pat has received certifications to teach from 4 main recognized Tai Chi

Masters. She is also a certified Range of Motion (ROM) Dance instructor. Her ability to train and certify health care professionals in Tai Chi Fundamentals® (TCF) comes from receiving her Advanced Instructor Certification (Level 6) in this discipline. Pat is a featured model of Tai Chi postures for Tai Chi Mind and Body by Tricia Yu (DK Publishing, London).

Tricia Yu holds a B.A. Behavioral Psychology from DePauw University and a M.A. in Education from Claremont Graduate University. Her certifications include Yang Style Cheng Man Ch'ing Lineage Tai Chi certified lineage Instructor by two Grandmasters: Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo and William C.C. Chen.

Tricia is former director (1974-2005) of Tai Chi Center in Madison, Wisconsin, one of the oldest and largest schools in the US, and the present owner: Tai Chi Health, providing instructors training and certification nationally. She has taught Tai Chi and qigong as a full-time occupation since 1972 and is a pioneer in integrating Tai Chi into medical model exercise therapy. 1981, co/creator: ROM Dance® Program. 1996, creator: Tai Chi Fundamentals® Program. She has collaborated with health care practitioners in developing training materials, seminars and certification testing for both programs.

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PRACTICUM: “Healing Invisible Wounds: Teaching veterans suffering from post-combat stress.” Sifu Laurent (Chris) Bouguyon

Sifu Chris is a veteran of the US Navy and a Valedictorian Honors graduate of the National Institute of Technology with a degree in Electronic Engineering. He is also certified in advanced wilderness medicine from the Wilderness Medicine Institute’s National Outdoor Leadership School. He is a Professional Member of the National Qigong Association and is currently serving on its Board of Directors. As the co-founder of SimplyAware, Sifu Chris’ programs and regional events have been featured in Allen Image Magazine, The Dallas Morning News, and on ABC, NBC and CBS.

A regional behavioral health hospital asked Sifu Chris to develop a Qigong based Recreational Therapy Program for their Veterans and Woman’s Trauma Groups. In 2010, the program’s success led them to add Qigong Recreational Therapy Groups focused on Chemical Dependency, Chronic Pain, Adult and Geriatric Psychiatric, including the Critical Stabilization Unit patients. As a result of this program’s continued success, and his unique Western/Eastern blended perspective on holistic healing, in 2012, the Department of Veteran’s Affairs

Hospital - Dallas asked Sifu Chris and SimplyAware to share their Training Mindfully with Qigong Principles™ program with their veteran population. This 12 week / 24 class program has delivered extraordinary results with the veterans showing marked improvement in every category measured.

KEYNOTE: “The Evolution of the Tai Chi Mind.”
Arthur Rosenfeld

Arthur Rosenfeld began his formal martial arts training in 1980 and has studied deeply in China and the United States. A Yale graduate and student of Tai Chi grandmasters, Arthur is dedicated to personal transformation and social change through the application of Tai Chi practice and Taoist philosophy. In 2012, he was ordained a Taoist monk at the Chun Yang (Pure Yang) Taoist Temple in Guangzhou, the first Westerner to be so honored. He hosts the hit national public television show Longevity Tai Chi with Arthur Rosenfeld.

In 2010, Rosenfeld produced and hosted a documentary series on the scientific evidence for acupuncture, tai chi, and meditation. Funded by the pharmaceutical industry, tens of thousands of copies of these films have been distributed to major medical centers, professional healthcare organizations, group medical practices, patient



advocacy associations and more. In 2012 he produced a follow-up instructional series.

Rosenfeld has penned 13 critically acclaimed books, some of which have sold bestseller numbers and been optioned to Hollywood. He was a finalist for the prestigious Books for a Better Life award for his bestseller *The Truth About Chronic Pain* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), and his prize-winning novels have recently focused on Chinese philosophy and martial arts action. Most recently he authored *Tai Chi - The Perfect Exercise* (Da Capo Press, June 2013).

PRACTICUM: “Community Based Tai Chi to Reduce Risk Factors for Chronic Heart Failure Patients.” Rod Ferguson

Rod Ferguson is the National Director of Training & Chief Instructor with the Australian Academy of Tai Chi & Qigong. A full-time professional instructor since 1978, he manages 45 locations throughout Queensland. As well as conducting Traditional Academy Tai Chi classes, he also trains Traditional & Applied Tai Chi instructors and ‘non-expert’ group leaders for Applied Tai Chi. Rod personally teaches more than 800 students on average per week.

Rod has won many awards – including a Gold Medal Fan perfor-

mance in China - yet his teaching style is very natural and inspires students of all levels. Ongoing learning is an essential part of his practice, to enhance and expand his skills – not only with his mentor Grandmaster Gary Khor (founder AATC 1976) but also with many Tai Chi Qigong Masters and health experts around the world.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

“Parkinson’s Disease and Multiple Sclerosis, Tai Chi based research.” Kristina Woodworth, B.Sc., CEO SciMantis Medical Communications, New Jersey

Ms. Woodworth earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. Prior to founding SciMantis, she participated in the product development phase of automated systems for the quantitative detection of viral RNA for clinical diagnostics and disease management applications for Roche Molecular Systems, Branchburg, NJ, and served as Senior Research Editor for eMedguides.com, Princeton, NJ.

As the sole proprietor of SciMantis Medical Communications, Inc., she provides a broad range of medical writing and consultation services to clients interested in the effective communication of scientific data and the development of straightforward, audience-appropriate content.

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She has been a practitioner of Shaolin Kung Fu and Tai Chi since 1992 and holds memberships in Systems Within Systems Kung Fu, the American Medical Writers Association, and the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association.

META-ANALYSIS:

“Tai Chi related research on the health of the brain and nervous system.” Patricia Flatt, M.S., PhD, Associate Professor of Chemistry at Western Oregon University

Dr. Patricia Flatt’s educational background includes a M.S. in Plant Ecology from the University of Denver and a PhD in Biochemistry from Vanderbilt University, where she conducted research on the molecular mechanisms of cancer biology.

In addition to her academic pursuits, Dr. Flatt has earned her first-degree black belt in ITF Tae Kwon Do, holds a blue belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and has been practicing Tai Chi Chuan under Master Warren Allen for the past 5 years. She has received further training in Chen-Style Tai Chi under Grand Master Liming Yue and completed her Level Two Instructor Certification.

In collaboration with Master Yue, she has developed a new Study Abroad Program at Western Oregon University

entitled “Applications of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)”. The course is offered in alternating years during the summer term and focuses on Chinese culture and history, the fundamental principles of TCM, and the bioenergetics of the ancient arts of Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong.

CLOSING KEYNOTE:

“The Dao, the future and survival.” Arthur Rosenfeld

For full biographies of our presenters please go to our Symposium Website:

www.TAICHISYMPOSIUM.com/academics/biographies/



The HARDNESS and Softness OF CHEN'S TAIJIQUAN

By Grandmaster Chen Zhenglei

The Hardness and Softness of Taijiquan was analyzed in detail by Chen Changxing (陈长兴) and Chen Xin (陈鑫) in their writings on Taiji. However, many practitioners fail to apply the principles and still use raw force in Taiji push-hands training. They fight with stiff power unaware of the “law of nature that the more solid your base is, the more violent the enemy’s attack becomes”. This is contrary to the Taiji principle of using softness to overcome hardness and the interdependent relationship between hardness and softness. One fundamental principle of Taiji is to form a perfect circle internally and externally by neither caving in nor pushing out. I would like to elaborate on my understanding of the hardness and softness of Taiji.



« No beginning or ending can be found in any moves, nor any traces or lines of motions can be followed. That is when one gets the true meaning of Taiji. »

What is the hardness and softness of Taiji? “Hardness” is explosive power, also called spring power. The mechanism generating such explosive power is by turning the body in Taiji spiral rotations with the waist as the axle to activate the internal *qi* in the dantian. This kind of power can only be achieved by training in extended and relaxed postures with soft and slow moves. It can only be generated through the process of getting rid of stiffness to acquire softness in order to activate the pre-natal natural bio-energy - *qi* (the *qi* of the dantian 丹田之气). It is not the commonly seen post-natal muscle strength. “Softness” is described in the *Manual on Taiji* as being achieved by, “long term training to convert hardness to softness and to forge softness into hardness. Only when hardness and softness are balanced, can *yin* and *yang* be seen”. Softness is not simply being loose or listless. It is a gentle spiral strength achieved after stiffness is eliminated. These two types of strength are the essence of Taiji. They are not easily acquired without diligent and persistent training over a long period of time.

In the beginning phase, the practitioner is required to do Taiji moves in slow and gentle motions. Many people misunderstand Taiji as being, “soft with impractical fancy moves for old people only”. Please note that the requirement for slow and gentle motions is a training method, it is not the final goal. Similar to sitting meditation or the standing pose for “One Finger Zen” and “Rock Breaking” training, one can acquire tremendous combative power through the training in slow and gentle movements.

The first step in Taiji practice aims to get rid of the stiffness and acquire softness. Clumsy strength and raw power need to be completely retrained. For example, when someone lifts a heavy object, he would use muscle strength. Over time, he would get into a habit of flexing the muscles to carry or lift heavy objects. Flexing the muscles actually exerts raw strength. This kind of strength is defined as “clumsy strength” in Taiji terms. To the contrary, Taiji practice requires the practitioner to begin with relaxation and move in slow, gradual and gentle motions. It is because only such motions will elongate the body to generate spring power in order to activate the fundamental internal *qi* and to charge the whole body with internal *qi*.

How can one achieve that? According to Chen Xin (陈鑫) in his Manual of Taiji, “Uplift the top of the head and sink the *qi* to the dantian. Tuck the chest and collapse the waist. Lower the shoulders and drop the elbows. Relax the waist and round the crotch. Open the hips and bend the knees. Concentrate the mind and control the *qi*. Stretch the body and elongate the arms.”

Uplifting the top of the head and sinking the *qi* to the dantian will ensure that the practitioner is thinking of stretching the torso. Loosening the hips and sinking the waist will elongate the back. Lowering the shoulders, dropping the elbows and relaxing the wrists will elongate the arms by stretching the shoulders, elbows and wrists. Opening the hips and bending the knees will stretch out the legs. We can’t elongate the bones but we can work on stretching the connecting joints. Through routine practice, focus on calming down the mind and the breathing; coordinate the breathing with the movements. Visualize that the *qi* is moving with the intention to stretch and elongate the body. As you progress, you will feel that the *qi* in the dantian is fuller and the body will begin to have obvious stretched, numbed, sinking and weighted sensations.

Chen Zhenglei
demonstrating the
applied energies of

Push Hands: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpqNZ0c2OcI>

In discussing the dynamics of hardness and softness, we must examine the yin/yang paradigm of Taiji. From the Taiji diagram, we can see that:

1. The commonly seen Taiji diagram is a circle divided evenly by a curved line. The two parts resemble the shape of two fish. Some refer to the Taiji diagram as the Yin/Yang Fish. The equally divided two yin/yang fish form the never ending Taiji diagram. The yin fish represents yin and softness; and the yang fish represents yang and hardness. From the tail of the yin fish, softness begin to increase. When softness increases to its fullest, the tail of the yang fish begins to appear signalling the beginning of hardness. The first step in Taiji practice is to get rid of stiffness to achieve softness.

2. The never ending cycles of creation and the emerging universe is represented in the Taiji diagram with a circle. The diagram also shows that yin and yang are interdependent. The eye of the yin fish represents yang and the eye of the yang fish represents yin. In practicing Taiji, it is experienced as having softness in hardness and hardness in softness.

Chen Xin applied the yin/yang paradigm when explaining fighting applications, “A practitioner with one part of yin and nine parts of yang is called a stiff stick. One with two parts of yin and eight parts of yang is called a hacker. One with three parts of yin and seven parts of yang is still somewhat stiff. One with four parts of yin and six parts of yang can appear to be quite skilful. Only when one achieves the



perfect separation of five parts of yin and five parts of yang can he be called a master of Taiji.” Prior to achieving the perfect balance of yin and yang, one’s boxing is actually either soft boxing or hard boxing. True Taiji is supposed to be a perfect balance of softness and hardness with hardness embedded in softness and with softness embedded in hardness. Such a perfect balance of hardness and softness can only be achieved through the processes of breaking down the hardness into softness, forging extreme softness into hardness and relaxing extreme hardness into softness. Therefore, in order to understand the hardness and softness of Taiji, one must first understand why this boxing system is called Taiji. Only when we understand the true meaning of Taiji, can we begin to understand the hardness and softness of Taiji as a martial art system.

This system is called Taiji because it incorporates the natural laws of yin and yang. In each move, each breath and every move of opening and closing, yang is embedded in yin and yin is embedded in yang. When yin grows to extreme, yang will emerge and when yang grows to extreme yin will emerge. Yin and yang are interdependent and inseparable. “Opening is yang and closing is yin. Striking outward is yang and leading inward is yin. In Taiji, opening moves are done without releasing explosive power and the closing moves are done without striking. That’s how the potential combative strength is sustained. Practising this way with attention paid to these details, one can expect to achieve the greatest precision and subtlety. Only then, hardness and softness will move in conjunction and emptiness and solidness will exist in harmony. No beginning or ending can be found in any moves, nor any traces or lines of motions can be followed. That is when one gets the true meaning of Taiji.”

This martial art system is named Taiji because its thirteen postures seamlessly coincide with the Taiji Eight Trigrams and Five Elements Diagram. The hand techniques are categorized into four yang types: Peng (棚), Lu (掎), Ji (挤) and An (按) according to the four cardinal directions: Kan (坎), Li (离), Zhen (震) and Dui (兑); and four yin types: Cai (采), Lie (捌), Zhou (肘) and Kao (靠) according to the four ordinal directions: Qian (乾), Kun (坤), Gen (艮) and Xun (巽). The footwork is divided into forward, backward, left, right and centered according to the five elements: metal (金), wood (木), water (水), fire (火) and earth (土). Each move and every posture can be seen as an expression of yin and yang. Therefore, the system is named Taiji.

The hand techniques are categorized into four yang types:
Peng (棚)
Lu (掎)
Ji (挤)
An (按)

The fourteenth generation Chen family master, Chen Changxing (陈长兴) discussed hardness and softness in his Taiji Ten Fundamentals (太极拳十大要论), “Hard power is to overpower fifteen hundred kilograms of power with fifteen thousand kilograms. Soft power is to defeat fifteen thousand kilograms of power with fifteen hundred kilograms. Using power or using skills is how we divide hardness and softness. Hardness and softness are specific in applications as well. When the limbs are charged and the *qi* is shown with sustained internal solidity, it is considered hardness. When the *qi* is sustained inside and the external presentation is soft and gentle, it is softness. When the power is hard, it must be accompanied with softness, otherwise the coiling and motion won’t be swift. When the power is soft, it must be sustained with hardness; otherwise the push and jam won’t be quick. Only when hardness and softness are combined and mutually supportive, can applications such as sticking, coiling, linking, following, jumping, ducking, folding, dropping, pushing, pulling, squeezing or pressing be executed naturally. Therefore, isn’t it important to apply hardness and softness without overly emphasizing either side?”

Each posture in Taiji is the completion of the process from softness to hardness. In terms of breathing and power, it is normally done with pronounced exhalation to help the exertion of explosive power. The body is in the state of the Six Coordinations (六合). The ending motion is normally faster to show hardness. From a fixed posture to the next move, the process of spiraling and folding is performed with soft movements. In terms of breathing and power, it is mainly done with inhalation to accumulate strength. The moves are softer and slower with opening movements. The process from softness to hardness and from hardness to softness should be accomplished with spiral rotations. Hand motions with direction change should be done with retraction and folding. Steps forward and backward should be done with rotation and turning. Opening, closing, retracting and releasing should be done with continuous movements and without ceasing. Intentions and strength should be maintained in synchronization so that retraction is also releasing and releasing is also retraction. This is not just true for the martial arts; it is also true for all things in the cosmos, as well as here on Earth. ☯

« This is not just true for the martial arts; it is also true for all things in the cosmos, as well as here on Earth. »

BASIC TRAINING *Methods*

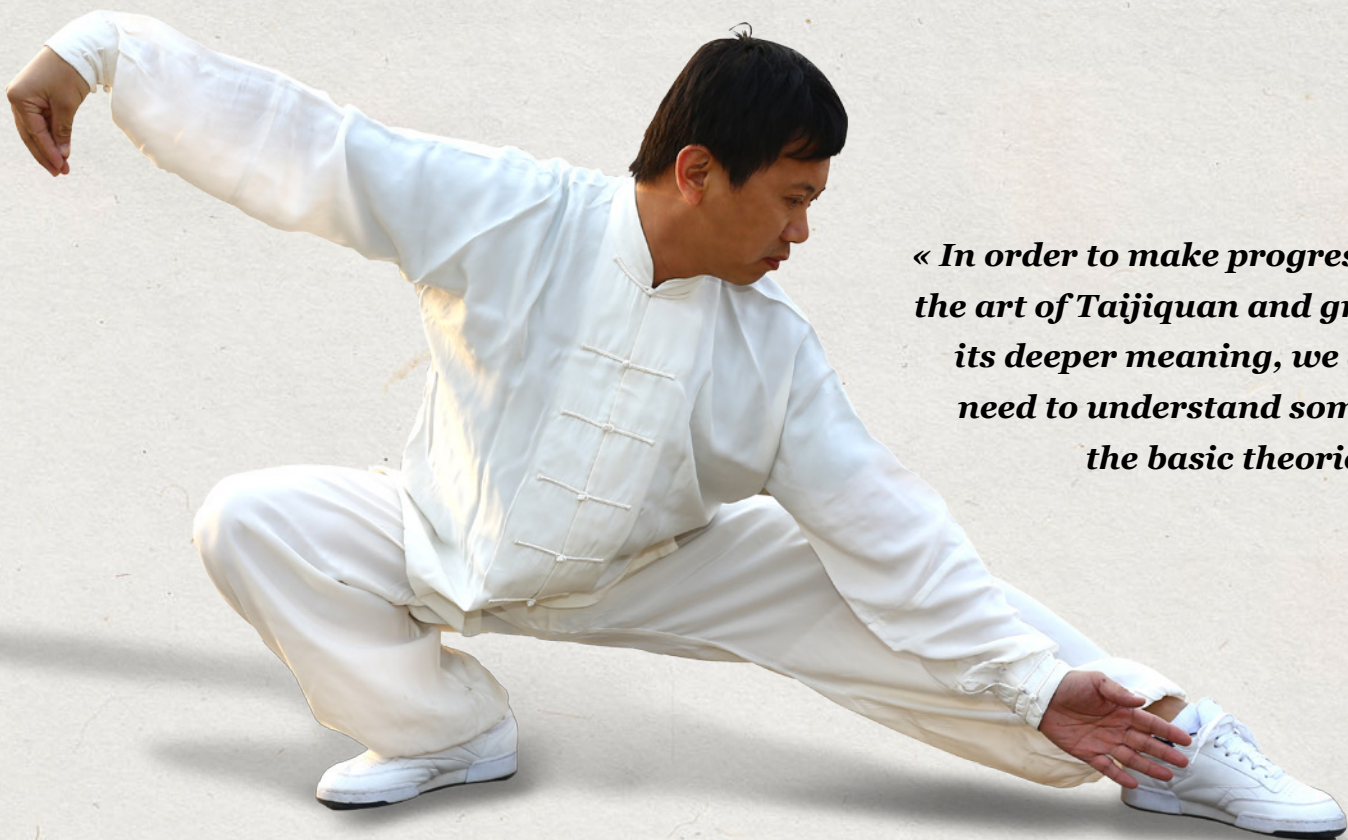
A SEMINAR LECTURE BY GRANDMASTER
YANG JUN

RIBEIRÃO PRETO, BRAZIL – NOVEMBER 2013

Transcribed by Paula Faro and Angela Soci

Emended by Edward Moore

Taijiquan training is normally based on five different points or methods. These points are: the footwork (步 Bù), the body shape (身 Shēn), the hand techniques (手 Shǒu), methods (法 Fǎ), and the spirit (神 Shén). These points are very helpful in learning Taijiquan, as well as correcting the movements over time. In order to make progress in the art of Taijiquan and grasp its deeper meaning, we also need to understand some of the basic theories. The two pillars that form the foundation of Yang Family Taijiquan are: *yin/yang* theory and Yang Chengfū's Ten Essentials.



« In order to make progress in the art of Taijiquan and grasp its deeper meaning, we also need to understand some of the basic theories. »

YIN AND YANG

The first basic theory is the theory of *yin* and *yang*. Everything that we do in Taijiquan can be connected to *yin* and *yang*. The idea of *yin* and *yang* can seem abstract, but in Taijiquan, the concept is used in a very practical way. It means that we are comparing opposite things. A classic example *yin* and *yang* is to imagine the sun shining on the side of a hill. One side of the hill will be in the shadow and the other side of the hill will be in the light. In *yin/yang* theory, the shadow side is *yin* and the bright side is *yang*. Taijiquan practice is full of opposites that can be seen through the lens of *yin* and *yang*. For instance: postures have movements that go up or go down. They can also take us forward or backward and right and left. Many taiji postures also have movements that open and close. Up/down, forward/backward, right/left, and opening/ closing can all be seen as different expressions of *yin* and *yang*.

The idea of *yin* and *yang* can also be applied to different kinds of taiji practice. For instance, sometimes we train in a *yin* way, when we practice standing still (zhan zhuang). Practice that is more still, or quiet (静 Jìng) can be considered more *yin*. Moving practice (动 Dòng) is more *yang*. Quiet practice is also translated into English as “quiescent” practice. In Yang Family Taijiquan, quiescent practice can take three forms: sitting, standing, and lying down practice.

Generally, we consider *yin* movements to be soft, neutralizing, and empty; while *yang* movements are hard, energy-delivering, and full. For each technique there is a *yin* phase, which is focused on storing energy, and then a *yang* phase, which is focused on delivering the stored energy to an opponent. In movement, the idea of *yin* and *yang* can also be applied to weight, which is sometimes referred to as “empty” and “full.” Step by step, we first learn to recognize the *yin/yang* relationship within ourselves throughout the forms, postures, and sequences. In the next stage of training, push-hands, we use similar ideas and methods, but expand the concept of *yin* and *yang* to include another person. In solo forms training, the center of focus is in our own self. In push-hands, the focus should be about being in balance with the other person.

« When *yin* and *yang* clash, this causes tension. Because *yang* changes to *yin*, tension changes to relaxation. This can occur in push-hands. Conflict becomes balance. »

In Taijiquan, there are three main ways to understand the concept of *yin* and *yang*: The first is unity/interdependence. This means that *yin* cannot exist without *yang*, and vice versa. An example of this is that without energy storage, energy cannot be sent out to the opponent. In the forms, it can be generally seen that *yin* energy-storing motions precede *yang* energy-delivering strikes. This is the interdependent and unified nature of *yin* and *yang*.

The second way to understand the *yin/yang* concept, is the dynamic of conflict and opposition. In this case, *yin* and *yang* can be seen as arguing. When *yin* and *yang* clash, this causes tension. Because *yang* changes to *yin*, tension changes to relaxation. This can occur in push-hands. Conflict becomes balance. This is an example of *yin* and *yang* as balance and conflict.

The third aspect of the *yin/yang* relationship in Taijiquan is the process of transmutation. When something becomes extremely *yang*, it will then turn to *yin*. For instance, if you shift the weight all the way back, you must then move forward. When you go all the way to the left, you must go right, and when you go completely to the right, you must then go left. When something is extremely *yin*, it will soon turn to *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* are inseparable. They are mutually beneficial.

THE TEN ESSENTIALS OF YANG CHENGFU

In our family, the Ten Essential Principles are very important for learning Taijiquan. These principles have been taught from the very beginning of Taijiquan. They were organized and published by Yang Chengfu. They are a constant guide for the Taijiquan practitioner. Whether we are just learning the forms, or working on progressing deeper into the art many years later, the Ten Essentials are an indispensable resource for our practice.

There are three ways to interpret each of the Ten Essentials. These are: body shape, methods, and mind/spirit. For example, take the third principle: "Relax the waist". When seen from the category of "body shape", it means that we need to avoid sticking out the lower back in order to have the correct posture to relax while practicing. This principle can also be seen from the "methods" point of view. Without a relaxed waist, it will be difficult to deal with an opponent's energy and remain rooted. From the "mind/spirit" perspective, relaxing the waist allows one to sink the qi, which helps to calm and clear the mind during practice.

WAIST METHODS

The waist methods are an important part of Taijiquan practice. In general, the waist should be flexible so that it can coordinate the energy between the legs and the upper body. There are three basic waist-circling methods: horizontal, vertical, and figure eight circling. Horizontal circling moves right and left. Vertical waist-circling moves up and down, and figure eight circling combines vertical and horizontal together. The energy comes from the root, develops in the legs, and is then transferred by the waist to the upper body. The waist can be used to lead the arms and the legs.

In order to use the waist, the three parts of the body need to be coordinated. The lower part (the legs) should be heavy, the middle part (the waist) should be flexible, and the upper part of the body should be relaxed and extended. The waist coordinates and controls the movements of the body so that they are unified and precise while delivering energy. This means that the waist moves the arms, and also controls their positions and rotation.

UPPER BODY METHODS

The upper body moves in four ways.

1. **Circling:** the horizontal waist movement leads the arms.
2. **Swinging:** the horizontal waist movement makes the arms swing forward and backward like a whip.
3. **Rotating:** the arms rotate with the turning of the waist. This can be compared to interlocking gears.
4. **Rotating and circling** are combined.

There are several methods to exercise the waist-arm connection.

1. **Swinging the arms.** There are two different methods for swinging.
 - a. *Synchronized swinging:* Turn the waist and swing the arms together so that the waist and the arms start together and end together at the same time.
 - b. *Non-synchronized swinging:* The waist slightly leads the arms when starting, and also when stopping. After the waist stops, the arms continue on a little bit more before stopping.
2. **Turning the waist and wrists together.** The waist and wrists turn together in a synchronized movement.
3. **Rotate the waist and wrists while swinging the arms.** The waist controls the delivery of energy. This can be synchronized or not.

In these exercises, the movements are physically controlled by the waist, but led by the mind. The waist leads the arm into the correct position and also delivers the energy.

FOOTWORK TECHNIQUES

In Yang Family Taijiquan, our footwork generally follows the pattern of one foot facing straight and the other to the corner. This is traditionally called *Ding Bā Bù* (八步) or “an eight and a nail step” because a nail is straight and the character for eight in Chinese faces diagonally. The weight should be on the “bubbling well” point, which is close to the middle of the ball of the foot. The inner thighs should feel slightly rounded outward, and the knees should align with the directions of the toes. We use two basic steps: the bow stance and the empty stance. There are also a few other types of steps that are used less frequently, such as the low stance in “Press Down”, the crab-like sideways step in “Cloud Hands”, and the single leg step in “Golden Rooster”.

There are three basic points for stepping in Yang Family Taijiquan. The first point is that you should step like a cat. A cat steps quietly and carefully in a coordinated manner. To step like a cat in a bow-stance, touch the heel first, then touch the bubbling well point, and finally the toes touch the ground. After the toes touch the ground, start to bend the knee evenly. The second point is that you should step as if you are walking on ice. Step carefully so that you will not break the ice. Do not put your feet down in an abrupt manner. The third point is similar. Walk as if you were stepping in mud. Step carefully so that you do not splash the mud upwards. Each step is low, even and smooth.

STAYING ROOTED

How can we keep a rooted feeling in Taijiquan? Sink your *qi* down. Also, there is a method to coordinate both legs so that the energy can be rooted. This is called *Dēng/Chēng* (登撑). *Dēng/Chēng* means to push and support. In a bow stance, the rear leg pushes and the front leg supports. Both legs should feel rooted with the weight on the bubbling well points.

BODY SHAPE

Although Yang Family Taijiquan has many different movements, they all share a similar method for the correct body shape. For example, in each movement, we need to have the same feeling in the back: that it is open in four directions. This means that the back should feel slightly extended up and down, which comes from lifting the top of the head and sinking the waist. The back should also feel extended to the right and left, which is the result of extending the arms and slightly pulling the shoulders. The main principles for body shape are:

1. Relax the waist.
2. Bring the shoulders and elbows down.
3. Open the back in four directions.

It is necessary to understand the methods and also to check the feeling. This helps to know whether you are in the correct position. The body position, like everything that we do, follows *yin* and *yang*. If you have something going up, you need something going down to have balance. If something is going left, there should be something going right also. The tailbone (coccyx) must be balanced in the center. The center is not the same as the middle. The center is the balance point: *Zhōng* (中)

FOOTWORK

There are five types of steps, or footwork in Yang Family Taijiquan.

1. **Step forward.** 进步 *Jìn bù*
2. **Step backward.** 退步 *Tuì bù*
3. **Look left.** 左顾 *Zuǒ gù*:
Pay attention/activate peripheral awareness.
4. **Gaze right.** 右盼 *Yòu pàn*:
Be aware/activate peripheral attention.
5. **Centered and balanced.**
中定 *Zhōng dìng*: Stable.

HAND TECHNIQUES

The three main hand techniques in Yang Family Taijiquan are:

1. **Palm:** The palm fingers should be slightly extended, with a little space between them. The fingers are slightly curved.
2. **Punch:** The fist should be square and full. The thumb is folded over the index and middle finger. The face of the fist is level and facing forward. The palm of the fist faces to the side so that the fist stands. The fist can also be used for the back-fist punch, and the knuckle can also be used, as in “Twin Fists Strike the Ears”.

3. **Hook Hand:** The fingertips all touch together. The hook curves in. The hook can be used to strike, to deflect, and also control. A different style of hook hand is used in the right hand in “Needle at the Sea Bottom”.

ENERGY AND TECHNIQUE

From the martial arts perspective, there are two main points: energy and technique. The energy that we use in Taijiquan is based on *yin* and *yang*. This can also be called hard and soft. Taijiquan energy must contain *yin* and *yang* together to be complete. In Taijiquan, strong energy comes through unifying the whole body. In order to unify the whole body, we need to be *Sōng*. We need to be relaxed and extended. To have hard energy, we first need to have soft energy. To be soft, we must relax.

How can you relax correctly? Relaxation can be difficult to define, but we can more easily point out what not to do: don't be stiff, and also don't be limp. Taijiquan has specific methods to achieve *Sōng*. We really don't want to make our muscles stiff, but we also don't want to have an empty, limp posture either. The way to properly relax is to slightly extend the tendons so

that the body feels like a flexible spring. What is the correct amount of extension? It depends on how fast you are moving. In the hand form, the motions are slow, so less extension in the tendons will be necessary. In faster training methods, the amount of extension needs to be increased to keep the body unified. In push-hands, the extension process also depends on what the opponent gives to you.

One helpful exercise to determine the right amount of extension involves a partner. Stand in the *Zhàn Zhuāng* (站桩) posture with the legs in a horse-stance, the arms rounded, and the palms facing in. Have your partner push on your wrist. Your arms must be flexible. Each time you feel the push, let your arms move like a spring without resisting the push. As the push goes back, your arms should return to where they were. Your partner can vary the speed and frequency of the push to test your relaxation and extension. Let your arms move lightly without resisting the movement, but always return to the original extended position. Your partner can also push down on the wrist and up on the elbow. This method can help to train the correct method

of *Sōng* (combining extension and relaxation) in Taijiquan.

GOALS DURING PRACTICE

When practicing Taijiquan, there are two main goals to keep in mind. The first is that we need to be rooted, balanced, and stable, both in mind and body. The second is that we need unified, whole body energy. How can we be stable, and also have a unified body energy? By following the method of sinking the body center. Relax the upper body and sink the *qi* to the dantian. The upper body becomes light, the waist becomes flexible, and the lower part of the body becomes heavy and stable. We need to be soft and relaxed. Do not resist an opponent. Resistance causes loss of balance. Neutralize the opponent and stay rooted. Sink the *qi* to the dantian and keep the breathing deep and relaxed.

The kind of relaxation that is used in Taijiquan is called "*Sōng*" (松). This means that we loosen and extend the joints in order to connect the body together. Dynamic relaxation is the most important point in Taijiquan, so it should be considered carefully. Everything in Taijiquan goes back to this method. ☺

POSTURES, METHODS *and* FUNDAMENTAL

TECHNIQUES OF WU/HAO STYLE TAIJIQUAN

By Grandmaster Zhong Zhenshan

Translated by Hon Wah Chan

Practicing the forms is the foundation of traditional Taijiquan. Generally speaking, “Beginning the training requires personal instructions, but mastering the forms depends on your own unceasing effort”. We learn from the experience of previous generations, who have taught us to avoid extra detours. When learning the forms, the postures must be followed accurately. You also need to understand the function and purpose of each movement. It is easy to learn the forms but difficult to correct and refine them. Once you have developed bad habits, it can be difficult to fix them later on. Students should practice daily and observe others in order to detect and fix any problems as soon as possible.



« Taijiquan is not about outside shapes, it is about internal methods. »

In Taijiquan, each movement is performed naturally and without affectation. Each posture is a part of the beautiful art that is Taijiquan. During daily practice, show your spirit and demonstrate the true nature of Taijiquan. Connect the postures with soft, slow, rounded, even, and steady movements. Your movements should have continual flow. When the form requires stillness, you should

be as stable as a mountain and maintain a serene composure with a properly balanced posture. When the form requires agility, you should move like a flowing river, demonstrating a majestic visage and heroic posture. Seek calmness during movement and vice-versa. Show your spirit and Yi (mind) throughout the forms.



« *Yin and Yang
should be in
harmony,
then you
understand
energy.* »

Taijiquan is a complete training method developed by the hard work of several generations of masters. It has gone through many refinements and transformations prior to arriving at its current stage. Many styles emphasize the same teaching: “Practicing the form is the same as push-hands, and push-hands is same as practicing the form; they both follow the same principle.” Therefore, when practicing the form, make sure that, “All parts of the body are connected.” “From your feet to your legs and to your waist, they are connected with the same Qi”. You also need to use your Yi (mind). “Apply your Yi everywhere” and “understand the principle of each posture.” During push-hands, stay connected with your opponent - “Follow your opponent’s movements, do not lose contact and do not resist”, “support with both hands, unified Qi threading through.” Pay special attention to following the opponent’s contact point with your mind (Yi). “Use Yi to move your Qi, do not use force”.

During Taiji training, remember that, “Taiji is your whole body, your whole body is Taiji”, and “the whole body becomes a ball filled with Qi.” This requires you to “strengthen your spirit internally and stay peaceful externally.” “The spirit should be concealed”, and you need to “stay calm”, “use Yi”, and “connect throughout.” One should strive for “Wholeness.”

The art of Taijiquan includes *Yin/Yang* theory. *Yin* and *Yang* appear in movement and stillness, open and close, empty and full, inhaling and exhaling, as well as cultivating and exploding, up and down, left and right, front and back and inner and outer. It also appears in stiff and soft, following and against, bent forward and backward, and advancing and retreating. It includes matters that are against each other but also rely on each other. The relationship between *Yin* and *Yang* should be: “*Yin* and *Yang* nourish each other”, “*Yin* stays close to *Yang*, and *Yang* stays close to *Yin*”. Wang Zongyue’s *Taiji Treatise* states: “It is necessary to comprehend the Taiji principle.”

Wang Zongyue also states, “*Yin* and *Yang* should be in harmony, then you understand energy.” To “understand energy” is an important goal in mastering

« After a long period of training and practice, students can get to a level where their appearance is round and full, harmonious, relaxed and alive. »

Taijiquan. If you don't understand energy, it is easy to become double-weighted. As a result, you will become stiff and can be easily controlled by your opponent. When you understand energy, you can improve your skills with each practice and then "follow what your heart desires" and "from understanding energy, achieve highest spirit". These are two very distinct levels. In the course of transformation, you need to comprehend Taiji and Yin/Yang theory, and practice them wisely.

Taijiquan has specific requirements for each part of the body. Basically, there are postural requirements and then different requirements on stances, hand and eye movements, actions, breathing, and consciousness that are all combined together. These requirements strictly follow the principles of Taijiquan. After a long

period of training and practice, students can get to a level where their appearance is round and full, harmonious, relaxed and alive. At this stage, internal energy is agile, flowing freely, and can change easily. At this point, the body becomes flexible and the spirit condenses. Inner and outer are coordinated, the soft contains hardness, and all elements are in harmony and absolutely exquisite.

These techniques are grouped as "postural methods" in Wu/Hao Taijiquan:

(1) Raise the top of the head and drop the crotch

Raise the top of the head. Slightly push the head upwards, like the crown of your head is hanging from a thread. Your head is straight and should not tilt to one side. Tuck in your chin, your tongue touches the upper palate, relax your neck and keep it straight. Raising



the top of the head keeps your spine straight and relaxes the surrounding muscles. The head contains the brain, which controls your reasoning and the cerebellum, which controls your movements. The brain drives your spirit and controls the whole body. Therefore, “The whole body becomes light with the crown of the head suspended”. “Once you can raise your spirit, you don’t have to worry about being slow and heavy”.

Raise your perineum, tighten your buttocks, and round your crotch. This is called “drop the crotch and wrap the hip”, also known as, “waist-crotch energy”, or “life originating from the waist”. Your waist is the axle of your four limbs, it maintains your balance and circulates your internal energy. Stay “active at the waist”, and “always pay attention to the waist”. “Circle the waist, fold the crotch” and “collapse the waist, raise the crotch” are different variations of “waist-crotch energy”.

As your waist and crotch become more flexible, you can handle the opponent’s energy with yielding and folding techniques. You are able to turn smoothly and react to any sudden changes. Storing and exploding energy comes from the

waist. “The waist is a bow”, and it should be elastic. “The important point is that it changes within the chest and waist, not from the outside”. Therefore, all actions begin with the waist and are followed by the four limbs. This is called, “the dominance of the waist”. When moving your waist, pay attention to dropping the crotch and wrapping the hip.

(2) Hold in the chest and slightly round the back

In Taijiquan, holding in the chest and rounding the back means to conceal your chest. It is not sticking out nor drawing in so far that it makes your back arch. This is done by pushing the spine slightly backwards. “When moving around, let the Qi flow along the back, deep inside the spine.” If you can hold in your chest, you can slightly round your back. Use your mind (Yi) without using force. Follow the principle of using your mind and do not show force on the outside. Otherwise, you will destroy the nature of the Taijiquan principle. Also, you won’t be able to keep the body in an upright position and you will expose weaknesses in your form.

(3) Keep the tailbone in the center

Taijiquan requires the body to “Stand like a scale and move like a cart wheel”. “Stand with the body relaxed and stable, then you can support all eight sides”. Keep a straight line from your head, through your body, to the *Huiyin* point (perineum). Push up your head and keep your body weight stable. Keep this straight line as you turn your body in various directions. Keep your spine in the middle with the tailbone in the center, and your body will remain straight. Keep the *Qi* following smoothly in the Conception (*Ren*) and Governing (*Du*) Meridians. This will prevent your body from leaning forwards, bending backward, or tilting to either side. If you lose your center, you can be easily led by others and lose your balance. This technique helps you to remain stable and agile, and makes you look graceful and able to react quickly.

(4) Sink the shoulders and drop the elbows

Loosen your shoulders by letting them drop down in order to open the shoulder joints. Both arms can then rotate smoothly. Drop the elbows by

letting them extend downwards. Don't point your elbows at your opponent unless you are striking with your elbows. As you relax your elbows and let them drop, energy will be contained within your body. This helps you to sink your *Qi* and increase the power when you extend or bring in your hands.

(5) Rotate the palms and sit the wrists

Rotate the palms and sit the wrists means that the wrists rotate with the palms in a circular motion. Use your mind if there is no circular motion in the appearance. The wrist, elbow, shoulder, waist, hip (*kua*), knee and ankle all follow circular motions. Combined with your breathing, these circular motions provide a massage for your internal organs, allowing your blood and *Qi* to flow through your meridians in a spiral. Your inner and outer body will operate together in a circular motion. All of these circular movements are controlled by your mind (*Yi*) and not by your force. The motions are controlled by your waist, and manifested by your wrists. Your fingers should be slightly bent; your wrists should be sitting and stable and not weak or stiff. You can

then reach the state of empty, relaxed, rounded, and agile. You can convert circular movements into straight movements. “Seeking straight within bent”, “nurture and explode”.

(6) Sink the Qi to the dantian

Sinking Qi to the dantian means the abdomen becomes both full and empty, allowing you to sink the Qi from your upper body to the dantian. At the same time, use the “drop the crotch” technique to gather Qi from your lower body to the dantian. Now your whole body can become light and agile. Only your body center remains heavy. All of your mind (*yi*) should be concentrated here: “Keep *yi* at the *dantian*”. The breathing in Taiji is different from regular breathing. Wu/Hao Taiji breathing uses the abdomen, which is the opposite of natural breathing. Contract your abdomen as you inhale; this is close, cultivate, and empty. Expand your abdomen as you exhale; this is open, explode, and full. With each exhale and inhale, there is open and close, full and empty.

This breathing technique has been developed in Chinese self-cultivation as a way to improve health, and is known as “spit and admit”. It increases the lung capacity and massages the internal organs as the diaphragm moves. This breathing technique makes the internal organs stronger and improves their functions. Therefore, abdominal breathing should be followed when practicing the forms or during push-hands. It is fine for beginners to use regular breathing, but as they get more familiar with the form, they should practice the abdominal breathing technique. Without this technique, they won’t be able to experience and understand open and close, empty and full, and cultivate and explode. Without this, they can’t connect their body and advance to the stage where “Qi flows through the body and does not stagnate”. High-level striking techniques use this technique: “Inhaling can naturally raise and uproot the opponent; exhaling should sink naturally and send opponent away”. There is a great health benefit to practicing the Qi guiding and “spit and admit” techniques.

(7) Internal Energy Direction Change

Taijiquan is not about outside shapes, it is about internal methods. Technique is expressed through concealed strength, and not shown on the outside. There are various hand movements but they need to operate with internal energy and change between empty and full, and opening and closing. Internal energy is defined as “within, not external”. This requires a long period of training using your mind (*Yi*) to coordinate breathing and actions with your spirit and concentration, to develop an energy that is a heavy but agile. This power contains hard within the soft – just like a hidden needle within a wad of cotton. This energy travels “from the waist through the spine, spreads to both shoulders, and manifests at the fingers”; “passed through the palms, it flows to the fingers”.

When generating power, we must “connect from the foot, to the leg, to the waist, unified with the same *Qi*”. Therefore, when practicing Taijiquan or push-hands with the palm opening and closing, the whole body is coordinated.

Internal energy moves in two different paths when you advance or retreat, and matches inner intent with outer shapes. During such movements, open when exhaling, extend, fill and explode. This energy travels upwards from the dantian to your back, shoulders, arms, and elbows and arrives at the wrists and fingers. Energy also travels downwards from the *dantian* to the hip (*kua*), legs, knees, feet, and arrives at soles and toes. Closing is inhaling, retreating, empty, cultivating; energy travels in reverse directions. It starts from your fingers and toes and gathers at the *dantian*. These two traveling paths of energy are known as “energy direction change”. It switches between empty and full, and open and close. Remember, “Empty doesn’t mean without force, it contains momentum which is always ready; full doesn’t mean totally tighten, spirit stays concentrated”. Getting ready is preparing for action, staying focused with calm concentration. All of these are based on your mind (*Yi*). Focus your gaze at the place where your mind is thinking, then your energy will “arrive with your spirit”. Taijiquan requires your gaze to follow the dominant hand movement with your eyes. It should be solemn, agile,

powerful and not dull. “The spirit stays within”. It is concealed and not shown on the outside.

(8) Use intention (Yi), not force

Taijiquan requires breathing and movements to be governed by your mind. Use intention, not force. Raise the top of the head and slightly push upwards. Put your mind at the top of your head and raise your spirit. The tailbone stays in the middle and keeps your body aligned. Holding in the chest and slightly rounding the back allows you to act naturally and get ready for any changes. Dropping the crotch and wrapping the hip helps to concentrate on the waist area and keeps you balanced. Sink the shoulders and drop the elbows, rotate the palms and sit the wrist. Follow the opponent’s bending or extending or seeking the straight within the bend, these techniques all follow your mind to switch accordingly. Separate empty and full, sink the *Qi* to the dantian and change the energy direction. Enable your body to open and close in order, synchronize upper and lower body, match up inner and outer – all these techniques are operated by your mind.

Taijiquan movements and all the above principles are governed by your mind (*Yi*), and not by pushing your energy around. Remember do not use brutal force or *Qi*. “Those who concentrate on *Qi* will have no strength, those who cultivate *Qi* develop pure hardness”. “Cultivating *Qi*” means through the direction of your mind, practicing abdominal breathing with deep, slow, even, and light inhaling and exhaling. “Mind as the commander, *Qi* as the message flag”, “Use mind to drive *Qi*”. Mind (*Yi*) is always the main leader in Taijiquan. First realize your intention, then your breathing and energy start flowing back and forth. Finally, your body starts moving.

Apply the above fundamental principles when you are practicing Taijiquan or push-hands. By following these techniques over long periods of time, you can advance in Taijiquan and improve your striking techniques. It can also improve your health and prevent as well as cure some chronic diseases. ☯

« Combined with your breathing, these circular motions provide a massage for your internal organs, allowing your blood and Qi to flow through your meridians in a spiral. »

TAIJIQUAN IS A PROFOUND ART *for* *Improving* WORLD HEALTH

By Grandmaster Sun Yongtian

Translated by Chi Kuan Kao



In the 21st century, people lead fast-paced lives. Stress at work and life creates anxiety, hesitation, and helpless feelings. Stress also causes imbalances in the body, mind, Qi, and blood. Because of this, we face many illnesses and health issues. In order to stay healthy using natural means without side effects, holistic health improving methods are becoming more popular along with a balanced life style and a healthy diet.

From this point of view, the health and fitness effects of Taijiquan's special style of exercise have very practical values. Many different health-improving methods have been developed to help people to fight disease and survive illnesses. Traditional Chinese Taijiquan is one of these methods. Even though Taijiquan belongs to the martial arts category, it can also be considered a part of Chinese therapeutic exercise. People can help themselves cure disease, improve health, and increase longevity by practicing Taijiquan. The key point is that Taijiquan is a comfortable, relaxing, and slow

« Taijiquan expresses the Chinese worldview of life, nature and balanced development. It expresses the traditional understanding that all things follow the Dao, the way of nature. By understanding and following nature we can gradually merge with the cosmos. »

low-impact exercise. An important Taijiquan principle is to have motion during stillness and stillness during motion. In this way it calms the mind. It relaxes and conditions the body. It helps maintain, adjust, and nourish functions of the body prone to age-related declines.

Time magazine wrote that Taijiquan is the most perfect exercise. A Russian newspaper wrote that Taijiquan is a whole body fitness method. Chinese culture considers Taijiquan a profound art of health and longevity. All of the above evaluations are not coincidental. Taijiquan has multiple functions: e.g., culture, philosophy, martial arts, self-defense, sports medicine, fitness, mind/spirit training,

self-adjustment medicine, etc. Thus, traditional Taijiquan can be called a valuable art of happiness, health and longevity in the journey of human life.

We practice Taijiquan like a floating cloud and flowing water, and express the pure traditional Chinese value of harmony with nature. While practicing Taijiquan in this special state there are comfortable, relaxing, and soft external forms done calmly that impart a peaceful state of mind. Taijiquan expresses the Chinese worldview of life, nature and balanced development. It expresses the traditional understanding that all things follow the Dao, the way of nature. By understanding and following nature we can gradually merge with the cosmos.

When we live a fast-paced life full of anxiety, difficulty, and stress, we can practice Sun style Taijiquan once to feel refreshed and practice twice to feel the sky is so blue and the air is so fresh. The mind will be naturally calmed and balanced. Then you can learn how to work calmly under stress with good organization, and a gentle, well-behaved manner with confidence and without arrogance. One can show one's ability when facing difficulty. No difficulty, no ability. Practice Taijiquan to have a mind that is still like water. Consider the words of the ancient sage, Zhu Geliang, "A gentle person uses calmness to improve health, to be thrifty and to nourish morality". One can only show one's will living a simple life and can only live long when calm. When a person has a well-balanced mind they can realize their full abilities and become objective and responsible. Roadblocks are removed, wisdom develops, and one can be hard-working and enjoy the colorful journey of life. For this reason Taijiquan has many contributions to make to the development of a healthy world.

Sun style Taijiquan was created by Grandmaster Sun Lutang who combined and integrated Xingyi (Shape and Mind) Quan, Bagua (Eight Trigrams) Palm, and Taijiquan into one. The unique characteristic of Sun style Taijiquan is that in combining these methods into one art, it maintains the unique features of each. It combines the unifying of internal and external as one in Xingyiquan with the dynamic and static as one in Bagua Palm into Taijiquan's central equilibrium. While practicing the form, it does not move up and down or rock left and right. It changes the center continuously during exercising with moving steps.

Before 1949, people referred to Sun style Taijiquan as the "Open-close Taiji or Moving-step Taiji" and not small frame Taiji. Sun style Taiji bends the knee 135° as a baseline, but there are middle and low movements as well.

In practicing Sun style, we need to pay special attention to the correct body shape and how to coordinate the hands and feet. The beginning of each movement is a little more difficult than other styles of Taijiquan. We pay special attention to have correct leg movements, bending the knee, and stepping forward and backward. For beginners, we use simple combinations of open, close, single whip, cloud

« By practicing the simple combinations and learning principle rules, you can improve more rapidly to reach a smooth, comfortable, and refined level when you practice the whole form. »

hands, brushing the knee oblique step, stepping back monkey, jade lady works the shuttle before practicing the whole form. By practicing the simple combinations and learning principle rules, you can improve more rapidly to reach a smooth, comfortable, and refined level when you practice the whole form.

Principles in practice lead to motions that are smooth like a floating cloud and flowing water, continuous without discontinuity, combining dynamic and static, and following forward and backward. When the front foot steps forward, the back foot should follow and when the back foot steps backward the front foot should step back. The movement should be agile, round, compact, and every turn should combine opening and closing.

One should calm the mind and relax the body with natural postures that are comfortable and slow while practicing Sun style Taijiquan. Thus, it can improve health, nourish the body and mind, extend longevity and bring happiness.

I miss and appreciate my teacher, Grandmaster Sun Jianyun, who taught us that to learn Taijiquan one has to learn how to become a better person first. She urged us to study traditional culture. By keeping the body and mind healthy, we can apply what we have learned. I have followed her guidance for several decades and do not dare to forget. I practiced the form once or twice every day when I was young, even when I was very busy. I studied slowly and calmly without stopping. This enabled me to work through the ranks of a nationally established company to eventually become the chairman of the board. This is all due to the foundation of improving the health of the body and mind through the practice of Taijiquan.

Several decades have passed like a dream. Taijiquan as a living art enables us to treat difficulties as opportunities. My hope is that the refined culture of Taijiquan can forever blossom throughout the world. ☯

The *Significance* *of* TRADITIONAL THEORY IN TAIJIQUAN PRACTICE

By Grandmaster Ma Hailong

Translated by Ke Zhang

Taijiquan is a distinctive type of *gong fu* from the traditional martial arts of China. This practice can help to cultivate moral character and prolong life by its subtle, yet powerful influence on the spirit of the practitioner. Since its establishment, Taijiquan has been continuously improved and perfected by the masters of the past who intensely studied the art, and by doing so preserved and developed it. This has contributed towards making Taijiquan an everlasting martial art.

The beautiful art of Taijiquan includes not only the exquisite skills of *gong fu*, but also the profound literary classics, which combined with the physical exercises, form the complete system of Taijiquan. To have such a pairing of literature and exercises is uncommon among the traditional martial arts in China.



« Beginners must pay constant attention to maintain their focus and composure. In this way they can gain twice the result with half the effort. »

Taijiquan-related classical documents that have been handed down through time include Zhang Sanfeng's *Taijiquan Scripture*, Wang Zongyue's *Theory of Taijiquan*, Wu Yuxiang's *Comprehension of 13 Movements*, etc. These classical theories have their own features and each elaborates on the true essence of Taijiquan from various perspectives. It was the goal of the earlier masters of Taijiquan to pass on these valuable documents so that future generations could know the art. This goal has been well fulfilled. In addition, other important Taijiquan related classical works were also preserved. An important Wu style text, *Speaking of Tai Ji Method* was given to my ancestor Wu Quanyou, who became a master of Taijiquan by his teacher Master Yang Banhou. Master Wu Quanyou developed the foundation of Wu Style Taijiquan. His son, Master Wu Jianquan, founded Wu Style Taijiquan. The above classics are not only important literature, but are also essential for understanding and practicing Taijiquan.

In my opinion, these theories are immortal masterpieces which were written down by true sages and masters based on their lifetime of studies and experiences. Every Taijiquan practitioner should study them, though unfortunately, most practitioners do not pay enough attention to this tradition. The following reasons may apply:

- i. The contents are so profound that those who do not have great knowledge of classical Chinese cannot easily read the articles or comprehend their deep meaning.
- ii. A lack of the combination of theories and practices, the advice of masters, and/or physical exercises results in practitioners who cannot be inspired from the theories and therefore cannot have a profound grasp of the text.
- iii. Today, due to the limitation of living conditions and time, practitioners commonly place extra emphasis on appearance (the practice of forms) and neglect foundation. Therefore, they have a difficult time reaching a deep-rooted and high-level state. Because of this, they cannot study and comprehend the traditional theory.

In view of this, I would like to recommend that everyone attach particular importance to the study of traditional theory. It is very important to the development of Taijiquan. In order to help people understand the meaning of certain classical works, I have selected a few important chapters and sentences from several documents, and I will try to help to explain them from my own observations. I hope I can achieve the effect of making my immature opinions contribute to the understanding of these important writings so that everyone can see the importance of these classical theories. Due to my limited level, errors will unavoidably occur in my article, and I hope that everyone will offer critical advice and feel free to correct my errors.

Taijiquan Scripture states, "Every movement should be agile and connected throughout the whole body with smooth internal strength and concentration of mind." It is a significant concept in the study of Taijiquan. I think this theory can be summarized into three key areas to focus on while practicing Taijiquan. It is very difficult to practice Taijiquan well without paying close attention to these points.

I. AGILITY

Agility is the first concept that practitioners should follow because it is formulated according to the principles of Taijiquan. It is the opposite of “heaviness and sluggishness”. Taijiquan has a unique cultural foundation that includes ancient Chinese philosophies. Lao Zi said in his *Dao De Jing*, “Prudence is fundamental to the overcoming of frivolity; calming is the remedy for impatience.” Here Lao Zi is referring to natural phenomena. Prudence and frivolity, calming and impatience are opposites.

These phenomena can be used for the cultivation of Taijiquan. If students want to fulfill the aim of “agility” during the practice of Taijiquan, they should master their center of gravity. To do this they need to distinguish the relationship between *yin* and *yang*. This is called, “paying attention to the place where deficiency and excess are transformed; no stagnation, and fullness of *qi* throughout the body”. Taijiquan is related to Daoism and it focuses on martial virtues. Taijiquan also concentrates on inner cultivation instead of outer force. This is the significant difference between Taijiquan and other martial arts.

How should one fulfill the aim of agility during the practice of Taijiquan? In my opinion, it is important to keep the body centered and upright. *Comprehension of 13 Movements* states, “Keep the lower vertebra centered and elevate the spirit to the top; keep the body relaxed and agile, and raise the head without stiffness.” I have noticed that many Taijiquan practitioners do not know the significance or the method for raising the head upwards without stiffness. If the body cannot be centered and upright, it will be difficult to fulfill the goal of agility. Beginners must pay constant attention to maintain their focus and composure. In this way they can gain twice the result with half the effort.

When practicing Taijiquan, one should observe three key points.

(1) Do not raise the Qi; otherwise there will be stagnation.

Using *qi* in Taijiquan practice refers to the method of moving *qi* gently without urgency or haste. If actions are carried out with urgency and haste, the requirement of sinking your breath into the dantian cannot be achieved.



Comprehension of 13 Movements states, “Guiding the circulation of *qi* with the mind so that it sinks down and can concentrate into the bones; moving the *qi* smoothly so that the body follows the mind easily.” This is a famous saying as well as a necessary step in the process of learning Taijiquan.

In order to reach the above standards, it is critical to always keep a calm state during the practicing of Taijiquan. Zeng Zi’s book *Great Learning* states, “Calmness occurs after establishment, tranquility occurs after calmness, deliberation occurs after tranquility, and attainment occurs after deliberation.” Briefly, this concept is divided into three phases: “establishment, calmness, and deliberation”. In other words, during Taijiquan practice, the mind must achieve a state of relaxed concentration. My parents, Masters Ma Yuehliang and Wu Yinghua, called it the “relaxation-calmness reaction”.

The essence of the relaxation response is “calmness”. The human brain is extremely complex. In order to concentrate and completely focus on an activity, strong mental power is required. The formula that the mind

must be calm before it can be focused is central to many Chinese philosophical traditions including Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. The *Dao De Jing*, states, “Emptiness should be brought to the utmost degree, guard the stillness with unflagging vigor. All things alike go through their processes of activity, and then return to their essence.”

Calmness is also highly valued in Buddhism, “Be quiet like a spiritual tower. Calmness can generate intelligence; intelligence can generate wisdom.” Calmness is an important feature of classical Chinese philosophy. Calmness should pervade the three realms:

Body calmness: This means smooth, steady, and deep breathing, namely “*sinking of qi into the dantian*”. There are three locations for the *dantian*: the lower *dantian* - below the umbilicus, the middle *dantian* - at the chest, the upper *dantian* - between two eyebrows (see Bao Pu Zi – *Terrestrial Truth*). The sinking of *qi* into the lower *dantian* makes the spirit quiet and reserved. *The Yellow Court Classic* states: “There is fine vital essence in the *dantian*... there is a spiritual portal in the *dantian*.”

«Beginners must pay constant attention to maintain their focus and composure. In this way they can gain twice the result with half the effort.»

Heart calmness: This refers to the agile and smooth movements of Taijiquan practice. One must practice using a heart which is concentrated and without distraction.

Mind calmness: This refers to a naturally relaxed mind. It cannot be reached simply. People should not only exercise assiduously for a long time, but also study to reach an extremely high level of comprehension. Calmness is the foundation of agility. Agility can also be explained as “flexibility”. *Comprehension of 13 Movements* states, “it becomes extremely hard after being extremely flexible.”

(2) Do not exert strength, otherwise the continuity breaks.

Force is actually still exerted during the practicing of Taijiquan, but it is not a hurried or rigid force. Rigid force has the defect of “interruption.” Stiffness causes difficulties in the collection of energy and the intrinsic coherence of the body’s frame. Force can be understood as a “vector” in mechanical terms and is relevant with speed. People are different in body size and strength and that makes for differences in speed. Under a condition of the same speed, the stronger always prevails over the weaker. So there is a saying in Chinese martial arts, “one person who is strong can defeat ten persons who are skilled.” On the contrary, the way to win the victory in Taijiquan is based on the method of winning energetically with minor force and conquering the hard with the yielding, not strength. The beginner should understand the above two concepts in depth.

(3) Use correct methods, otherwise progress will be difficult.

Incorrect methods include the deliberately made-up, the artificially pursued, and bad habits. It is important to cultivate and restore *qi* in training and exercising. It requires the practice of yielding, restraint of mind, and integration of body and spirit. *Comprehension of 13 Movements* states, “It becomes being extremely hard after being extremely yielding; the energy accumulates after being restored.” Taijiquan requires the integration of hardness and flexibility, and focusing of the mind. During practice, one becomes agile after being able to breathe correctly. *Qi* can be cultivated without harm. However, beginners have to follow the principles. “Nothing can be accomplished without norms or standards,” so the beginners must master the correct methods.

“Agility” is not being slack. Some teachers often use terms such as “relax” or “relax a little” for teaching agility. I think that the accurate meaning of agility is, “being apparently relaxed but actually not relaxed, and apparently stretched but actually not stretched.” This requirement is very important. It requires the precise management of relaxing and tightening by both degrees and timing.

A double defect can be caused by having slack body positions, and also by the use of stiff force. Both are absolutely taboo in Taijiquan practice. As we practice, pushing palms or punching fists are not stretched or tightly grasped. The fist should be closed, but not tightly. The palm should be made without being completely stretched. There should be slightly concave shape at the center of the palm. The fingers should not be too tight or too loose. This will help to avoid defects in the hand techniques.

Our footwork should also be agile. Many beginners commonly make mistakes in the footwork. *Comprehension of 13 Movements* states, “Step like a cat and move the body like reeling silk from a cocoon.” While practicing Taijiquan, practitioners should walk like a cat. When walking, cats lift their legs slightly and put their soles down gently. We have to be filled with admiration when we realize the observational abilities of the ancients. But how many people pay attention to this important point?

Taijiquan is a process of refining internally and externally. This is expressed in the statement, “The mind is highly centralized inside, while ease and comfort are shown on the outside.” The internal cultivation of Taijiquan is the most difficult part to practice. Because of this, one must learn and practice with the correct methods, which come from the traditional theories.

Whether we are talking about social science or natural science, theories need to have a practical basis and application. Taijiquan is no exception. The classical theories of Taijiquan were summarized by the masters of previous generations from their experiences. They are the true treasures of Chinese martial arts. We not only need to study them, but also have the responsibility and obligations of continuing to develop them. Agility is essential for the practice of Taijiquan.

II. ON BEING THOROUGH

Taijiquan is a unique martial art. One of the key elements of this art is “being thorough” which must be highly emphasized.

(1) Actions must be coherent and without inconsistency or stagnation

Theory of Taijiquan states, “Keep a rounded, smooth and balanced body shape with no hollows or protrusions; the form should have continuous flow with no interruption.” The head is upright, the chest is tucked in, and the back is slightly rounded. The lower back is centered, the elbows are dropped, and the shoulders are relaxed. The arms are dropped and the waist is relaxed down. Sink the *qi* to the *dantian*. “Step like a cat and move the body like reeling silk from a cocoon.” These key points must be observed constantly during Taijiquan practice.

I have observed many beginners who do not understand the importance of these key points. Some who practice Taijiquan hold their chests stiffly during practicing and many people do not properly focus the eyes, which affects the energy of the practice. Many people are arched at the waist and tight in the hips. Unquestionably, these defects will influence the cultivation of the art.

“Interruption” often happens when there are excessive actions. When the actions are excessive, the balance will be compromised. This should be avoided because balance is a fundamental principle of practicing Taijiquan. Misplaced footwork cannot be easily corrected. Incorrectly placed stances force practitioners, out of frustration, to recover their stances. This can cause a dragging step. If the postures are very low, balance cannot be restored quickly. One must pitch down the body, and withdraw the steps in order to restore the original position through an abrupt adjustment. This defines the defect of interruption.

Similarly, the defects of the interruption are also caused by overly quick or overly slow actions. Taijiquan lays emphasis on equilibrium. The strength and speed of actions should be relatively consistent. For example, beginners practice a set of boxing forms for approximately 20 to 25 minutes. As they gain proficiency in the actions and their skills improve, they can practice the boxing forms for 20 to 40 minutes, but one should not practice the boxing forms for over 45 minutes. For

consistency, beginners should practice at uniform speeds. The pace must maintain a balance during the practicing of Taijiquan, without any interruption. These principles must be observed strictly during the so that the defects of flaws, bumps, interruption, etc. can be avoided and good habits are cultivated.

(2) The correct use of strength

The principle of “agility” must be followed during the practice of Taijiquan. The application of brute force is forbidden. Because force is related to strength and speed, this can cause the defect of “interruption”. You can lose your balance in this out-of-control condition so that you are easily attacked. The principle of the application of strength in Taijiquan is “being apparently relaxed but actually not relaxed, being apparently stretched but actually not stretched.” In Taijiquan, strength is applied with the technique of understanding empty and full.

(3) Promoting qi circulation

The other important aspect of being thorough is closely related to the circulation of *qi*. *Taijiquan Comprehension of 13 Movements* states, “Guiding the circulation of *qi*

« I think that the accurate meaning of agility is, “being apparently relaxed but actually not relaxed, and apparently stretched but actually not stretched.” This requirement is very important. It requires the precise management of relaxing and tightening by both degrees and timing. »

with the mind so that it sinks down and can concentrate into the bones; moving the *qi* smoothly so that the body follows the mind easily. Suspending the top of the head eases the problems of slowness and heaviness. The mind and *qi* harmoniously balance empty and full. This brings agility and vivacity.” During the practice of Taijiquan, practitioners must pay close attention to the adjustment of *qi*. “Relax the abdomen and the clear *qi* can flow.”

These principles are the foundation of being thorough. It is very important for Taijiquan practitioners to be thorough in each stage of practice. Follow the principle of “*chang chuan*” (taiji long boxing) that says, “people who are good at long boxing are like the Yangtze River and Yellow River, which move ceaselessly.”

The meaning of being thorough not only refers to the hands, eyes, body shape, footwork, and steps during the practicing of Taijiquan, but also more importantly, refers to “consciousness of *shen yun*.” *Shen yun* is a Chinese concept that is difficult to translate into English. It is related to the *shen* (spirit) energy. One way to translate this is: the rhythm of balanced spirit and energy. We might also call it “animated spirit.” If the *Shen Yun* is not thorough, the forms cannot be completed perfectly.

Focusing on *Shen Yun* in Taijiquan is part of the importance of practicing while “seeking mental cultivation methods for *qi* and focusing on consciousness rather than outward appearance.” Taijiquan puts great emphasis on the mind, consciousness, and the general body shape. These three parts are complementary to each other. Good form cannot be achieved without support from the mind and consciousness. Inherent mind and consciousness cannot be cultivated without the proper body shape. Students of Taijiquan should think this through carefully.

氣

III. CULTIVATION, EXPANSION, AND SMOOTHNESS OF QI

It has been said that “cultivation, expansion, and smoothness of *qi*” is another criterion that must be observed during the practicing of Taijiquan. How can one realize “cultivation, expansion, and smoothness of *qi*”? We must raise the level of understanding of the essence of *qi*.

“*Qi*” was regarded as the principle that formed all things on earth in ancient China. For example, Wang Ch’ung in *Lun Heng·Nature* states, “*Qi* between heaven and earth produces all things on earth ” In traditional Chinese medicine, “*qi* ” is the interchange of circulation. *Qi* also maintains vital movement and promotes the nutrients and organizational activities, such as vital essence, essential substances circulating in channels and blood vessels, kidney *qi*, the *qi* of middle-*jiao* energy, etc.

The traditional Wu style Taijiquan text on essence/function: *Tai Ji Way Theory* says, “Blood is used as *ying-qi*, *qi* is used as defensive energy, blood circulates around the organs, *qi* circulates in bones, muscles and vessels; hair is abundant because of flourishing blood and vital breath, and tendons and nails are strong because of sufficiency of *qi*.”

Taijiquan breathing Mind Comprehension advises, “Carefully study each posture of Taijiquan. Taijiquan is controlled from the mind, but much time and energy are required to develop true skill. Pay close attention to relaxation and the movement of *qi* in the spinal column and the abdomen. Keep the lower vertebrae natural and collected, and keep the body relaxed and agile. Raise the head without causing stiffness in the neck.”

« Good form cannot be achieved without support from the mind and consciousness. Inherent mind and consciousness cannot be cultivated without the proper body shape. Students of Taijiquan should think this through carefully. »

These principles can be reduced to three points:

1. Being concentrated and respectful during the practicing of Taijiquan.
2. Paying close attention to the importance of the waist and relaxation of the abdomen (sinking of *qi* into the dantian).
3. The relationship of relaxed lower vertebra and the raising of the head without causing stiffness in the neck.

In the practice of Taijiquan, the mind should lead the *qi*. This is an essential point. When the mind is moving the *qi*, the *qi* can become very smooth. Many practitioners might not realize the importance of this point. In the art of Taijiquan, seeking smoothness is not limited to the physical forms. When the *qi* is smooth, you can have “*shen yun*.” This is the harmonious and beautiful rhythm of balanced spirit and energy.

There is a poem that goes:

***A tiny boat moves into a large river
the boat bumps and sways with the waves like a
little leaf,
it doesn't matter how big the waves are,
the boat can be controlled
I stand relaxed and bring the boat
back home***

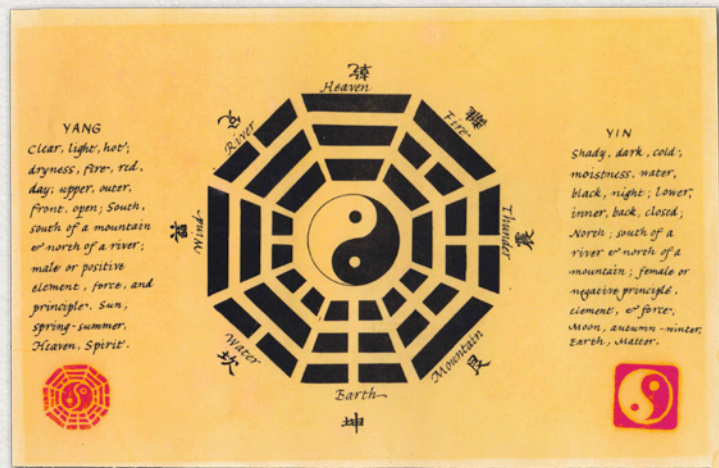


Principles, Methods *and* *Characteristics* OF HE STYLE TAIJIQUAN

By Grandmaster He Youlu

Translated by Chi Kuan Kao

He style Taijiquan was created by He Zhouyuan (1810–1890). He was born in Zhaobao town in the Wen county of Henan province. His family practiced traditional Chinese medicine for several generations and he learned Chinese literature and medicine from his father when he was young. In 1825, he began his study of Taijiquan in his hometown from Master Chen Chinping and became one of his disciples. His brother-in-law, Li Tangjei, was a highly placed official in Beijing, Chancellor of Exchequer, and brought He Zhouyuan to Beijing as a martial artist of the sixth rank. He Zhouyuan simplified the original Taijiquan form and combined it with Science, Confucianism, Daoism and Chinese Medical theories to create a practical form unifying both theory and application. It was called “Dai-Li Jia”, also later known as Zhaobao Taijiquan due to its birthplace.

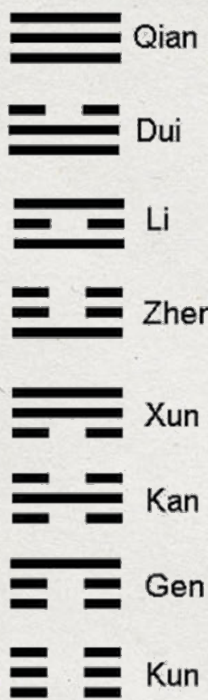


There are two aspects to the name “Dai-Li Jia”: The first is the combination of Taiji’s Yin and Yang theory and the body techniques of the style. Second, is the training and nourishment of the internal Qi with naturally soft and agile body movements. By practicing internally and externally we can reach the goal of internal training.

The term “Taiji” came from the *Book of Change (I-jing)* by Zhou Yi. Taijiquan uses the Yin/Yang theory in the *Book of Change* to guide the methods of practicing the form. The Taiji diagram is the visualized expression of the philosophy of the *Book of Change*.

The Taiji diagram has a round outside shape to show the heavy rounded Qi, which contains the Yin/Yang inside. It shows the dynamic movement and transformation of Yin and Yang. He style Taijiquan uses the *Book of Change*’s theory throughout the form. The form emulates the round shape, embodies the meaning of Yin/Yang,





Five-Elements, and Eight Trigrams, and uses the theory of Yin/Yang changes. It also contains the nourishing and extinguishing dynamics of the Five-Element theory as well as the goal of unifying the cosmos with the individual.

The *Book of Change* states, “From nothingness comes the Taiji which creates Two Appearances, the Two Appearances create the Four Images, and the Four Images create the Eight Trigrams”. Two Appearances means Yin/Yang, which is represented by the Yin Trigram and the Yang Trigram. The combination of the Yin Trigram and Yang Trigram becomes the Eight Trigrams. Using different combinations of the Eight Trigrams, 64 different trigrams can be created. These types of Trigrams can create unlimited variations. We can apply these Trigrams to your body. For example, our body has left and right sides, then has the four large joints including two shoulders and two hip joints; then eight small joints including two elbows, two knees, two hands, and two feet. These body parts coordinate with the movements that are explained below. A circle is Taiji. Dividing the upper and lower parts becomes

Two Appearances. Moving forward and backward represent the Four Images . Opening and Closing is Qian Kun. Retrieving and entering is Kan Li. Rising and dropping is Zhen Xun. Attacking and blocking is Gen Dui.

The circle is the image of Taiji. Circular motion is the foundation of Taijiquan’s movements. Coordinating this with corresponding parts of the body can create different Yin/Yang combinations for the up-down, forward-backward, open-close, retrieve-enter, rise-drop, attach, and blocking actions. By practicing these aspects of Taijiquan, we can reach the level that enables the whole body to have natural circular motion with Yin/Yang changing techniques in each part of the body. We express Taijiquan’s characteristics when one part moves, the whole body moves with coordination during continuous circular motions. We can have the separation and completion, as well as other refined forces (Jin) that are created to formulate the infinite variety of martial art techniques of Taijiquan.

Circling, rising, dropping, and moving forward, and backward are the Five Elements. Opening, Closing,

« He style Taijiquan uses nature as the model. It uses circles and arcs as the shape of motions, and uses the method of varying Yin/Yang to have Yin and Yang in every part of the body. »

Retrieving, Entering, Rising, Dropping, Attacking, and Blocking are the Eight Trigrams. Adding the Five Elements to the Eight Trigrams becomes 13. For this reason, He style Taijiquan is also called “13 style”.

He style Taijiquan’s health improving theory

He style Taijiquan’s principle to “follow nature” is the same as the principle of Chinese medicine to cure disease and improve health. Traditional Chinese medical theory expresses the vision of unifying the cosmos and the human as a whole. It considers humans as part of nature. When the human body suffers during illness, it cannot just be isolated to consider the body alone, one should consider the relationship between the human and nature too. The theory of He style Taijiquan is circular, agile, and compact. It requires that Yin and Yang compensate each other during forward, backward, opening, and closing. Using one *Qi* to manipulate Yin and Yang is Taiji. This *Qi* is the neutralizing *Qi* in the Dantian, which is the vitality *Qi* of the human organism. It is distributed in the body and penetrates inside the hundreds of skeletal bones with continuous flow.

The taiji forms and techniques utilize the post-natal shape without using the post-natal force. The moving, not moving, opening, or closing are all done naturally. It stretches the muscles and bones, harmonizes the *Qi* and blood. It exercises the body without exhaustion and massages the internal organs to eliminate the waste *Qi* from food. It smoothes the blood flow, eliminates illness, and promotes longevity.

He style Taijiquan's daily practice time follows heaven's schedule as well as the natural rule. According to Taijiquan theory: face south during 3am to 5am, relax the body and concentrate the spirit by breathing naturally. The tip of the tongue should touch the upper palate to create the bridge for Qi circulation, harmonize Yin and Yang, and accumulate the Five Element principles. Practice to have the full Qi feeling during the time of 11pm to 1am, 11am to 1pm, 5am to 7am, and 5pm to 7pm on the first and fifteenth days of the Chinese lunar month. Do this carefully and regularly, and then one can achieve the very high level after practicing it persistently for many years. It is most effective to practice Taijiquan following heaven's schedule to balance the natural body and unify the cosmos with the human microcosm.

Creating the dynamic balance of Yin and Yang can keep diseases away. Normal physical function is the result of balanced Yin and Yang. Illness develops when the balance of Yin and Yang inside the body is broken or uneven. Chinese medical theory emphasizes that the management of life is to use Yin/Yang Qi to nourish hundreds of bones in the skeleton. The Book of Change also describes the beauty of Yin/Yang dynamics. The *Book of Meaning in Medicine Variation*, written by Zhang Jingyue, states that the reason illness occurs is due to the imbalance of the Qi, blood, internal organs, and the energy meridians in the body. He style Taijiquan's theory originated from the Book of Change. Every movement in the form is always well balanced without too much or not enough. By balancing the external movements, it promotes the internal Yin/Yang balance in the Qi, blood, internal organs, and meridians so as to achieve the goal of improved health by nourishing vitality and healing diseases.

Traditional Chinese Medicine uses the Five Elements theory to guide diagnostics and treatment of disease. It believes that the physiology and pathology of internal organs are related to each other and influence each other. Thus, they formulate the healing and prevention process by using methods such as to nourish the earth to create gold; to enhance the fire to create the earth; to nourish the earth to control the water and to constrain the wood to help the earth, etc. He style

Taijiquan is based on the theory that the internal is always expressed externally. So that when practicing the form, we use the external to nourish the internal and let the whole body have smooth circular motion from internal to external with unpredictable Yin/Yang variations. The movements of the form have naturally circular motions and are compact, soft and agile; upper and lower motions follow each other; internal and external are unified. It also uses the Five Element mutual nurturing and controlling theory to guide the steps and martial art techniques to enable the body to be agile and stable.

The purpose of Taijiquan's philosophy is to use the training method of, "do nothing and do everything". In order to improve the martial arts effect and nourish health, we emphasize softness to conquer hardness; borrowing the opponent's force to beat the opponent; using four ounces to divert a thousand pounds of force. To achieve this effect, at first it requires the body skill to accomplish it. Only when the whole body can have agile circular motions and can rotate smoothly when being touched, can you always have the

upper hand. Then one can receive and follow the opponent's force without separating. It doesn't matter if the motion is fast or slow, one can always vary and divert to attract the opponent's force and make it feel like they are touching nothing. It is not difficult to understand that agile, whole body circular motion is the core skill requirement of Taijiquan.

Circular motion is the foundation of agility and it is also the most effective martial art technique to divert and attack simultaneously. Circular movement is the principle of He style Taijiquan. Every part of the body has spiral and rotational motions under relaxed and soft conditions. Circular motions include special types of martial application forces: such as receiving, guiding, diverting, and releasing power, etc. Every part of the body has the ability to rotate to create natural circular force. Whichever part of the body is touched, then the touched part will move. The whole body has Taiji in every part. The changes depend on the opponent's movement during fighting. Use the tangent line to attract the opponent's force and make it feel that

« It stretches the muscles and bones, harmonizes the Qi and blood. It exercises the body without exhaustion and massages the internal organs to eliminate the waste Qi from food. It smoothes the blood flow, eliminates illness, and promotes longevity. »

it has no resistance. Use the centrifugal force to throw the opponent's force away with the internal energy rounded, relaxed, and agile when releasing power. The related four large joints and eight small joints of the body should have the feeling of being connected by invisible ropes while doing the circular motion. He style Taijiquan is sometimes called "practicing the form with a rope" or more commonly, "to hang with a rope".

We create the Yin /Yang transitional motion with the whole body by moving when everything moves and stopping when everything stops. It lets the movement of the form follow Yin/Yang transitions to always separate


empty and full. This allows us to pursue Yin without leaving Yang and Yang without leaving Yin and to balance Yin and Yang. We express Taijiquan's martial art techniques of slipping like a fish, sticky like a glue, soft like cotton and hard like steel.

He style Taijiquan's form and postures are simple and flow smoothly. Practicing the form and applying the form are the same. It matches the human body's natural physiology and the rules of martial arts movements. The push-hands application is the same as practicing the form. Push-hands can be used to check if the form is practiced correctly and is the transitional step

before free sparring. Practicing the form is the foundation to improve push-hands and free sparring skills. Thus, some people combine the He style Taijiquan form, push-hands and free sparring and call it, “three-in-one Taijiquan”.

While practicing the form, one should have the three straightness's: the head is straight, body straight, and calf is straight. One should also have the five smoothness's: smooth body, smooth legs, smooth hands, smooth feet, and a smooth mind. One should understand the three sections. The human body can be divided into three sections, and each section can be divided into another three sections. One needs to know the six connections comprised of three external connections: hand and foot connection, elbow and knee connection, and shoulder and hip joint connection. There are also three internal connections: heart and mind connection, Qi and force connection, and muscle and bone connection. Also, pay attention to the rules and key points of not separating and not stopping.

He style Taijiquan prefers not to use fixed movements to practice martial applications. There are eight methods created during the body's Yin/Yang transitions: Peng (outward force), Lu (roll-back), Ji (summation force from both hands), An (push), Cai (grabbing), Lie (separation force), Elbow, Kao (strike with body). We also have the Middle (torso) Eight Methods, which are longitudinal, lateral, high, low, forward, backward, reverse, and side. There are also the Low (leg) Eight Methods, which are kick with foot, kick with heel, cover with leg, hook with foot, tangle with feet, sweep, insert, and knee. One should apply all these techniques naturally with relaxation when one finds the opportunity thus to conquer the opponent. The above 24 methods can be integrated in the He style to express the 3-in-1 characteristics of He style Taijiquan.

He style Taijiquan uses nature as the model. It uses circles and arcs as the shape of motions, and uses the method of varying Yin/Yang to have Yin and Yang in every part of the body. We also use lightness and agility to express the principle of having hardness within softness. 

**« He style
Taijiquan uses
nature as the
model. »**







THE SWORD SECTION

*Transition from Dusting
in the Wind, Three*



Shifting back slightly, lower the right arm and bring the sword back to the vertical with the tip up.



Turn the body to the right. The left foot follows and points to the corner direction.



Shifting to the left, pick up the right leg. Draw the right foot in, close to the left foot.

*Pushing the Canoe with the
Current*



Shift forward, and bend the knee to form a bow stance. Coordinate the weight shift with pushing the sword forward. The arms are crossed above the chest. Keep the tip of the sword pointing down at a 45° angle.

FRONT VIEW



(Front view)
Keep the edge of the sword standing vertically and parallel to the body. The tip of the sword points down at a 45° angle.



Shift back, the left foot following the body rotation turning 135° until it becomes straight. While the body is turning, do not move the sword; keep it pointing towards the corner.



Step back with the right foot. Keep the left foot to the corner and make sure the right foot is straight.



Shift back while at the same time circling the sword back. Draw the left foot in and touch the ground with the ball of the foot. Place the sword fingers by the right hip. The left arm's shape is rounded.



Step out with the left foot pointing to the corner, and shift into a bow stance. At the same time, bring up the right arm and circle the sword so the tip points down at a 45° angle. The right hand is about face level. The left arm circles down in front of the body.



Shifting back, pick up the right leg and step out to the corner forming a bow stance.



Shooting Star Chases the Moon

Move the sword by shifting forward. It goes up and then splits down, pointing to the corner at shoulder level. At the same time, the left arm circles down and then goes up, pointing towards the back. Sit the sword fingers. The footwork is a standard bow stance.



Moving slightly forward, pick up the left foot.



**Heavenly Steed Flies Over
the Waterfall**



SIDE VIEW



Turning to the left, step out with the left foot. The foot is open towards the corner, so that both feet are on either side of the centerline.

At the same time, circle the right arm up, and set the sword with the hilt up and the tip down.

Shift onto the left leg and step with the right foot into an empty stance, the ball of the foot touching the ground.

At the same time, from the upper position, the sword splits down, powered by the turning of the waist. The left arm circles up and then pushes down, with the sword fingers pointing to the right forearm.

(Side view)

The sword is in line with the right arm, pointing down at a 45° angle.



Lifting the Curtain

REVERSE VIEW



Shift to the right and lift the left leg. The sword continues moving in a circle: from the left and down, to the right and up.

In the end position the body is open to the corner, with the left knee pointing straight forward. The lower leg is curved in, and the toe points down. The right arm is naturally straight, in line with the shoulder.

The sword is level and points straight forward.

(Reverse view)

The left arm is rounded with the sword fingers pointing to the right forearm.





Shifting to the left, pick up the right foot and draw it in.
Open the sword to the right, edge vertical and circle the tip up.



The right foot steps out, aligned to the corner. The feet are on either side of the centerline. With the step, the sword continues to circle up and both arms meet high, above the head. Then both arms circle down to the left.



Sink down and step out with the left foot aligned to the corner, both feet on either side of the centerline.
At the same time, the sword starts to circle down from above.



Shift onto the left leg while the sword swings to the left. The arms cross, with the left arm on the inside.



Step straight forward with the right foot. Continue circling the sword from down to up while it remains on the left side of the body.

Left Cart Wheel



Move the knee forward to finish the bow stance. The right arm splits down from an upper circle until the sword and the arm are pointing forward at shoulder level. The left arm circles from down to up, sword fingers pointing back in a diagonal direction.



Shifting forward, draw the left foot in close to the right, with the foot pointing straight. At the same time, lower the right arm and bring the sword to vertical, in front of the right shoulder. The left arm circles forward, with the sword fingers pointing to the right forearm.

Right Cart Wheel



Moving forward, step out with the right foot forming an empty stance with the ball of the foot. As the body turns to the left, the sword splits down from above, and the left arm circles up and then down, sword fingers finishing by the right forearm. The sword is in line with the right arm. The tip of the sword points down at a 45° angle. The body is open 45° to the left.

Swallow Carries Pieces of Earth in its Beak



Lower your right arm and bring the tip of the sword up to chest level.



Step back with the right foot aligned the corner.



Shifting back, circle the sword back and sit it vertically. At the same time, draw the left foot in and set the ball of the foot. The left arm follows the sword's circling and the sword fingers sit by the side of the body. Keep the arms rounded.



The left foot steps out aligned to the corner, and both feet are on either side of the centerline. At the same time, the left arm circles down to the left and the right arm circles up and back.



Shift back and at the same time circle open the arms, with the left arm opening to the left and the right arm opening to the right.



The right foot steps out aligned to the back corner direction. At the same time, the arms circle and close on the left side of the body. Keep the sword in line with the right arm.



Roc Extends its Wings

Shift forward rotating the body to the right and open the arms. In the end position, the sword is in line with the arm, and points to the direction of the right foot. The sword fingers sit by the left hip, in front of the body.


STEALING *Boxing*

CHAPTER 6

A MUTE BEGGAR APPEARS AND QUIETLY
SWEEPS THE STREET.

By Gong Baiyu

Translated by Mui Gek Chan



The days and months passed as quickly as flying arrows and flickering light. Five years had gone by, and in Chen Jiagou the spirits were appeased and the bandits lay low. It was early autumn. The villagers lived and worked happily and peacefully, while reaping the rewards of their labors. Through the lush green forest and wild grasses of the countryside, there ran a clear little river that continued through Chen Jiagou, making a half-circle. Each day at sunrise, a spirited old man with a loose robe and a sash could be seen hiking along the stream through the countryside. Each morning as the farmers walked down the road carrying hoes and young boys herded the cattle into the fields, the old man walked in the morning air to welcome the light of dawn. All the villagers knew him as he passed by for this was the legendary Taijiquan Master Chen Qingping.

The martial arts skill of Master Chen seemed to only improve as he grew older, as did his love of solitude. Master Chen was very kind to outsiders, but was known to be quite temperamental and strict with his own disciples, whom he would quickly reprimand or even expel for breaking the rules of his school. In order to pass on the art of Taijiquan, he knew that it was necessary to rid the disciples of their youthful arrogance. He also did not want to pass his art on to those who would bully others.

Each morning after washing his face and rinsing his mouth, Master Chen would go out walking around the village, meditate, and practice some internal tu-na exercises (a type of qigong). Master Chen woke up very early and only Lao Huang was able to follow his schedule to get up and open the door. The other servants usually waited until the old master had gone out before they themselves got up. Some of them headed out to the fields to tend to farm chores, while others cleaned within the residence, using straw brooms to sweep the courtyard. Cleanliness was very important to Master Chen. So much so that he would sometimes even take off his jacket, hold a

watering can, and help his disciples and servants clean inside and outside of the house until it was spotless.

Unfortunately, these long-time servants could be very lazy. As soon as their Master was out of sight, they would slack off and just clean whatever was right in front of them. Because of this, they did not often bother to clean the area around the outside the house. It was only when Master Chen personally handed them the broom, that they had no choice but to reluctantly clean the alley and debris around the garden walls. Master Chen watched as they swept, and used the watering can to wash the stones after them. When Master Chen noticed their laziness, he summonsed Lao Huang and reprimanded him, so that the others would learn by example. After being scolded, all of them would vow to keep up the cleaning properly, but after a few weeks they always seemed to slip back into their old lazy ways.

One day, Master Chen got up very early and walked quietly through the courtyard, opening the front door. As he looked out, he saw twigs and leaves from the previous day's firewood lying at the bottom of the steps. There was also litter





that had been blown there by the wind. Master Chen immediately reprimanded Lao Huang and made sure that the workers cleaned it up properly. Later, when Master Chen got home after his morning walk, the doorway and courtyard were nice and clean, so he said no more about it. After this big fuss, the old servants seemed a little more conscientious. Every time Master Chen went out, he noticed that the doorway was spotless. This went on for more than ten days. Master Chen was very happy, and he thought to himself, "This time I finally succeeded in managing them." This continued for more than a month, and each morning Master Chen was very pleased to see that the steps and street had been properly swept before his morning walk.

One day however, Master Chen woke up at the crack of dawn and called out to Lao Huang to open the door. Lao Huang had not woken up yet, but when he heard Master Chen's voice calling, he jumped up and pulled on some clothes. Hurrying into the room, Lao Huang unlatched the bolt and opened the door for Master Chen. With the light from the rising sun, Master Chen took a look

outside the door and was pleased to see that the steps were spotless; even the street was clean. He was surprised and thought, "I got up very early, and only Lao Huang is up. I saw him come out of the gate room and unlatch the bolt though, so how did he clean the street outside?"

Master Chen turned to Lao Huang and asked him, "Who cleaned the street outside the door?" Lao Huang sleepily answered, "I did!" Master Chen thought, "It must have been swept last night before the door was closed... but how has this lazy fool Lao Huang become so diligent?" Master Chen went out for his walk as usual. Heading east, he faced the rising sun and walking slowly along the river he did his usual routine to cultivate his internal energy.

Several months passed by in this way. No matter how early Master Chen woke up, the street outside was always very clean. Sometimes, although outside was clean, the courtyard inside was littered with leaves and bits of paper. Master Chen voiced his displeasure with this, saying "Lao Huang, how come you only care about outside but not inside?"

Lao Huang pointedly said, "Cleaning the courtyard is Lao Zhang's job, Master Chen."

Master Chen then gave Lao Huang a tongue-lashing.

Then one day, Master Chen woke up earlier than usual. The courtyard was still foggy. The night's dark veil still enveloped the eastern skyline. A floating cloud, white like the bottom of a fish, slowly appeared. Neither the crows nor the sparrows made any sound, then a rooster crowed three times. Master Chen finished washing and combing. He put on his gown and prepared to go out. Lao Huang was not up yet, so Master Chen opened the door himself.

Just as Master Chen unbolted the door, Lao Huang, who was still in the gate room heard the noise and pretended to cough. Master Chen called out, "Lao Huang, get up and open the door!" and then pushed the door open. As Master Chen looked out of the door, he saw a young beggar dressed in rags. The beggar's body was hunched over, and his hands he held a short broom, which he used to sweep the ground. Master Chen could see that the brick steps were cleaned, and also the area west of

the steps was swept. Only the east side of the street has yet to be swept. Once the Chen's door opened, that beggar turned around to take a look. When he saw someone coming out, he quickly straightened himself, picked up the broom, and ran off without saying a word.

Master Chen was taken aback by the beggar's actions, and quickly tried to greet him. "Hey, don't leave, I want to ask you ..."

The beggar did not seem to hear him, but instead clutched the broom in his hands and walked away, heading east. Master Chen watched as he disappeared into an alley, dark with the dawn shadows.

Master Chen did not get a clear look at the man. He pondered for a while, turned his head toward his door and shouted, "Lao Huang!" After he shouted Lao Huang's name three times, Lao Huang appeared. As he walked, he buttoned his clothes, and stood in front of Master Chen and said, "Old Master, you're up earlier today."



Master Chen pointed to the floor and asked, "Lao Huang, who swept this?" Lao Huang blurted out, "We did. We sweep it everyday."

Master Chen snorted, "You did? When did you sweep this?"

Lao Huang did not realize what was going on, and answered unwaveringly, "We swept it bright and early. When you go for your walks, we get up and clean the yard."

Master Chen angrily said, "Bullshit!" Pointing to the front of the door, from east to the west, the street in front of the Chen residence is swept clean except for a few piles of debris. Master Chen looked sternly at Lao Huang and said, "You swept this? You got up after me, so when did you have time?"

Lao Huang looked at him and replied, "You're asking about the street outside? We swept it last night before we closed the front door. It saves us some effort in the morning."

Master Chen, who could not help feeling angry, sternly replied, "So you still want to argue! I saw with my own eyes a poor person sweeping our front

steps, how could it be you?" Old Huang was dumbfounded and did not dare to speak.

Master Chen thought for a while, and then went to the door to investigate. He finally started to understand what had happened. He turned to Lao Huang and asked, "If you see that beggar, could you ask him why he is doing this?"

Lao Huang quickly agreed. Master Chen let out a knowing laugh and said, "How can you be innocent and hardworking? You haven't learned how to do things properly, only how to lie and be lazy! Quickly get the dustpan and clear out these piles of garbage." Master Chen then leisurely walked out and circled the village, practicing his tuna exercises. It was almost dawn when he slowly made his way back.

The next day, Master Chen got up early as usual. He went to look outside the door and it was cleanly swept like always. As Lao Huang opened the door, Master Chen asked him, "Did you see the beggar who swept the steps?"



Lao Huang answered directly, "I didn't see anything. Nobody swept our steps." Master Chen said dismissively, "You're still lying!" He scolded Lao Huang for a while before going out again.

Half a month went by swiftly, and Master Chen got up early and followed his daily routine. One day he woke up a little earlier than usual. Upon opening the door, he met the beggar again. The beggar had finished sweeping half the alley and there were several piles of debris. Since the beggar did not have a dustpan, he used a piece of broken earthen pot to collect the debris and dispose of it outside the alley.

This time, Master Chen was able to get a clear look at the poor young man's appearance. His whole body was dirty and he was shabbily dressed. Master Chen then noticed something unusual about the young man's face; he seemed to have delicate features. This young man did not look like a typical village beggar.

Master Chen could not understand why this beggar swept the street every day, so he walked over and asked,

"Hey, what are you doing? Who asked you to sweep?"

The beggar did not appear to hear Master Chen's words. Instead, he turned and looked at him for a moment, and then tucking the broom under his arm, he straightened himself and walked off without saying a word. Master Chen was puzzled. He needed to resolve this. Why was this mysterious beggar sweeping the steps?

Master Chen considered it for a moment, and then thought to himself, "Our cook must be giving him leftovers, so he is grateful and therefore sweeps in return." However, when Master Chen asked the cook, he said that no food was being given to him.

Master Chen thought again while looking over the door, and suddenly it occurred to him, "Maybe it's because the beggar has no place to go, so he uses our door as shelter and cleans it after he wakes up. So, when we see him, we should not detest him. After all as he is poor, he may dread meeting others. This is why he goes away so fast when he sees me."



On that day, Master Chen decided not to go for his usual walk along the river, and instead headed back home. When he arrived, he summoned his long-time servant and sternly questioned him, "Did you allow the poor guy to live at the doorway? Is that poor man who sweeps the ground the one living there?"

Lao Huang could no longer hide it. He finally admitted the truth, "Indeed, there is a young beggar who uses the doorway for shelter. He is a poor man. We felt compassion for him, and so we did not drive him away. He gets up very early and has been sweeping the steps for several months."

Master Chen looked at Lao Huang and was silent for a while. Lao Huang anxiously said, "Old Master, don't worry, I'll shoo him away tomorrow."

"Did this beggar ask for our food?" Lao Huang replied, "No."

"How old is he? Is he from our village?"

"He's not too old, he doesn't seem to beg for food very much. He is very shy and always bows his head."

Master Chen frowned, "I asked you, where is he from?" Lao Huang hastily replied, "I have no idea".

Master Chen got angry again and scolded, "Can't you tell by the accent?" Lao Huang replied, "He's a mute."

Master Chen said, "Oh! He's a mute?"

Lao Huang noticed that his master looked calm, so he dared to boldly respond, "I asked him before, but, he didn't reply at all. I was worried about his background, so I stopped him and questioned him closely. That's when I realized that he is a mute. He signed to me that he wasn't from around here and lives far away. His parents have passed away so he is alone and somehow made his way here. Since he has no place to sleep, he uses our doorway for shelter. He's very aware of his situation and cleans the doorway before he leaves. He is a young handicapped person and doesn't know any better."



Master Chen pondered, "A mute! He has no home, no job, and is also disabled, yet he is so honorable...in the future keep an eye on him, and give him two steamed buns everyday so he doesn't starve. It's good to help out this kind of pitiful beggar."

Lao Huang said, "A few days ago, I gave him some leftovers, but he didn't want any. Now that he's become more familiar, he eats what's given to him every day."

Master Chen widened his eyes and grunted, "Didn't you say he didn't get food from us? You have been lying! Do you think you can fool me? Shame on you!"

Lao Huang felt very uncomfortable after his master scolded him, but did not dare to respond. He muttered to himself as he left and walked towards the gate room. After a few days, he put the incident in the past.

Master Chen got up as soon as he could, but did not meet the poor, mute beggar. Sometimes, the beggar woke up a little late, and was still sweeping when the door opened. Startled by the sound, he would hastily gather the litter from

the ground and disappear down the alley with his broom in the morning light.

Master Chen assumed that the beggar was timid and afraid of people, so he did not try to pursue him, but instead stood in the doorway and watched him hurry away. After learning that the beggar was mute, Master Chen realized that he would not be able to ask the man about his family background even if he did wait around. How could he talk to the beggar? ☯

(To be continued)



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