



# Peter Lim's Taijiquan Resource Page

---

Welcome to my home page. My name is Peter Lim Tian Tek. These web pages are dedicated to the art of Taijiquan which I have practiced since I was a young boy.

Over the years I've collected a modest library of literature on Taijiquan, both English language and Chinese language works. Combining both practice and the study of these works have made Taijiquan emmensely rewarding for me and lately I have begun to record down my research and practice in written form.

These articles are offered here freely for the benefit of the Taijiquan community. Feel free to download them and distribute them. I ask only that you don't change the contents and keep my name on them for copyright purposes.

This site is still under construction and more material will be put up in due time. Check back regularly for updates. As I have only recently taken up HTML, please forgive any shortcomings on this site. Your feedback will help to make it better.

---

## A Word Of Thanks To My Teachers

I'd like to thank and acknowledge my teachers whose strict teachings and strong moral character have been inspirational and essential to my martial arts development. My knowledge and skills come from their unselfish sharing of the arts they love so well and I will continue to train, to study and to try to help others, hoping that I will not disappoint them.

---

## Taijiquan History And Development

By Peter Lim Tian Tek

 Part 1: The Origin Theories

 Part 2: The Martial Arts Practiced In the Chen Village

 Part 3: The Development Of Chen Style Taijiquan

 Part 4: The Development Of Yang Style Taijiquan

 Part 5: The Development Of Wu Yu Xiang Style Taijiquan

 Part 6: The Development Of Wu Jian Quan Style Taijiquan

 Part 7: The Development Of Sun Style Taijiquan



🎧 Part 8: The Development Of Zhao Bao Style Taijiquan

🎧 Part 9: Popular Modern Styles Of Taijiquan

🎧 Historical Series Notes

---

## Taijiquan Training

🎧 Traditional Yang Style Training Sequence

🎧 Discourse On Jing

🎧 On Internal Strength And Internal/External Martial Arts

🎧 The Basis And Methodology Of Internal Martial Arts

🎧 Internal Strength Definitions And Elaborations

## The Form

🎧 Yang Cheng Fu's 10 Essentials Of Taijiquan

🎧 Yang Cheng Fu's Talks On The Practice Of Taijiquan

🎧 Yang Style Eye Usage

🎧 Tung Ying Jieh's Taijiquan Basics

🎧 Dr Tsang Ju Pai's Taijiquan Principles And Techniques

🎧 Principles And Practices In Yang Taijiquan

🎧 Yang Style Taiji Long Boxing

🎧 The Practice Of Taiji Long Boxing

🎧 Yang Shao Hou's Small Frame

🎧 Yang Style Taijiquan Training Speed

 [The Importance Of Yi And Chi In Tai Chi Chuan](#)

 [Tai Chi Chuan Method Of Breathing And Chi Direction](#)

## **Push Hands**

 [Yang Cheng Fu On Pushing Hands](#)

 [A Slow Discourse On Push Hands \(Part 1\)](#)

## **Sparring Hands (San Shou)**

 [Cheng Man Qing On San Shou](#)

## **Taijiquan Weapons**

 [Yang style Taiji Sword](#)

 [Yang style Taiji Saber](#)

 [Yang style Taiji Spear/Long Staff](#)

---

## **Taijiquan Combat**

 [The Combative Elements Of Yang Taijiquan](#)

---

## **The Taijiquan Classics And Important Writings**

 [The Taijiquan Classics In Li I Yu's Handwritten Manuals](#)

---

## **Related articles**

 [Dit Ta: The Chinese Art Of Healing Injuries](#)

 [Peng Jing FAQ Cross Reference](#)

---

## **Bibliography**

 [English Books](#)

 Chinese Books

---

## **A Little Bit About The Web Page Owner**

 [A little bit about Peter](#)

## **Part 1: The Origin Theories**

The main forms of TCC practiced today all trace their origins back to the Chen Village in Wen County, Henan. It is only reasonable to begin our search for the origins of Taijiquan there and the early records from there and those that learnt the art from there.

### **The Earliest Reference To The Origin**

The written works on Taijiquan were not from the Chen village or its members. The earliest being the Taijiquan Classic by Wang Tsung Yueh. The earliest verifiable manual on Taijiquan that we have is from Li I-Yu (1832-1892) who compiled the 3 manuals which are known as the '3 old manuals' in Yung Nien today. Li learnt the art from his uncle Wu Yu Xiang who in turn learnt the major part of his art from Yang Lu Chan, the founder of the most popular Yang style of Taijiquan, and spent a month learning the 'Xiao Jia' or 'Small Frame' from Chen Ching Ping. In these old manuals he recorded the Taijiquan Classics, works of his uncle, those of Wang Tsung Yueh and his own writings on the art. In his 'Brief Preface To Taijiquan' he wrote that the creator of the art was Chang San Feng and that Wang Tsung Yueh was skilled in it and that it was later transmitted to the Chen village. Later, Li I Yu rewrote the first sentence of his Introduction to say that the founder was unknown. This could very well be due to a differing origin theories in the post-Chen Ching Ping period. This is the earliest record we have on the origins of Taijiquan.

### **The Chang San Feng Theory**

This is the theory of origins adopted by most of the major styles of Taijiquan and was first put forth by the Yang style. The Yang style traces its origins back to Chen Chang Xin who was taught by Jiang Fa who was in turn taught by Wang Tsung Yueh. Wang Tsung Yueh was supposed to be a student of Chang Sung Chi a noted practitioner of the Internal Boxing of the Wudang Temple. The Wudang Temple certainly exists and their Internal Boxing certainly existed and does share certain characteristics like controlling the opponent with calmness. The creator of this Internal Boxing was Chang San Feng, a Taoist on Wudang Mountain. The Wudang martial arts bear little resemblance to the Taijiquan we have today even though they share some of the same characteristics.

The Wudang Temple is still exists and there are still Taoist sages managing the temple and they still teach Wudang martial arts there. It is interesting to note that there is a form called Wudang Taijiquan practiced there. Its postures bear little resemblance to the main styles practiced today even though it has many common characteristics, in terms of technique and principles, of the major styles. The last head of the Wudang Temple, Taoist Xu Ben Shan (1860-1932) was skilled in it and taught it to his disciples together with other Wudang arts. Xu spent most of his life in the Wudang Temple having entered the temple when young. It is unlikely that his art came from the outside since his life is quite well documented. But whether Wudang Taijiquan is the seminal form of all the others cannot be concluded since there is no firm link between the practitioners of the Wudang arts and Wang Tsung Yueh who is the earliest common personage of the the early styles of modern Taijiquan. But it should be noted that there are common theorems between the Wudang Internal Boxing and Taijiquan. and it is possible that Wudang Internal Boxing influenced Taijiquan though it should be considered a separate art.

Some have raised the question of Chang San Feng's existence as there is much legendary material about him. He is recorded by reliable historical documents such as the 'Ming History'

and 'The Ningpo Chronicles' which have no relation to martial arts literature as having existed and to have created Wudang Internal Boxing arts. This is in line with the beliefs held at the Wudang Temple itself and one can find much old material pertaining to Chang San Feng there. According to the available material, Chang lived at the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) and at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). There was a confusion of dates as the Emperor Yung Ler used searching for Chang as an excuse to send Yan Wang Chu in 1403 to scour the country in search of his rival, the Emperor Jian Wen. Chang San Feng was widely regarded as a Taoist saint and Emperor Yung Ler knew that he had already died and so came up with the ruse. Historians who have tried to reconcile the misinformation of the Emperor Yung Le with the earlier records have either regarded Chang as a mid Ming Dynasty personage, possibly a different person from the Chang San Feng of recorded as living in the Yuan Dynasty or that Chang had lived for a very long time, beyond normal human life expectancy.

The Zhao Bao style of Taijiquan also traces their art back to Jiang Fa and Wang Tsung Yueh and ultimately to Chang San Feng. Gu Liu Xin, the noted Taijiquan historian, posits based on the writings of Chen Xin that Chen Ching Ping created the Zhao Bao style. Chen Ching Ping was a student of Chen You Pen who created the 'new frame' (xin jia) of Chen Taijiquan which was also known as the 'high frame' (gao jia) and 'small frame' (xiao jia). Chen Qing Ping was also recorded to be a student of the Zhao Bao Taijiquan master Zhang Yan. Wu Yu Xiang who learnt from Chen Ching Ping retained this high standing characteristic in the style he passed down.

The present Zhao Bao style is relatively low standing and is performed in a slow manner without fa-jing (strength emissions) except in kicks, in a manner common to the Yang and Wu Yu Xiang styles and those that developed from them.

This theory can not be reliably proven, all that we can ascertain is that the art came down from Wang Tsung Yueh and Jiang Fa to the Chen village and Zhao Bao villiage. It is unlikely that Chang developed Taijiquan as we see it today though he may have invented some of the principles that went into the art. The works attributed to him in the Taijiquan Classics are actually the works of Wang Tsung Yueh. This is evident in the handwritten manuals of Li I Yu.

### **The Chen Pu Theory**

This was the theory put out by Chen Xin, the first to write a book on the Chen style of Taijiquan. He attributed the creation of the art to Chen Pu, this was echoed later by Chen Ji Pu in his later book on the art. Chen Xin records that Chen Pu taught his descendents a way to digest food, and Chen Xin claims this to be Taijiquan. Chen Pu's grave has nothing to indicate that he was skilled in martial arts or to have created Taijiquan, a very significant piece of evidence since the Chen Family was famous for its boxing for generations, gaining the name 'Pao Chui Chen Family'. So this theory has been proven to be false.

### **The Chen Wang Ting Theory**

This theory was first posited by Tang Hao. He based his theory on the side note in the Chen Family Manual (Chen Si Jia Pu) that Chen Wang Ting (1597-1664) was the creator of the Chen Fist, broadsword and spear arts, and on the assumption that the Chen family did not learn arts from outside the Chen family. According to the *Annals Of Wen County*, Chen Wang

Ting served as an officer in Shantung Province from 1618 to 1621 and was officer in charge of the garrison at Wen County in 1641.

The theory was further elaborated upon by Gu Liu Xin, Tang Hao's good friend. He brought in a poem attributed to Chen Wang Ting that stated that Chen Wang Ting 'created boxing when bored' and a Boxing Song Formula attributed to Chen Wang Ting as proof of the theory. Modern linguistic studies show that it should actually be translated as 'no bored (free) time to create boxing' instead.

We need to note that the references to boxing in the Chen Family are in the side notes and are not in the main text. Since the Chen family was famous for its boxing, it seems a gross omission that such an important article of information as Chen Wang Ting creating the Chen family arts is not included in the main text but is in a side note. What more, the earliest published works by the Chen family on their art does not attribute the creation of the art to Chen Wang Ting. The last line of the Chen Family Manual says clearly that the side notes were the work of Chen Xin and so it is a recently added reference. Yet Chen Xin does not posit that Chen Wang Ting is the creator, but instead Chen Pu.

The *Boxing Song Formula* attributed to Chen Wang Ting is taken from the *Liang Yi Tang Ben* manual of Chen martial arts, it is also the only old manual that records a form called the 13 postures. Its content is an addition on to an old Chen martial art manual called the *Wen Xiu Tang Ben* which does not record any form called the 13 postures. So it is possible that the *Liang Yi Tang Ben* is a later manual with additions not found in the original Chen transmission. The poem attributed to Chen Wang Ting is found in the *Liang Yi Tang Ben* and there is no other evidence to authenticate it.

Another early Chen family writer is Chen Zhi Ming. It was he who accompanied Tang Hao and Gu Liu Xin on their trip down to Chen Jia Gou for investigations into the origins. His work is thus as important as theirs in terms of evidence for the early Chen arts. In his book on the Chen family arts he quotes from the old manuals and records old song formulas, many of which are revealing (see next chapter for more information)

Chen Xin also authored the **Three Three Boxing Manual** (*San San Quan Pu*) which uses Taiji Boxing theories to complement Hsing-I theories. It contains 3 of the 10 thesis of Hsing-I. Tang Hao also posited that Chen Wang Ting had used 29 out of the 32 boxing postures in General Qi Ji Kwang's (1528-1587) book *Ji Xiao Xin Shu*. We shall examine this claim in detail in the next chapter.

From the above evidence, it is quite clear that the Chen family did probably learn and practice arts from outside the Chen village. Based on this, the theory of Chen Wang Ting creating Taijiquan cannot be supported.

### **The Four Old Schools Of Taijiquan In the Sung Manual: Sung's Taiji And Its Offshoots**

The manual was first given to Wu Tu Nan by a friend of his in late 1908 or early 1909. Later when Sung Si Ming came to Beijing to teach Taijiquan, Wu had the opportunity to compare the manual he had with Sung Si Ming's manual and they agreed in content. In the manual it lists four old schools of Taijiquan, namely Hsu, Yu, Cheng and Yin. The postures delineated in the manual have names similar to Yang Taiji and the form and sword form postures are almost identical to the Yang style, it is obvious that the Sung style of Taiji came from the Yang style so the historical data in the manual is suspect and cannot be regarded as factual.

## **That Jiang Fa Transmitted It To The Chen Village**

The early sources all record the existence of this personage and that he was skilled in the art of Taijiquan. Zhao Bao style traces their lineage to him and even Chen Xin's book 'Chen Family Taijiquan Pictures And Sayings' has a song formula of his which Jiang apparently got from his teacher from Shanxi (who would be Wang Tsung Yueh). So even in Chen Xin's book, there is a reference to Jiang as being a teacher of the art.

This song formula in Chen Xin's book comes down from Du Yu Wan, whom Wu Tu Nan had met during his investigative visit to the Chen Village. Du himself wrote a book which was published only once in 1935. The original handwritten manual has been traced to the Zhao Bao village though it has not been made public. It states that Jiang was the teacher of Du's art and was taught by Wang. There is a chapter in Du's book called 'Wudang Taijiquan Beginnings' indicates that Du considered his Taijiquan as coming from the Wu Dang school.

The Yang family tradition also records that it was Jiang who taught Chen Chang Xin the art. Wu Tu Nan's book 'Research On Taijiquan' (1984) records his encounter with Chen Xin on the matter. Chen Xin admitted that Chen Chang Xin had learnt the art from Jiang Fa after Jiang had defeated Chen Chang Xin and that because of that, Chen Chang Xin was not allowed to teach Pao Chui.

The Chen Taijiquan proponents have also said that Jiang was a student of Chen Wang Ting, pointing to a painting of Chen Wang Ting and a man surnamed Jiang as proof of the matter. The painting needs to be dated to verify it as an early source but it doesn't really need to be done because the name given the man is Jiang Pu and not Jiang Fa. This bit of information comes from Chen Xin's book. This incorrect attribution has led to the placing of Jiang Fa as a Ming dynasty personage, affecting also the Zhao Bao dating. But the writings of Chen Xin indicate that Chen Wang Ting was a Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) personage and Jiang Fa was a Ching Dynasty (1644-1911), Chien Loong Era (1716-1795) personage. So their assertion is baseless. Chen Xin emphasized the fact that Chen Wang Ting and Jiang Fa were from different eras because some in the Chen Village believed that Jiang Fa had taught Chen Wang Ting martial arts.

Given the evidence above of the nature of the early Chen family arts, Jiang Fa could indeed have been the person who 'softened' the existing art to the present day Taijiquan and input the 13 postures into the art. The 13 postures consist of the 8 different Jings and the Five directions of movement. It is interesting to note that the early Chen documents record different names for the 8 jings than the conventionally accepted ones which are in the Taijiquan Classics. (see next chapter)

## **Jiang Fa's Teacher: Wang Tsung Yueh**

The song formula at the very back of Chen Xin's book indicates that Jiang Fa's teacher was from Shanxi, that would indicate Wang Tsung Yueh and the contents of the song formula is almost virtually identical to the Taijiquan Treatise (Taijiquan Lun) which is attributed to Wu Yu Xiang (this attribution originates from Tang Hao, who assumed because Wu Yu Xiang compiled the sayings on 'Hitting Hands' of which this was one section, that it was Wu Yu Xiang who wrote it. This is to differentiate it with Wang Tsung Yueh's Taijiquan Classic of the same name). This would mean that Wu Yu Xiang did have access to Wang's teachings and that the Chen family does acknowledge his existence and that he taught Jiang Fa. This would make the theory that Wu Yu Xiang invented Wang's personage improbable. Besides Wu did

not hesitate to put his name on the other works he wrote which are a part of the Taijiquan Classics.

Zhao Bao also records him in their lineage and he is an important figure in the Yang lineage as well. The Taijiquan Classic of his is probably the most profound work on the nature and function of the art of Taijiquan.

Tang Hao and Gu Liu Xin have written that Wang had learnt his art from the Chen family but one must note that this is pure conjecture as there is no evidence to suggest that this is so. In documents pertaining to Wang's life, there is no mention that he learnt his art from the Chen family.

Other than Wang's manual discovered in the salt store, Tang Hao obtained in 1930 the Yin Fu Spear Manual written by Wang Tsung Yueh, the manual also contains the Taijiquan Classic. The preface of the Yin Fu Spear Manual states that in his old age, Wang was a school teacher with his own private school in Luoyang in 1791 and was also active in Kaifeng in 1795 and was still alive in 1796. The consensus of the early evidence does suggest that they all believe he existed and they do record his teachings. It is unlikely that he was just a fictitious character invented by Wu Yu Xiang.

## **Part 2: The Martial Arts Practiced In The Chen Villiage**

### **The Sung Tai Zhu Quan Connection**

Tang Hao was the first to theorise that Chen Wang Ting invented Taijiquan by integrating 29 of the 32 postures of General Qi Ji Kwang. In chapter 3 we have already ascertained that Gu was wrong about the origins of Taijiquan, here we will see how the 32 postures of General Qi fits into the picture as a basis for the development of Chen Taijiquan.

General Qi was a general during the Ming dynasty who compiled a book on effective war techniques called the "New Book Recording Effective Techniques" (*Ji Xiao Xin Shu*). In it he had sections of strategy, weapons usage, unarmed combat and other aspects of war. In the section on unarmed combat he recorded the names of 16 extant empty hand martial arts and took note of what made effective boxing. He also recorded 32 boxing postures. Gu was the first to assume that these 32 postures were an amalgam of the most effective techniques of the 16 listed fistic forms. For many decades, this was the accepted truth because of his reputation as a Taijiquan historian. Unfortunately he was wrong.

Based on the above assumption, Gu had posited that Chen Wang Ting had developed his Taijiquan from General Qi's form which supposedly consisted of the best techniques from the 16 extent fistic arts during the Ming dynasty. An impressive pedigree. With a closer examination of the postures and their listing we discover something else.

In 1918, the Shanghai Da Shen Bookshop published a book called the 'Boxing Canon' (Quan Jing) which was at that time one of the more complete books on the many aspects of boxing. Inside it was included drawings of the original 32 postures of Sung Tai Zhu Chang Quan (First Emperor Of Sung's Long Boxing). Upon closer examination, it was discovered that these 32 postures were identical (there were some variant readings where similar sounding words were used in place of each other though without losing the meaning of the posture name) with the 32 postures in General Qi's book. General Qi had listed the 32 postures of Sung Tai Zhu Quan as the first in the list of the many fistic forms he mentioned.

A parallel comparison of the drawings and names of the 32 postures shows that they are in fact identical. A posture listing of both sets are as follows:

### **The 32 Postures In General Qi's Book**

- 1) Lazily Arranging Clothes
- 2) Golden Chicken Stands On One Leg
- 3) Pat Horse
- 4) Bending Single Whip
- 5) Seven Star Fist
- 6) Repulse Riding Dragon
- 7) Sweep Leg And Empty Bait

- 8) Hill Fairy Stance (qiu liu shi)
- 9) Repulse Thrusting Attack
- 10) Ambush Stance
- 11) Casting Away Stance
- 12) Pick Up Elbow Stance
- 13) Speedy Step
- 14) Chin Na Stance (Grappling Stance)
- 15) Middle Four Level Stance
- 16) Subduing Tiger Stance
- 17) High Four Level Stance
- 18) Repulse Insertion Stance
- 19) Well Blocking Four Levels
- 20) Ghost Kick Foot
- 21) Pointing At Pubic Region
- 22) Animal Head Stance
- 23) Spirit Fist
- 24) Single Whip
- 25) Sparrow Dragon On The Ground
- 26) Rising Sun Stance
- 27) Goose Wings Fold Body
- 28) Riding Tiger Stance
- 29) Bend Pheonix Elbow
- 30) Cannon Overhead
- 31) Follow Pheonix Eblow
- 32) Flag And Drum Stance

**Sung Tai Zhu Chang Chuan's 32 Postures**

- 1) Lazily Arranging Stance
- 2) Golden Chicken Stands On One Leg
- 3) Control Horse Stance
- 4) Bending Whip
- 5) Seven Star Fist
- 6) Repulse Riding Dragon Stance
- 7) Sweeping Foot And Lightly Empty
- 8) Hill Flowing Stance (qiu liu shi)
- 9) Repulse Thrusting Stance
- 10) Ambush Stance
- 11) Pulling Frame Stance
- 12) Bracing Elbow Upwards Stance
- 13) Escaping Step
- 14) Chin Na Stance (Grappling Stance)
- 15) Middle Four Level Stance
- 16) Subduing Tiger Stance
- 17) High Four Level Stance
- 18) Repulse Catching Stance
- 19) Well Blocking Stance
- 20) Ghost Kicking Stance
- 21) Pointing To Pubic Region
- 22) Animal Head Stance
- 23) Spirit Fist
- 24) Single Whip
- 25) Sparrow Dragon Stance
- 26) Rising Sun Stance

27) Wild Goose Wing Stance

28) Riding Tiger Stance

29) Bend Pheonix Stand

30) Over Head Stance

31) Follow Pheonix Stance

32) Flag And Drum Stance

What does this mean to Taijiquan? Chen Zhi Ming was the member of the Chen family who accompanied Tang Hao to the Chen village. He, like Gu and Tang also wrote about his family's Taijiquan. Chen Zhi Ming work contains records the following about Sung Tai Zhu Quan:

*'Tai Zhu stances are the strongest, tumbling and diagonal moving, even ghosts have to be busy to get out of the way'* from the *Liang Yi Tang Ben* manual of Chen martial arts.

*'Seven star fist and hands take care of each other, Pat Horse Fist comes down from Tai Zhu'* from the *Wen Xiu Tang Ben* manual of Chen martial arts

From the above, which are the earliest sources of information about Chen family martial arts, it is clear that it was Sung Tai Zhu Quan that formed the basis of Taijiquan with 29 of its 32 postures adopted into the form, and did not come from General Qi's work which has no mention in Chen literature. This inaccurate hypothesis having been originated by Tang Hao.

Sung Tai Zhu Quan or Sung Tai Zhu Chang Quan as it was also known, comes from the south of China and is a external hard boxing form. It is characterised by powerful strikes and movements, body shaking, being structurally aligned, postures flowing with coordinated footwork, being very firm and stable both in standing and stepping and is effective in grappling (chin-na). All of which are present in Chen Taijiquan today. Sung Tai Zhu Chang Quan was not the only art practiced and ultimately integrated into their unique family boxing routines, from Chen Zhi Ming's record of the Chen arts song formulas, we know that Shaolin Red Fist was also practiced.

### **Shaolin Red Fist (Hong Chuan)**

The *Liang Yi Tang Ben* records that the Chen Villiage practiced *'four small sets of Red Fist'*. The Red Fist boxing is a Shaolin form. Given the close proximity between the Chen Villiage and the Shaolin Temple, it is not surprising that this form of boxing would be practiced there. The Red Fist boxing is also widely practiced in Shanxi where it is several different and but related sets, Tai Zhu Quan being one of them. Stylistically, it stresses low postures, soft use of muscles, using the mind instead of strength, speedy emission of power, guarding the four directions, agility, using the Qi circularly, closing into the opponent and using sticking and leaning.

### **Shaolin Cannon Fist (Pao Chuan) And Cannon Pounding (Pao Chui)**

Shaolin Cannon Boxing consists of 3 sets, 2 sets of Small Cannon Fist and one set of Big Cannon Pounding. All three stress offense, using strikes like the pounding of cannons. Firm stances and powerful, explosive blows characterise it. This set is still being practiced in the Shaolin Temple to this very day.

Postures in it that are similar to Chen Taijiquan include `Tornado Kick' (*Xuen Fung Jiao*), and `Cannons In Series' (*Lien Huan Pao*). The *San Huang Pao Chui* which is derived from the Shaolin art contains movements like `Dash Leftward' (*Zhuo Chong*) and `Dash Rightward' (*Yu Chong*) in it and would indicate that there is some relationship to the Pao Chui of the Chen family. The Chen family was famous for several generations for their Pao Chui (Cannon Pounding) boxing art and were known as the `Pao Chui Chen Family' (Pao Chui Chen Jia).

### **Wu Dang Transmission?**

Since the art was popularised there has been a widely accepted tradition among the non-Chen lineages that there was input from the Wu Dang arts into Taijiquan. So much so that Taijiquan is considered by many noted practitioners as a Wu Dang art.

The first to record Wu Dang's Internal Boxing at length was Huang Bai Jia and later the art was transmitted to Kan Feng Chi. Fortunately, we still have a record of Kan's art with us and it is still practiced. What has come down to us is the art which he combined both the Shaolin and the Wu Dang schools into a single art and he called it Hua Chuan (Flower Fist). If there is indeed a connection between the two arts, there should be some similar postures other than similar Taoist theories.

We do find similar postures but not similar to Chen Taijiquan but to Yang Taijiquan and its derivatives. Postures like Hitting Ears With Both Fists (*Shuang Feng Kuan Er*) complete with smashing the face onto the knee first, Playing The Lute (*Shou Hui Pi Pa*) with its characteristic elbow break on retreating, Cross Hands (*Shi Zi Shou*) with its cross hand block, Embrace Tiger And Carry Back To Mountain (*Bao Hu Kui Shan*), etc., are present in Kan's form.

Other resemblance comes from the art of the other great Wudang Internal Boxing master Chang Sung Chi. His art consisted mainly of the `4 stable 8 methods', the 4 stable techniques denoting the four directions and the eight methods are which are eight different combat techniques with myriad changes. These methods have another interesting name of `Yin Yang Five Element Eight Triagram Taiji Hands'. Chang Sung Chi's boxing theories include similar theorems and practices like sinking the qi to *Huang Ting (Dan Tien)*, hollowing the chest and lifting the spine, listening to jing, using softness to neutralise an attack.

The postures are similar to those found in Yang Taijiquan and one can see the similarity in the two man sets in terms of technique. Indeed, even in an early Ta Lu interaction is there complete with the wrist grab (*T'sai*), arm lock/break (*Lieh*) and the attack to the face following it (*Bi*).

This would seem to bear out the Yang lineage's assertion that at least part of the art taught to Yang by Chen Chang Xin had input from the Wu Dang lineage related to Kan Feng Chi, Chang Sung Chi and Huang Pai Jia.

It is indeed strange for Yang Lu Chan to have admitted learning from Chen Chang Xin and yet attribute at least part of the art as having come from outside the Chen villiage arts unless

there was some element of the truth in it. What could be possibly gained from it unless he denied he studied from Chen Chang Xin, a member of the Chen family of the Chen Villiage. We know that the Chen family did study arts from outside their villiage, so input from the Wu Dang Internal Boxing lineage should not be so strange. And it would be in line with the song formula at the back of Chen Xin's book which attributes transmission to Jiang Fa and Wang Tsung Yueh.

### **The Shaolin Pole Techniques**

The Shaolin Temple is well known for its martial arts, in particular its fistic, broadsword and pole arts. Of the weapon arts of the Shaolin School, probably the most famous is its pole arts. It was the favoured weapon of the Shaolin Monks and they seldom left the temple without it in hand.

The song formula from Chen Zhi Ming's book confirms that the pole techniques of the Chen family originated from the Shaolin Temple. The '*Sitting Arhat Pole Formula*' has these lines: '*Old Temple is the Shaolin Temple, the halls had 500 monks...if you want to know where this pole came from, Sitting Arhats transmitted it at Shaolin.*' Gu Liu Xin did a comparison between the Chen family pole techniques and the Shaolin Temple Pole techniques and concluded that they were indeed related, sharing the same theory, the same body, hand and foot methods. This is not surprising since the Chen Villiage is quite close to the Shaolin Temple.

### **The Yang Family 24 Flower Spear**

The Yang family Flower Spear art was extant even in the Ming Dynasty and was recorded in General Qi Ji Kwang's '*Ji Xiao Xin Shu*' and consisted of 24 postures. We need to note here that this Yang family is no relation to Yang Lu Chan, the founder of the Yang style of Taijiquan who was also famous for his spear techniques. The song formula recorded by Chen Zhi Ming in his book indicates that the original set of 24 techniques were practiced by the Chen family. The '*24 Spear Song Formula*' has this line: '*If you ask this spear's name and family: Yang family Flower Spear 24*'. The spear used in this set is a relatively long one and its main emphasis is on thrusting techniques.

### **Training with the Short Stick (Pang)**

One of the methods of training of Chen Taijiquan is to make use of a short stick or club held in both hands and using twisting motions to train in it. A similar exercise can be found in Kan Feng Chi's training methods where the same thing is done.

We also have this method of training coming down from the training methods of Chang Sung Chi, the other great Wudang Internal Boxing master. This could indicate that at least part of the training methods used by the Chen family could have come from a Kan Feng Chi, Chang Sung Chi related lineage.

### **Hsing-I Quan Influence?**

The '*Three Three Boxing Manual*' written by Chen Xin contains three out of the ten thesis of Hsing-I Boxing as well as Taijiquan theories. This would indicate that some time in the history of Chen martial arts, Hsing-I Boxing was practiced. Whether the whole art was present is questionable since only three of the thesis are present.

## **Wu Tu Nan's Interview With Chen Xin And His Meeting With Chen Fa Ke**

Wu Tu Nan visited the Chen Villiage in 1917. There were few educated people in the villiage at the time and he was directed to meet Chen Xin, this was before Chen Xin's book was published. Chen Xin was very frank in his interview with Wu Tu Nan and gave him an account of how Taijiquan came to the Chen Villiage (see chapter 6 on Yang style historical development for details). He said that both Taijiquan and the indigenous Chen family Pao Chui was practiced in the villiage but that Taijiquan came down from Jiang Fa. He also introduced Wu to Du Yu Wan who practiced Taijiquan and who said his art came down from Jiang Fa who was of the Wudang lineage, Du's subsequent book on Taijiquan in 1935 confirms this view and the authenticity and accuracy of Wu Tu Nan's interview material.

Chen Xin had told Wu that he was writing a book on Taijiquan. Wu then asked Chen Xin whether he practiced Taijiquan. Chen Xin replied that his father had let his older brother learn martial arts but had made him get an education instead so he did not know any martial arts. Wu then asked how he was going to write a book on martial arts if he did not practice martial arts. Chen replied that Taijiquan is based on the Book of Changes and that he felt that as long as an art conformed to the Book of Changes it was Taijiquan. So he intended to use the boxing postures of Pao Chui and relate them to the Book of Changes and that his purpose of the book was to show how the Book of Changes was related even to martial arts, it was not his intention of writing a martial arts manual.

With this background information, Wu Tu Nan had asked Chen Fa Ke during a meeting around 1950 whether his art was Taijiquan, given that the definition of Taijiquan was that is was based on the 13 postures. Chen Fa Ke had replied that his art was not based on the 13 postures and so was not Taijiquan. The meeting was cordial and it was not confrontational.

## Part 3: The Development Of Chen Taijiquan

### The Chen Family Cannon Pounding Art (Pao Chui)

The Chen family assimilated all the arts they practiced and created their own version of the predominant art which they practiced, Cannon Pounding (Pao Chui), derived from the original Shaolin Cannon Pounding art. Sung Tai Zhu Chang Chuan formed a major part of this new art and there were elements from Shaolin Red Fist in it.

What resulted is five routines of Chen family Pao Chui and one routine of 'Short Hitting' (duan da) and the song formula stated a total of a 108 postures consisting the art. There is much confusion over this particular song formula but on closer examination the correct name should be '*Boxing Canon Complete Formula*' and is only found in the later *Liang Yi Tang Ben* manual. By the time the *Wen Xiu Tang Ben* Chen family martial arts manual was written it was noted that the 'second and third routines are lost'. The *Wen Xiu Tang Ben* makes no reference to an art called Taijiquan or '13 postures' or 13 anything for that matter. So it is an early reference to the state of the Chen family arts before the advent of the Taijiquan of the Chen family that we know today.

The Chen family was famous for the Cannon Pounding art for several generations and gained the beautiful name of 'Cannon Pounding Chen Family' (Pao Chui Chen Jia) in the region around the Chen village.

### The Simplification Of Chen Routines

Somewhere along the line the Chen Pao Chui art was simplified to just two routines. We have no evidence to indicate who was the one responsible for this simplification. The furthest that we can trace it back is to Chen Chang Xin, Yang Lu Chan's teacher. But even the Chen family genealogy book does not indicate that he was responsible for this momentous change, only indicating that he was a boxing teacher with a nickname 'Ancestral Tablet'.

We know for certain that two of the routines were already lost by that time and so only the 3 remaining could account for the final two routines. Whether there was an integration or that another routine was lost through time resulting in the final two is not certain at all.

### The Advent Of Internal Boxing In The Chen Arts

When did the Chen arts become a form of internal boxing as opposed to their parental arts which were external boxing?

Most of the Taijiquan lineages regard Jiang Fa as the one providing the input that transformed the art from the external Cannon Pounding to the softer internal art. Some have also credited his input as the reason why the transformed art was called Taijiquan, a name reflecting a Taoist origin and also the classification of the art as an internal one. The name, however, was not widely used for the art until Yang Lu Chan popularised it in the capital city of Beijing. From the early writings, we know that the form was originally called the '13 postures' and by that time the name Taijiquan was already in use as evidenced by the *Taijiquan Classic* of Wang Tsung Yueh and the *Ten Important Discourses Of Chen Chang Xin*<sup>1</sup>.

The classification of martial arts into external and internal came about because of the new method of combat devised by Chang San Feng, a Taoist which resided in the Wu Dang

Mountains. It stressed overcoming external techniques using calmness and appropriate action and from external form this martial art often looked weak in comparison with external styles but could defeat them easily.

Internal Boxing was passed down through the generations with noted practitioners like Chang Sung Chi, Huang Zhen Nan, Huang Pai Jia, Gan Feng Chi and Wang Tsung. Wu Dang Internal Boxing still exists at the place of its birth though it has been diversified into many different styles in the course of the centuries. But still present in its syllabus is a form called Wu Dang Taijiquan. This bears only a little resemblance to the popular Taijiquan of today but has common theories.

We know that the Chen family was famous for generations for their Pao Chui art which was a Shaolin form. It was only after Chen Chang Xin that the art was considered an internal one and specifically from the lineages stemming from Yang Lu Chan the founder of the Yang style of Taijiquan.

According to Chen Xin, Chen Chang Xin learned part of his art from Jiang Fa. Chen Chang Xin had been practicing his boxing when Jiang Fa who was passing by saw him practicing and burst out laughing. Realising that he was observed Jiang Fa hurried away but Chen Chang Xin caught up with him and angrily challenged him as Jiang had slighted his Chen family art. Chen grabbed Jiang's shoulder from behind, Jiang simply turned around and Chen was thrown out and lay on the floor. Realising the superiority of Jiang's art Chen asked Jiang to be his master. Jiang who ran a Tofu shop in Xian was passing through village after visiting his mother in Honan. Jiang said that he would return after three years to teach Chen and he indeed returned at the appointed time after which Chen Chang Xin brought him home and learnt Taijiquan from him.

Chen Xin also said that because Chen Chang Xin had studied with Jiang Fa, the Chen family did not permit him to teach the family art of Pao Chui. This could very well explain why Chen Chang Xin held his classes in secret in the dead of night in the back courtyard of his home where Yang Lu Chan spied upon him.

Chen Xin also introduced to Wu Tu Nan another Taiji master from the Chen village called Du Yu Wan (the source for a song formula attributed to Jiang Fa's teacher from Shanxi which is probably Wang Tsung Yueh. This is found at the back of Chen Xin's book). According to Du, his art came down from Jiang Fa who was from Kaifeng in Honan and that his form and Yang Lu Chan's form was the same, even bearing the same postural names like 'Grasp Sparrow's Tail' and the same sequence. Du told him that his Taijiquan was not a family transmitted art but a teacher transmitted art. The previous generations of the art, that is the founder of his lineage, were present when Jiang Fa was teaching Chen Chang Xin and had also learnt the art from Jiang Fa. He then demonstrated his form to Wu Tu Nan and the form was the same as the Yang style of Taijiquan.

According to Chen Xin, Chen Chang Xin was very stiff in the upper body and was therefore nick named 'Mr Ancestral Tablet'. When he was learning under Jiang Fa, Jiang made Chen practice some loosening exercises to rid him of his stiffness before teaching him Taijiquan. The rest of the Chen family continued in their practice of Pao Chui for which they were famous for.

The input from Jiang Fa, who traced his lineage back to Chang San Feng, which indicates that his art was Wu Dang Internal Boxing or at the very least derived from it, would mark the change of Chen family art from an external one to an internal one.

The earliest available literature on Taijiquan indicates that the art consisted of only 13 postures, the 8 Gates and Five Steps. We know that the 8 gates were 8 postures which represented 8 different types of Jing (refined strength). The Five Steps were the five different directions of their application. These were probably incorporated into the existing Pao Chui postures and the slow, relaxed, continuous and smooth manner of performing the form, the very element which made Internal Boxing look weak, was also incorporated. The result was a long form which had all the elements of Internal Boxing, a modified Pao Chui form which was a vehicle for Internal Boxing's theories and practices. This would have been the art that was transmitted by Chen Chang Xin.

### **The Question Of The 13 Postures**

The form was also known as the 13 postures since all the techniques within derived from the basic 13. This has always been standard in the Taijiquan Classics that have come down from the Wu Yu Xiang and Yang Lu Chan.

The *Wen Xiu Tang Ben* does not state the existence of the new form. The *Liang Yi Tang Ben*, a later manual does record it but calls it the 13 sections instead. Chen Xin's book recorded the Xin Jia of the Chen Style of Taijiquan. The material he records is quite different from that which was gleaned from him from Wu Tu Nan.

We need to first recognise that Chen Xin's book was published posthumously. He had 3 other collaborators who published the book after his death. How much of the book is attributable to him is a matter of uncertainty. The fact that the book was only published four years after his death would indicate that considerable editing could have taken place by his 3 collaborators.

The Yang related styles of Taijiquan all agree on the classification of the basis of the art which is the 13 postures. The postures of Peng, Lu, Ji, An, Tsai, Lieh, Chou, Kao, Gu, Pan, Jin, Tui and Ding. These are the postures delineated and referred to in the accepted Classic writings. In *Liang Yi Tang Ben*, the form is called not only the 13 postures but also 13 sections, a rather different classification which is carried on into Chen Xin's book where the entire form is taught as consisting of 13 sections, each section having sub-postures. This other classification is ignored by Tang Hao and Gu Liu Xin in their writings.

The 13 postures actually consists of 8 basic postures and 5 movements. The 8 basic postures differ slightly in the early Chen style publications. The *Liang Yi Tang Ben* records the first four as Peng, Ji, Lou, Na and Chen Xin's book records them as Peng, Lu, Ji, Na. Chen Tze Ming's book has the same song formula as in Chen Xin's book but here the first four are recorded as Peng, Shu, Ji, Na. The full 8 postures are named in Chen Tze Ming's book as Peng, Shu, Ji, Na, Tsai, Lieh, Chou, Kao. It must be noted that the earlier manual, the *Wen Xiu Tang Ben* did not contain any boxing theory. It was only in the later *Liang Yi Tang Ben* that Taijiquan was first mentioned in the Chen family documents and that boxing theory was recorded.

### **Chen Taijiquan Today**

The Lao Jia or Old Frame of Chen style Taijiquan was first promoted by Chen Fa Ke in the early half of this century. The Xin Jia or New Frame, Zhao Bao style and the Hu Lei style all retain close resemblance to each other in terms of how the postures are done. The Yang style, however, varies quite greatly from the other Chen related Taijiquan styles. Given that this was the style first taught by Yang Lu Chan when he returned from the Chen villiage, it would indicated that what he was taught may have differed from the standard Chen syllabus.

However, due to the ecumenical efforts of the current generation of masters, six major styles of Taijiquan are now officially recognised. They are the Chen, Yang, Wu Yu Xiang, Wu Chien Chuan, Sun and Zhao Bao styles. The Hu Lei style is also growing in popularity and may in time be considered a major style.

The 5 greatest promoters of the art today are Feng Zhi Chiang, Wang Xi An, Chen Zhen Lei and Chen Xiao Wang. Their efforts have spread the practice of Chen Taijiquan throughout the world and continue to serve as inspirations for those who practice it.

## Part 4: The Development Of Yang Style Taijiquan

Taijiquan first became a noted martial art through the prowess and teachings of the founder of the Yang style of Taijiquan, Yang Lu Chan. It was largely through the efforts of the first 3 generations of the Yang family that Taijiquan has such a large following in the world today. The Yang lineage also resulted in three of the five most important schools of Taijiquan today. To them the Taiji communities of today owes a great debt.

Yang Lu Chan, the founder of the Yang style of Taijiquan learnt his art from Chen Chang Xin, a martial arts master from the Chen Village in Wen County, Henan. Chen Chang Xin was versed in his family martial art Pao Chui (Cannon Pounding) and was also a student of Jiang Fa whose master was Wang Tsung Yueh. From this lineage, the art was traced back to the Internal Boxing founded by Chang San Feng, a Taoist residing on Wu Dang Mountain, the founder of Wu Dang martial arts, second in popularity only to the Shaolin school.<sup>2</sup>

### Yang Lu Chan's Teacher Chen Chang Xin

From noted Taiji master and historian Wu Tu Nan's interview with Chen Xin, a noted Chen family martial artist and historian<sup>3</sup>. We learn that Chen Chang Xin was teaching his students when Jiang Fa was passing through the village, returning from a visit from his mother in Henan and on his way back to his Tofu store in Shanxi. He happened upon Chen Chang Xin and when he saw how he practiced, he could not help but laugh. Having revealed his presence, he hurried away. Chen Chang Xin took offence at the laughter and persued him, grabbing Jiang's shoulder from behind. Jiang simply turned around and Chen was thrown to the ground. Realising that he had met a superior martial artist, Chen asked Jiang to accept him as a student. Jiang specified that he would return after three years to teach Chen and he did so.

Because Chen Chang Xin had studied under Jiang Fa, the seniors of the Chen villiage forebade Chen Chang Xin to teach the family art of Pao Chui which they had been famous for several generations, gaining the title 'Pao Chui Chen Family'. This may very well be the reason why Chen Chang Xin held his classes at night in his back court yard.

So it would seem that Chen Chang Xin's martial art would have been part Pao Chui and part Wu Dang Internal Boxing which would lend credence to the common belief first voiced by noted Taiji historian Hsu Chen that the Taijiquan we know today was Chen family Pao Chui softened by input from Jiang Fa<sup>4</sup>. From early Chen martial arts manuals we can see such a influence. The earlier *Wen Xiu Tang Ben* martial arts manual does not mention any form called '13 postures' or 'Taijiquan'. The later *Liang Yi Tang Ben* is the first to mention the art but calls it in addition to '13 postures' also '13 sections'.

### How Yang Lu Chan Learnt The Art

There have been many variations of the storey of how Yang Lu Chan learnt his art from Chen Chang Xin. All are variations of the simple fact that Yang Lu Chan journeyed from Yung Nien southwards to the Chen villiage to eventually study with Chen Chang Xin. The most commonly accepted version is also one that is probably the most credible<sup>5</sup>.

We know that Yang Lu Chan was born poor, a son of a farmer. He loved martial arts and had studied Shaolin Hung Quan<sup>6</sup> with a local boxer, building up a good martial arts foundation. One day as he was passing by the Tai He Tang owned by Chen De Hu, a member of the Chen family of the Chen family in Henan, he witnessed an encounter between a shop assistant (who

was a member of the Chen family also) and an unruly customer. The customer attacked the shop assistant who dispatched him with ease, causing him to be knocked out the door of the shop. Yang Lu Chan had never seen such an effortless repost before and enquired after Chen De Hu, seeking instruction in this superior martial art.

Chen De Hu disavowed any great knowledge but offered to recommend him to Chen Chang Xin, a great martial arts master in the Chen village. As the Chen family were rather protective about their martial arts, only family members were taught at that time. Chen De Hu wrote a letter recommending Yang Lu Chan as a servant to work for the family so that Yang could learn their martial arts.

Yang travelled there and worked as a servant, earning his room and board and studied martial arts with Chen Chang Xin. As he was an outsider, Yang was not allowed to learn the Chen martial arts. As a servant he was instructed not to go into the back court yard for whatever reason. Yang felt that this was strange but thought nothing of it. One hot and humid night, Yang could not sleep. He got up and went for a walk to relieve the heat. As he walked about the house, he heard strange noises coming from the back court yard. Not able to go into the court yard, he went round the wall surrounding it and found a small hole in the wall, large enough for him to peer through and see what was happening.

He saw Chen Chang Xin instructing a group of students on martial arts and breathing techniques. Excited, Yang watched attentively and then proceeded to practice what he saw alone when he had the spare time. This went on for some time. As a servant Yang often mingled with the members of the Chen family and was treated as a part of the household. One day, some of Chen Chang Xin's students were practicing and they made some mistakes, Yang corrected them without knowing that Chen was nearby watching. Chen was surprised that Yang knew his art and asked him to explain how he learnt it. Being honest, Yang told Chen how he had come to learn the art. Chen then asked Yang to demonstrate all that he had learnt. After Yang's demonstration, he sighed that Yang, who did not receive formal instruction but learnt by watching, had learnt more than his students and agreed to accept Yang as a student.

After several years, Yang returned home where upon several local boxers wanted to test his skill since he had spent so much time studying at the Chen villiage. To Yang's disappointment, he was defeated. Not disheartened, he returned for a second time to the Chen villiage to seek instruction. Chen Chang Xin, seeing Yang's dedication, taught him more of the art. After several more years, Yang again returned to Yung Nien, again the local boxers wanted to test his skill. This time, though he was not defeated, he did not win easily either. Feeling that there was still room for improvement and that his skills still lacked perfection, Yang journeyed for the third time to the Chen villiage.

Chen Chang Xin was much impressed with Yang's perserverance and resolved to hold nothing back and teach Yang the whole art. But before doing so, he wanted to test Yang one more time. When Yang came to seek instruction, Chen appeared to be asleep, Yang sat waiting patiently till late in the day when Chen appeared to awake, Chen asked him to return on the morrow, saying that he was too tired to teach him. When Yang arrived the next day, Chen again appeared to be sleeping and again the same thing happened. This went on for several days, on the last day, Chen still appeared to be sleeping but this time his head lolled uncomfortably to one side. Yang used both hands to support his teacher's head so that he could sleep comfortably, and since Chen apparently slept the whole day, Yang held that tiring position until Chen awoke, Chen again asked Yang to return on the morrow. The next day when Yang arrived at the specified time, a wide awake Chen Chang Xin greeted him and

begain teaching him the whole art. After 3 years, Chen told Yang that he had taught him all there was to learn and that he could return to his home town and that he no longer had any opponents who could defeat him.

Yang returned to Yung Nien where he taught martial arts for a living. So great was his skill that he was never defeated. His art was so soft and yielding that people called it `mien quan' (cotton boxing) or `hua quan' (neutralising boxing). In all his matches, he never hurt anyone. He also travelled widely, testing his skills and making friends with fellow boxers.

Years later, when Yang was in his middle age, he was recommended to teach in the Imperial Court by one of his students, Wu Yu Xiang (who later founded the Wu Yu Xiang form of Taiji Quan). In the Imperial Court he was tested many times but never defeated, earning the prestigious title `Yang the Invincible'. He was the martial arts instructor for the Shen Ji Battalion and also taught in Royal Households. So sought after was he that he was also called `Ba Yeh' (Eight Lords) because eight princes studied under him.

Yang Lu Chan had three sons, the oldest died early. Yang Ban Hou and Yang Jian Hou both studied under their illustrious father who was a harsh taskmaster. So severe was the training that Yang Ban Hou attempted suicide and Yang Jian Hou ran away several times and attempted to become a monk. Yang Ban Hou was an exceptional martial artist, second in skill only to his father. He also earned the title `Yang the Invincible' for his great skill. Yang Jian Hou was not as gifted as his brother and did not attain as great a level of skill initially but later, through hard work, attained the highest levels of Taiji skill, blending hard and soft to a very high degree. Yang Lu Chan and his two sons all taught in the Imperial Court, their form was identical. Later on, there would be some changes in the form and these will be discussed later.

### **Taijiquan Gets Its Name**

When Yang Lu Chan first taught the art in Yung Nien, his art was referred to as 'Mien Quan' or (Cotton Fist) or 'Hua Quan' (Neutralising Fist), it was not yet called Taijiquan. Whilst teaching at the Imperial Court, Yang met many challenges, some friendly some not. But he invariably won and in so convincingly using his soft techniques that he gained a great reputation.

Many who frequented the imperial households would come to view his matches. At one such gatherings at which Yang had won against several reputable opponents. The scholar Ong Tong He was present and was so impressed by the way Yang moved and executed his techniques and felt that his movements and techniques expressed the physical manifestation of the principles of Taiji (the philosophy) wrote for him a matching verse:

*'Hands Holding Taiji shakes the whole world,  
a chest containing ultimate skill defeats a gathering of heros.'*

Thereafter, his art was referred to as Taijiquan and the styles that sprang from his teaching and by association with him was called Taijiquan.

### **Combat Or Health**

Many have said that Yang Lu Chan softened the form to suit the unfit members of the imperial court, making the art easier and less effective, focusing on health aspects because

guns were making martial arts obsolete. There is no proof beyond hearsay for this conjecture. Before Yang Lu Chan entered the imperial court, his boxing was already so soft and neutralising that it attained the name 'mien quan' and we have record of a bout where Yang's skill was questioned because his form was so soft, a bout which he won<sup>7</sup>.

Being in the Imperial Court as a martial arts instructor, it was imperative to turn out students of high attainment. It was literally a matter of life and death since with withholding anything from the Royal family was considered treason. Rather than causing the Yang art to be diluted, it probably added a lot more in terms of content due to the opportunity to meet and compare skills with other highly skilled martial artist in the imperial court at that time<sup>8</sup>.

## **The Old Yang Form**

This is the form that was taught by Yang Lu Chan when he began teaching in Yung Nien. It is also the form taught by Yang Ban Hou and Yang Jian Hou initially. This form still exists today, as do several other older sets which were subsequently dropped because they added nothing to the content of the art, their essences having been incorporated into the large frame. These other sets are the Yang 13 Pao Chui set and the Lift Legs form. Though the latter could have come down to us as the Taiji Long Boxing Form.

Yang Lu Chan and his sons taught the small frame in the Imperial Court and taught the large frame outside it. The Small Frame is not an inferior set but a variation of the large frame to allow combat and practice to be performed in the long sleeved, long skirted imperial robes worn by members of the imperial court. This small frame comes down to us today primarily from Yang Ban Hou's student Quan Yu<sup>9</sup> and his son Wu Jian Quan.

The Old Yang Form was also called the 'Six Routines' and the '13 Postures'. Six Routines because the long form was broken into six separate routines and practiced as such until the skill attainment and endurance of the students reached a point that they could link all six together into one long routine and practice it as a whole. The Old Yang Form differs only on details with the standardised Yang Form of Yang Cheng Fu. One needs to note that Yang Cheng Fu himself did not standardise the form. It's just that he spread the form so widely that his method of doing the form became the accepted standard.

The Old Yang Form retains the 'strength explosions' (Fa-Jing) and jumping kicks (one only). We know that the sequence of the Old Yang Form and the standardised Yang Form is almost the same. From the old manual of Wu Yu Xiang also records a very similar sequence.

It is interesting to note that in this old manual the name 'Grasp Sparrow's Tail' is used. This points to the fact that the name 'Grasp Sparrow's Tail' was in use during the early days when Yang Lu Chan first started teaching in Yung Nien. In a later compilation by Li I Yu, the name of the posture is changed to 'Lazily Arranging Clothes' which would indicate a post-Chen Qing Ping date (Wu Yu Xiang travelled to seek out Chen Chang Xin but stayed instead in Zhao Bao Village to learn from Chen Ching Ping).

We also note that in the initial handwritten manual (1867) by Li I Yu, in his 'Brief Introduction To Taijiquan' he writes that the founder of Taijiquan was Chang San Feng. But in a later handwritten manual (1881), he amends his Introduction to say that the founder is unknown. This could also reflect a confusion of sources in after the death of Wu Yu Xiang and Yang Lu Chan.

## **The Later Yang Form**

At a later period of time, both Yang Ban Hou and Yang Jian Hou changed their forms slightly and in the same way. We don't know if the initiator of this slight modification is Yang Lu Chan, though it's certainly possible. Some of the changes were the way the 'Grasp Sparrow's Tail' postures were done and the removal of 'Turn Body Double Lift Legs' and replacing it with 'Deflect Downwards, Parry And Punch' and 'Right Kick With Heel'<sup>10</sup>.

Versions of this form come down to us from Wu Meng Xia who is of the Yang Pan Hou lineage and Wang Yung Quan who is of the Yang Jian Hou lineage. Yang Cheng Fu himself taught this form which retains the strength explosions (Fa-Chin) before he went to Shanghai to teach in public classes.

## **Yang Cheng Fu's Later Form**

Yang Cheng Fu was invited in 1925 by his student Chen Wei Ming to teach in Shanghai. It was there that Yang Cheng Fu began to teach public classes, prior to that he had always taught in private classes only.

When Yang Cheng Fu began to teach in public classes he taught them from the basics. He removed the strength explosions (Fa-Chin) and replaced them with using qi to extend the limb instead. This is a basic practice which teaches one to bring qi to power the limb, only after this has been achieved can strength explosions (Fa-Chin) be done properly. He also smoothed out the form to emphasize flow, rootedness and relaxation which is primary to the art. Only after the flow, rootedness and relaxation are mastered can changes in speed take place without losing these qualities. These speed changes are evident in Yang Cheng Fu's Taiji Long Boxing as well as Yang Shao Hou's small frame.

Other than a few minor variations, his form remained much the same as the Later Yang Form. Yang Cheng Fu travelled extensively throughout China promoting his art. Taijiquan was already well known at that time as a combat art with great curative powers<sup>11</sup>. Its mode of practice enabled both old and infirmed to take up the art to better their health. Yang Cheng Fu himself was undefeated and was a great boxer, his reputation and ability caused the art to spread far and wide and made it what it is today: the most popular form of Taijiquan in the world.

The great popularity of his form and the huge numbers of people who took it up caused it to become the standard form for Yang Taijiquan. There are those who still practiced the older forms but Yang Cheng Fu's form became the hallmark of the style. Yang Cheng Fu taught and promoted his art as a combat art. There is little evidence other than conjecture that he promoted his art solely as a health art. Both his books<sup>12</sup> focus on the art as a combat art and his writings all dealt with the practice towards achieving a combative goal. In practicing the art as a combat art, one gained the health benefits as well, both aspects of the art being inseparable.

## **Yang Cheng Fu's Advanced Set: Taiji Long Boxing**

In addition to the large frame, Yang Cheng Fu also taught an advanced set to be practiced after a high enough level of attainment was reached practicing the large frame. When Yang Cheng Fu began to teach public classes, he dropped this from his public syllabus because this advanced set should only be practiced after learning the large frame. This advanced set was

called Taiji Long Boxing. It consisted of 59 postures and is considerably more mobile than the large frame and includes strength explosions (Fa-Chin) as well.

Many advanced combat concepts and practices are incorporated and emphasized in this form. Because its relatively short compared to the large frame, some masters have added additional postures, sometimes resulting in as many as 150 postures. This set is relatively rare today, only a relatively small number of exponents know the form and practice it. Yang Shou Chung, Yang Cheng Fu's oldest son taught this form in Hong Kong where he resided, his daughters and advanced students continue to carry on the tradition of teaching this advanced set to worthy students.

### **Yang Shao Hou's Small Frame Advanced Combat Set**

Yang Shao Hou was also invited by Chen Wei Ming to Shanghai to teach at his Zhi Rou Association. Yang Shao Hou taught the large frame during public classes and his large frame was the same as that of his younger brother Yang Cheng Fu.

Later, he began to teach privately in the homes of students who have already learnt the large frame or Wu Chien Chuan's small frame. In these private advanced classes he would teach an advanced combat set which was later to be referred to as Yang Shao Hou's Small Frame. He began to teach and practice this set exclusively.

Yang Shao Hou was known to be very combat capable. He had been given to his uncle Yang Pan Hou as a foster son and had gained his uncle's skill and his temperament. He had also studied with his father and most probably had instruction from his grandfather Yang Lu Chan as well. His advanced Taiji skills included vital striking, bone locking, bone hitting, sinew splitting, control and blocking blood vessels and psychological attack. Those who watched him were in awe of his abilities and aspired to gain them but few could take his harsh training. It is because of this that he only had a handful of students.

His small frame form was also called the 'usage frame' and according to Wu Tu Nan who studied with Yang Shao Hou, this set was created by Yang Lu Chan as a distillation of the essence of Taijiquan. It has elements of both the Old Yang Form and the Small Frame taught by Yang Lu Chan and Yang Pan Hou. Consisting of 73 postures which totals over 200 movements, the form is done very quickly, striving to do the entire set within 2-3 minutes. Even at this great speed the fundamental principles of proper alignment, rootedness, relaxation, continuity of movement, calmness and coordination are not lost. This set can only be properly learnt after mastery of the large frame and its principles.

In order to increase the endurance, strengthen the musculature further and foster proper alignment and root, Yang Shao Hou often made his students practice their postures under a kind of high table which was commonly used in the kitchen for the preparation of food.

### **Yang Taijiquan Today**

It is from Yang Taijiquan that the majority of styles of Taijiquan have developed. Yang Taijiquan continues to be the major style of Taijiquan to be practiced in the world. Sadly, however, many have come to regard it as diluted and devoid of its original martial content. Wang Zhen Nan, a great Internal Boxing expert, once lamented that Internal Boxing was dying out because it did not look strong and some of its practitioners were infusing external

techniques into it to make it appear more credible. Fortunately, Taijiquan has had great masters to show that is credible both as a martial art and as a health art.

Yang Taijiquan has not changed all that much since its foundation by Yang Lu Chan, only minor changes have been made to the way its been practiced and its main practice set. Its syllabus is still practiced and still bringing benefits to all who practice it. The Yang family still continues to promote their art vigourously and new generations of teachers are being trained to carry on this glorious tradition.

## Part 5: The Development Of Wu Yu Xiang Style Taijiquan

The founder of this form of Taijiquan was Wu Yu Xiang (1812-1880) who was a native of Yung Nien, the home County of Yang-style founder, Yang Lu Chan. Wu Yu Xiang had two brothers, Wu Deng Qing (1800-1884) and Wu Ru Qing. Both brothers were officials in the Qing government. Wu Deng Qing was the magistrate of Wu Yang, a County in Henan Province, and Wu Ru Qing was a secretary in the Penalties Department under his older brother.

All three of the brothers were very interested in martial arts, having initially learned martial arts from their father. The main art learned was Shaolin Hung Boxing thus they had a good foundation in martial arts. When Yang Lu Chan started teaching Taijiquan at Yung Nien, the Wu brothers went to watch him. All three brothers were enthralled by Yang Lu Chan's skills and began studying under him. Wu Yu Xiang also became a tutor to Yang Lu Chan's sons, teaching them reading and writing<sup>13</sup>.

Later, Wu Yu Xiang went to seek out Yang Lu Chan's teacher Chen Chang Xin to further his skills, but instead ended up learning from Chen Qing Ping at the Zhao Bao village. (see later section on why he did so) Wu Yu Xiang had few pupils and his art was made famous mostly through the efforts of the Hao family who learned Wu Yu Xiang's Style of Taijiquan from his nephew, Li I Yu. Indeed, occasionally this style of Taijiquan is referred to as Hao style. Li I Yu is an important early recorder of Taiji material and his works are important references in any study on the origins and historical development of Taijiquan. Today, Wu Yu Xiang's Taijiquan is one of the major styles practiced though it is still relatively unknown in the West.

### **Wu Yu Xiang's Teacher Yang Lu Chan**

Wu Yu Xiang's family owned the building which housed the Tai He Tang drug store run by the Chen family of Chen Jia Gou. It was there, many years before, that Yang Lu Chan had witnessed a scene, which led him to the Chen village to study under Chen Chang Xin. Yang Lu Chan also taught martial arts at the Tai He Tang after he returned from the Chen village following many years of study.

The Wu brothers on seeing Yang's consummate skill, went to study under him and learned what is now called the old Yang style of Taijiquan (see the later section on Wu Yu Xiang's early form). The Wu brothers also studied the Broadsword and the Long Staff/Spear under Yang Lu Chan.<sup>14</sup>

In an effort to better his skills, Wu Yu Xiang decided to travel to the Chen Village in 1852 to seek out Yang Lu Chan's teacher Chen Chang Xin. On the way there, he stayed at an inn in the Zhao Bao Village. There he spoke to the inn-keeper about his desire to go to the Chen Village to further his skills. The inn-keeper, desiring to earn more of Wu's money, sought to keep him in Zhao Bao Village telling him that Chen Chang Xin was old and sick (he eventually died the following year) and did not teach anymore, but that a highly skilled member of the Chen family was teaching martial arts in the Zhao Bao Village. That teacher was none other than Chen Qing Ping.

### **Wu Yu Xiang's Other Teacher Chen Qing Ping**

Chen Qing Ping is recorded in Chen Xin's *Chen Family Manual* as being a student of Chen Yu Ben, who created the New Style of Chen Taijiquan. The style taught by Chen Qing Ping

was also known as the Gao Jia or High Frame. The Zhao Bao Village records show that Chen Qing Ping also received instruction from Zhang Yan whose art had come down from Jiang Fa. So whether or not Chen Qing Ping founded Zhao Bao Taijiquan is in dispute with the Chen family claiming that he did and the Zhao Bao lineages claiming that he didn't. The postures of the Zhao Bao Village form does show resemblance to the Chen Taiji form, but the way the postures are executed has more of the flavor of other Taiji lineages.

Based on the inn keeper's information about Chen Chang Xin's health and Chen Qing Ping's skill, Wu Yu Xiang approached Chen Qing Ping and studied under him for forty days, gaining a new understanding of the art. When he returned he modified his form to include skills he learned from his second teacher, as well as with the ideas found in Wang Tsung Yueh's Taijiquan Classic, which his brother had discovered in a salt store. (See later section about Wu Yu Xiang's later form)

### **Wu Yu Xiang And The Taijiquan Classics**

Wu Yu Xiang's brother, Deng Qing, discovered Wang Tsung Yueh's Taijiquan Classic in a salt store in the province he was governing. We can speculate that his subordinates knew of his love for Taijiquan and brought the manuscript to him when it was discovered.

Wu Deng Qing forwarded a copy of the Classic to Wu Yu Xiang, who found it inspiring and wrote several thesis based on the principles in Wang Tsung Yueh's work for his students. In total, there are three works attributed to Wang Tsung Yueh, the Taijiquan Classic, the 13 Postures and the Taijiquan Discourse.

It should be noted that some people suggest that Wu Yu Xiang authored the works that are attributed to Wang Tsung Yueh. The author notes, however, that the Taijiquan Discourse has text that is almost identical to the song formula handed down by Du Yu Wan which is recorded at the back of Chen Xin's book. That song formula is also attributed to Wang Tsung Yueh in Chen Xin's book. The author also notes that Wu Yu Xiang did not hesitate to put his name on the works he wrote, notably, the **Song Formula of Methods of Use for the Thirteen Postures** (Shi San Shih Xing Gong Ke Jue) and **Important Words On Hitting Hands** (Da Shou Yao Yan). These works and other writings by Wang Tsung Yueh, as well as notes on his early and later forms, were recorded in several handwritten manuals written by Wu Yu Xiang's nephew Li I Yu. On balance, the author considers this as convincing evidence that Wu Yu Xiang did indeed get access to Wang Tsung Yueh's authentic work.

### **Li I Yu's Scholarly Contributions**

Li I Yu (1832-1892) learned the art of Taijiquan from his uncle Wu Yu Xiang, and was one of the great recorders of the writings and content of the art. He left behind several handwritten manuals on the art including the three old manuals of Yung Nien County.

In addition to recording the classic writings of Wang Tsung Yueh and his uncle Wu Yu Xiang, Li also wrote some important works on the art. These were also included in his manuals. Li I Yu's compilation of song formulas and classic writings form the basis of what are now known as the Taijiquan Classics. These Classics catalog the Taijiquan's principles and their application.

Li I Yu passed down the art to Hao Wei Chen (1849-1920) and the Hao family continues to this day to popularize it. Descendants of both Li and Wu Yu Xiang are still around today and continue to practice this form of Taijiquan.

### **Wu Yu Xiang's Early Form**

From the manuals of Li I Yu, we have on record the early form that Wu Yu Xiang practiced. It is almost exactly the same as the old Yang form and retains the characteristic names of the postures like Grasp Sparrows Tail. This indicates that what Yang Lu Chan taught was not the Old Chen style, but his style which he attributed to Chen Chang Xin.

By deduction, we calculate that Wu Yu Xiang would have started studying with Yang Lu Chan in 1849, since Yang left for the Chen village at 10 years of age and spent 30 years studying with Chen Chang Xin. We also know that Wu Yu Xiang trained with Chen Qing Ping for 40 days while in 1852, the same year in which he obtained a copy of Wang Tsung Yueh's writings. Since Li I Yu began studying with Wu Yu Xiang in 1853, we can conclude that the initial form Li I Yu recorded was essentially the old Yang form with which Wu was most familiar. Only later did Wu Yu Xiang modify his form to a small frame sequence that is recorded in a later manual by Li I Yu.

Yang Ban Hou lived from 1837 to 1892, which would indicate that he was already a teenager and was already skilled at Taijiquan when Wu Yu Xiang went to study with Chen Qing Ping. We know that Wu Yu Xiang tutored Pan Hou when he was studying with Yang Lu Chan from various sources like Zhao Bin and Gu Liu Xin. We don't know, however, if he continued to tutor Ban Hou after he trained with Chen Qing Ping.

While some assert that the Yang Small Frame was due to influence from the Wu Yu Xiang, at this point we must consider this as conjecture. The Yang Small Frame which comes down to us from Wu Chien Quan has little resemblance to Wu Yu Xiang's small frame and the primary reason for the origin of that form was the Imperial Court Dress which hampered movement. We note that Yang Pan Hou's training regime, which is still taught in Yung Nien, included training in three heights and in four frames, one of which is a small frame, the form did not change but the way it was done changed. Consequently we refer to Yang Ban Hou's form and that of his brother and father (they taught together and so their forms should have been relatively alike) as the old Yang form. It is unlikely that Wu Yu Xiang's small frame had influenced Yang Ban Hou's form whilst Pan Hou was studying with his father.

### **Wu Yu Xiang's Final Form**

Wu Yu Xiang modified his form to incorporate the information from both his teachers and the Taijiquan classic writings. His modified later form differed from that of both his teachers and is characterized by compact, rounded, precise, and high standing postures. The basic structure of the form was based on the Yang sequence with a change of name for the posture Grasp Sparrow's Tail to Lazily Arranging Clothes was done later after Wu's death. The postures themselves were modified.

The Thirteen Torso Methods are the keys to power development in Wu Yu Xiang's Taijiquan and there is emphasis on rising, falling, opening and closing. The form's movements are simple and circular with each movement expressing aspects of the 8 basic postures of Taijiquan (peng, lu, chi, an, tsai, lieh, chou, kao), .

Wu Yu Xiang taught few students and we know of only one significant one, his nephew Li I Yu. Li I Yu did not teach widely and only taught a few students, notably Hao Wei Chen who was also a native of Yung Nien County.

Hao Wei Chen and his descendents did the most to promote Wu Yu Xiang's Taijiquan, making it one of the major styles today. Hao taught his son Hao Yue Ru who in turn taught his son Hao Shao Ru who was the recent master of the form. The form itself was not pictorially recorded until Hao Shao Ru's book which remains today the standard text for this style of Taijiquan.

### **Hao Yue Ru's Modification**

Wu Yu Xiang's form originally retained the energetic slapping of toes and jump kick, as well as quick movements interspersed with slower ones, which were characteristics that the old Yang form has as well.

Hao Yue Ru inherited his art from his father Hao Wei Zhen who in turn learned it from Li I Yu. Hao Yue Ru was a professional martial arts teacher and in order to cater for mass instruction covering a wide age range, he taught the form devoid of these jumps and strength explosions to enable the basics to be better grasped when the form was taught to a large class. The slow even movements was a basic method of practice and the Hao Style then used a fast form which retained the elements of the original.

This is the form that is practiced extensively today. Some have termed this form "Hao style Taijiquan" to differentiate it from the other Wu Yu Xiang lineages which retain the old characteristics both in the normal sequence and the fast form.

### **Wu Yu Xiang Taijiquan Spawns Sun Taijiquan**

When Hao Wei Chen was visiting Beijing, he fell sick. Sun Lu Tang happened to hear of it and went to see him. Sun Lu Tang, already an accomplished Hsing I and Pa Kua master, had heard of Hao's boxing prowess, but did not know which type of boxing he practiced. Sun attended to Hao and took care of him until he recovered from his illness. In gratitude, Hao taught Sun Lu Tang his Taijiquan. Later Sun Lu Tang incorporated elements from Hsing-I and Pa Kua into his Taijiquan and developed a new version which was later termed Sun style Taijiquan. Apparently he felt that Taijiquan was the style that best suited him and he taught little else in his later years. (more information in a later document on Sun style Taijiquan)

### **Wu Yu Xiang's Taijiquan Today**

Wu Yu Xiang style Taijiquan is one of the five major styles but is still relatively unknown and seldom practiced outside China. The most popular form of this style is the one promoted by the Hao family. Its popularity is increasing as China opens up and more and more people learn this style of Taijiquan.

With its high standing postures, it appeals to those who regard the lower standing styles as being hard on the knees. Like the other styles of Taijiquan, it continues to bring health and self defense skills to those who practice it.

## Part 6: The Development Of Wu Jian Quan Style

Wu Jian Quan style Taijiquan is second in popularity only after the Yang style of Taijiquan. It is in fact representative of the Yang style Small Frame which was developed and taught by Yang Lu Chan, the founder of the Yang style, for the students in the Imperial Court.

The founder of Wu Jian Quan style Taijiquan is Wu Jian Quan's father Quan Yu (1834-1902). Quan Yu was one of Yang Lu Chan's top students and was said to have gained his master's skill in evasive techniques. He worked as a bodyguard in the Imperial Court and was Manchurian by race. Wu Jian Quan (1870-1942) did the most to popularise this style of Taijiquan and the style is named after him. Because of his efforts, many people came to learn this style of Taijiquan and his form soon became the accepted standard for this style.

### **The Yang Style Small Frame Of Quan Yu**

When Yang Lu Chan began teaching in the Imperial Court through the recommendation of Wu Yu Xiang's brother. He encountered conditions which merited a modification to the form he normally taught. The Imperial Court Dress had long sleeves and long robes which made certain movements awkward, these factors had to be taken into account in order for the art to be used effectively for combat in such clothes.

What resulted was the Yang style Small Frame. This is primarily a modification of the Old Yang Form to take into account these factors. It was smaller in terms of movements and its postures allowed combat in the restrictive clothes of the Imperial Court. The Yang Small Frame comes down to us also from Gong Tian Ren who was also a student of Yang Lu Chan in the Imperial Court. It agrees substantially with the early Wu Jian Quan style set.

Because the Yang Small Frame was different from the Old Yang Form that Yang Lu Chan taught before he was in the Imperial Court and at his private classes. There arose a misunderstanding that he taught a watered down 'Manchurian' directed form in the Imperial Court and a secret 'Han' form to his family and close students.<sup>15</sup> This was not the case, his family knew the Small Frame and taught it as well and some of the Imperial Court members like Wang Lan Ting who practiced outside with him also practiced the Old Yang Form. Other than the postural modifications to take into account the dressing differences, the art remained essentially the same.

### **The Three Major Lineages From Quan Yu**

Quan Yu taught many disciples his art and three main streams come down to us from him. Wang Mao Zhai (1862-1940) who taught the famous Wu Jian Quan style master Yang Yu Ting (1887-1982), Chang Yun Ting (1860-1918) and his own son Wu Jian Quan.

From these three lineages come the modern masters of Wu Jian Quan Style Taijiquan, like Mah Yueh Liang, Wu Ying Hwa, Wu Kong Yi, Wu Kong Zhao, Eddie Wu, Wang Pei Sheng, Ma You Qing, Chang Yun Jia and many others who carry on the task of promoting the art.

Quan Yu is recorded as a disciple of Yang Ban Hou and indeed he had trained under Yang Ban Hou as Yang Ban Hou would assist his father in teaching the classes. But he was primarily a student of Yang Lu Chan. One must understand the importance of status in the Imperial Court. Yang Lu Chan instructed not only soldiers and bodyguards but also taught the Imperial household, the princes of the realm themselves. It would be unseemly that the

princes would have boxing brothers with commoners, and in terms of boxing seniority, these commoners were sometimes boxing seniors to the princes. So these non-royalty students were made to bow to Yang Ban Hou as master. This would ensure that they were at least one generation below, in terms of boxing rank, from the royal princes.

When Yang Lu Chan left the Imperial Court to retire in his old age, Quan Yu also left the Imperial Court and lived in Beijing and taught his art to many students. He attained a great reputation as a boxer and produced many fine students.

### **The Family Takes On The Wu Name**

After the fall of the Qing Dynasty, in order to integrate into the predominant Han population, Quan Yu adopted a Han surname Wu for his family. Thus in some references he is referred to simply as Quan Yu and some refer to him as Wu Quan Yu. The Manchus were not well regarded by the Han people because they were the foreign ruling race which had conquered the Han ruled Ming Dynasty. The move to integrate into the Han race was important during that period of time when hatred against the ruling non-Han races was a very real thing.

The style was not taught publicly until Xu Yu Sheng, Yang Jian Hou's disciple established his association in Beijing and invited Wu Jian Quan to teach there. Quan Yu taught his son martial arts from a young age and Wu Jian Quan grew up an accomplished martial artist skilled in more than just Taijiquan.

### **The Great Master Of The Style Wu Jian Quan**

Wu Jian Quan was born into a martial arts family. His father had earned his living as a bodyguard in the Imperial Court. This meant that his father was a professional martial artist whose skills were his means of livelihood. So martial arts was very much the 'family trade'. His father had trained under the great Yang Lu Chan, founder of the Yang style, and also under Yang Ban Hou, Yang Lu Chan's son. The form practiced by Quan Yu was the Yang style Small Frame but way back then, the division into the major styles had not yet taken place and the art was simply known as the small frame of Yang Lu Chan.

Wu Jian Quan achieved a very high level of skill in the art of Taijiquan and was also an accomplished archer and equestrian. He also practiced with members of the Yang family and maintained a close relationship with them. He and Yang Cheng Fu would practice Push Hands together and Wu Jian Quan used to call him 'Third Uncle' because in terms of lineage generations, Yang Cheng Fu was his senior by one generation. In fact, before the Wu Jian Quan style became considered as an independent style, there was no differentiation between the two families. This close association and non-distinction between these two great Taiji styles can be seen by Wu Jian Quan's sending his son, Wu Kong Yi, to study under Yang Shao Hou.

### **The Wu Jian Quan Transmission Becomes An Independent Style**

There is an interesting story on how the Yang Small Frame practiced by the Wu family became an independent style. The relationship between both families was a close one and it was never the intention for the two families to form independent styles of Taijiquan. This division occurred when both Wu Jian Quan, Yang Cheng Fu and Yang Shao Hou were teaching in Chen Wei Ming's Zhi Rou Association in Shanghai.

The Secretary General of the association at the time, who was also a government official, was Chu Ming Yi. Chu initially studied under Yang Cheng Fu. During some Push Hands demonstrations which he did with Yang Cheng Fu, he had expected Yang to give him 'face' because of his position as Secretary General and to allow him to appear skillful during the demonstration. Yang, however, regarded people by skill and not status and unceremoniously bounced him out repeatedly a great distance.

Feeling insulted by this incident, he changed from studying from Yang Cheng Fu to studying under Wu Jian Quan. Because of this he promoted Wu Jian Quan and his Taijiquan vigorously whilst not promoting Yang Cheng Fu so much. This resulted in the public regarding Wu Jian Quan's form and Yang Cheng Fu's form as independent styles of Taijiquan. Despite this, the relationship between both families remained close.

### **Wu Jian Quan's Early Form**

When Wu Jian Quan first began to teach in Beijing, he taught the Yang Small Frame as handed down by his father, Quan Yu. This form is almost identical to the form handed down by Wang Mao Zhai and can be regarded as the old Wu Jian Quan form.

Not many people, however, learnt this form and there are few records of it. The form itself is still quite similar to Wu Jian Quan's later form and besides minor variations, it remains essentially the same. There are still those who practice this form so it is not extinct and provides a valuable insight into the early teachings of Wu Jian Quan.

### **Wu Jian Quan's Later Style**

Wu Jian Quan continued to refine his skills and to modify his form. He removed some of the more vigorous movements and made it slow and even in tempo. This also facilitated the easy learning and transmission of the art. He taught this form exclusively in his travels and finally based himself in Shanghai where his family still resides.

Wu Jian Quan's influence, popularity and the large following he amassed established his form as the standard one for the Wu family. Today it is still the most practiced version of Wu Jian Quan Taijiquan and it is the one that all variations are measured against. We are fortunate that photographs were taken of Wu Jian Quan's form and we can see his high attainment in the art. A film was shot of him performing Taijiquan in Shanghai but the film has since been lost through the turmoil of the ensuing years in China.

### **The Wu Jian Quan Style Fast Form**

This form was first made public by the Jian Quan Taijiquan Association headed by Mah Yueh Liang and Wu Ying Hwa in 1982. It proports to be the original style taught by Wu Jian Quan before his modification of the form.

We do not have any early information on a Wu Jian Quan fast form before this and are unable to verify its authenticity. But Mah Yueh Liang is Wu Jian Quan's recognised successor and such a form is still a legitimate form of the Wu Jian Quan lineage.

The form is done relatively faster than the normal form and there are modifications to the postures to accomodate a more martial aspect. The advanced fast training is not unique to Wu Jian Quan's Taijiquan and can be found in other Yang related lineages.

## **Modern Wu Jian Quan Style Taijiquan Sets**

Variations to the Wu Jian Quan style began with Wu Kong Yi who taught a form that was slightly different from that of his father. This is attributed by some to be because of his training with Yang Shao Hou but we have no verification for that.

In an effort to promote Wu Jian Quan Taijiquan, shorter sets were created as many people did not have the patience or the time to learn the long sequences of the traditional sets. One of these sets is the 37 posture Wu Jian Quan form developed by master Wang Pei Sheng, a student of master Yang Yu Ting. Mah Yueh Liang and Wu Ying Hwa have also created a shortened version of the traditional long set of only 30 postures.

These variations have certainly made Wu Jian Quan style Taijiquan easier to learn and savour. Whether they will retain their popularity remains to be seen. The original form of Wu Jian Quan will always hold a mystique that will beckon to a serious student of his lineage.

## **The Wu Jian Quan Style Spreads Across The World**

Through the efforts of Wu Jian Quan's sons, grandsons, great grandsons and students, his style of Taijiquan has spread across the world and ranks second only to the Yang style of Taijiquan in terms of popularity.

Wu Kong Yi was involved in a much publicised fight with Chen Hak Fu, a White Crane stylist half his age. That he could hold his own against a younger fighter established for many the credibility of the his style as a fighting art. For others, the fight was seen more like a brawl than a match between two highly skilled exponents but as Robert W. Smith, a respected authority on Asian martial arts, noted in his book when he showed a friend a film of a full contact Taiwanese-Hong Kong Tournament, the missing elements are contact and pain. It makes a vast difference and real fights seldom look as good as text book examples of applications. This is especially true when faced with exponents from two completely different styles of fighting.

Wu Kong Yi went on to establish schools across South East Asia and his sons continued this tradition and not too long ago, representatives of the Wu family have made North America their home, bringing their family art to the region.

## **Wu Jian Quan Style Taijiquan Today**

Wu Jian Quan style Taijiquan continues to grow in popularity and is spreading throughout the world through the efforts of its enthusiastic practitioners. And more and more material is becoming available in different languages on this style of Taijiquan.

This style of Taijiquan has remained relatively unsplintered due to the acknowledged leadership of the Jian Quan Taijiquan Association in Shanghai. Through the efforts of Mah Yueh Liang and Wu Ying Hwa, the family of Wu Jian Quan Taijiquan remains committed to promoting the art in the original spirit of its founder Wu Jian Quan.

## Part 7: The Development Of Sun Style Taijiquan

Sun style Taijiquan was developed by the famous martial artist Sun Lu Tang (1861-1932) also known as Sun Fu Quan. It contained the essence of his martial arts experience and techniques. Sun was famous also for his Pa Kua and Hsing-I which he learned from famous masters. He was already highly skilled when he came to learn Taijiquan and in the later part of his life, taught it as his preferred art.

Sun style Taijiquan is the most recently developed of the five major styles which were taught when Taijiquan was first made public. His great reputation as a martial artist made Sun a sought after master but Sun never taught his art to promote violence, he taught it to promote peace and good health. His form of Taijiquan incorporated what he felt were the key elements of Pa Kua and Hsing-I into the framework and theories of Taijiquan.

Having learnt from the great Hao Wei Chen (1849-1920). Sun's own form of Taijiquan retains many of its characteristics like the high standing and emphasis on opening and closing. With more emphasis on mobile stepping, Sun's Taijiquan is often referred to as the active step small form of Taijiquan.

In order to more fully understand Sun Taijiquan, we must first examine the arts which Sun Lu Tang studied and for which he was famous for. Even though Sun Lu Tang is a recent historical figure, there is much legendary material about him. Fortunately, his daughter Sun Jian Yun is still around to provide us authentic details into the life of her father. A diary of his which recorded his experiences in martial arts was stolen, a great loss to the martial arts community, perhaps one day it will be recovered and the precious wisdom of a great martial artist be shared with the martial artists of the world.

Through the efforts of Sun Lu Tang's family and students, and his great reputation as a martial artist, Sun style Taijiquan is quite well known and is practiced in many countries. Since the liberalisation of China, Sun Jian Yun, his daughter, has been able to meet with foreign enthusiasts adding new impetus to the promotion of the style. Sun Taijiquan stylists from China are also beginning to make their presence felt throughout the world. Both bringing the precious treasure of the life work of Sun Lu Tang and the spirit which he taught and lived to all.

### **Sun Lu Tang The Man**

Sun Lu Tang was born poor and physically weak, the son of a poor farmer. Though he was very poor, Sun's father bartered the produce he grew for Sun's education. Sun was a very intelligent child and progressed quickly in his studies. Unfortunately, he only managed to study for a few years. Due to a bad season, his father could not afford let him continue his studies and due to the Imperial Tax, his father was forced to sell all that he had. And to make the situation even worse, he died shortly after that.

So poor was Sun and his mother that in the end, his mother had to beg a rich man to take Sun in as a servant so that he would at least not go hungry. The man saw that Sun was frail and weak, so he said he would provide him with food but would not pay him any money. The man's son was a bully and would beat Sun any chance he got. For the sake of his mother, Sun endured the suffering and worked hard for his keep.

Later he studied martial arts with a local teacher, who was skilled in the external school of martial arts. Sun wanted to learn martial arts in the beginning because he didn't want to be bullied by the rich man's son. But he soon developed a genuine love for the martial arts. He was a quick study and his teacher taught him quickly. Later, because he injured a member of the rich man's family when he tried to beat him, he was fired from his job and returned home to his mother.

There, he was only interested in martial arts and would not work but spent his time practicing. In order to relieve his mother's burden, he often ate wild vegetables which he found in the country side. Things got so bad that he decided that he wouldn't be a burden on his mother any more and committed suicide by hanging himself. Fortunately for posterity, two men saw him hang himself and quickly cut him down, bringing him back to his mother. They told him that no matter how bad things got, it was not worth dying. They gave him some money and left.

Sun and his mother used the money to send Sun to live with his uncle. His uncle owned a calligraphy shop and Sun would help in his uncle's shop. His uncle was a kindly man and would not only feed and house him but also pay him for his work in the shop. Through his uncle's contacts, he met his first internal martial arts teacher and learned Hsing-I Quan.

Later, he would go and live with his teacher and train full time. To progress further, he would later learn Pa Kua under the famous Pa Kua master Cheng T'ing Hua. All this time, Sun was very respectful of his mother and made sure that she was well taken care of. So great was his love and respect of his mother that when he visited her grave, he would take a bow every five steps.

Sun taught at many places and because of his skill became a famous martial arts teacher. Always heeding his teachers' words, he always taught martial arts in terms of morality and never advocated violence and even turned away students who wanted to take up martial arts to learn how to fight. He once said that if somebody wanted to fight, he should use a gun.

Later Sun would meet up with Hao Wei Chen, the famous Wu Yu Xiang style Taijiquan master and learn Taijiquan from him. Sun later integrated Pa Kua and Hsing-I principles into his Taijiquan and developed his own style of Taijiquan. He also wrote books on the internal martial arts he practiced and these have become important works for the martial arts community.

There are many legends about the man but as Sun Jian Yun, his daughter, cautions, her father was an exceptional martial artist but he was not superhuman. Sun always stressed that the keys to success in martial arts was to persevere in correct practice.

### **Sun Lu Tang's First Martial Art**

Sun Lu Tang's first martial art was an external martial art. He learned Shaolin Hung Boxing from his teacher, surnamed Wu, who had studied for two years at the Shaolin Temple. He also learned the light work skill (qing gong) from his teacher.

His teacher was highly skilled and Sun was very talented. Sun gained a very good martial arts foundation from him and received a firm grounding for the internal martial arts.

### **Sun Lu Tang And Hsing-I Quan**

Sun Lu Tang got to meet his first Hsing-I Quan teacher through friends of his uncle. His uncle's scholar friend, surnamed Chang, was impressed with his calligraphy and allowed him to visit him at any time to learn more about calligraphy. During his spare time, Sun would also go over there to practice his martial arts. It was during one of these sessions that one of the scholar's friends, Li Kuei Yuan. Li found Sun to be intelligent and upright and having a good martial arts background. He offered to teach Sun Hsing-I Quan which he had learned from the famous Kuo Yun Shen.

Sun studied hard and soon learnt all that Li had to teach him. In order to help Sun progress further, Li recommended Sun to study under his teacher Kuo Yun Shen and went with Sun to study under Kuo together. Kuo was very impressed with the progress Sun had made in Hsing-I Quan and taught him diligently. So agile was Sun at his Hsing-I that Kuo nicknamed him the 'lively monkey'.

Kuo worked Sun hard and taught him all he knew. After eight years, he graduated Sun and presented to him the Hsing-I manual he had received from his (Kuo) teacher Li Neng Jan. Kuo told Sun that in order to improve his martial arts further, he should take up Pa Kua Chang from his friend Cheng T'ing Hua.

### **Sun Lu Tang And Pa Kua Chang**

Sun Lu Tang went and studied under the great Pa Kua Chang master Cheng T'ing Hua (?-1900). Cheng himself was one of the best students of the great modern founder of Pa Kua Chang, Dong Hai Chuan.

When Sun first met Cheng, he was soundly defeated and was greatly impressed with Pa Kua Chang. He practiced diligently and eventually learnt all that Cheng had to teach him. It was here that Sun gained his speed in foot work, a skill which gained him fame.

Sun began Pa Kua Chang relatively late in life, at around 30 years of age but his perseverance and constant regular hard practice gained him great proficiency. He stayed with Cheng for 3 years. After 3 years, Cheng graduated him and told him that if he wanted to improve he needed to go out into the world and test himself. It was Cheng that changed Sun's given name from Fu Quan to Lu Tang.

For the rest of his life he was known more by the name of Sun Lu Tang than by his old name Sun Fu Quan. Sun's Pa Kua Chang came from the Cheng lineage and retained much the same syllabus but Sun's exceptional speed on his feet made his Pa Kua Chang truly magnificent.

### **Sun Lu Tang Learns Taijiquan**

Sun Lu Tang was already a highly skilled and relatively famous martial artist by the time he learnt Taijiquan. Hao Wei Chen was visiting Beijing and being unfamiliar with the territory was not able to meet up with his friends who lived there. Having no other alternative, Hao had checked into an inn and subsequently fell ill. Not something very unusual for those of us who have travelled to unfamiliar regions.

In any case, Sun Lu Tang came to hear about it and went to visit him. Hao Wei Chen already had a reputation of being a highly accomplished martial artist and Sun was in the habit of visiting highly accomplished martial artists to make their acquaintance and to exchange knowledge. Sun went to visit him to make his acquaintance, having heard that he was a great

master but did not know at the time that the art practiced by Hao was Taijiquan. When he found Hao sick in bed, he took care of him and even got a doctor to treat him. Hao eventually recovered from his illness and was very grateful to Sun for looking after him. It must have been hard being ill and alone in a very big city full of strangers.

In gratitude, Hao taught Sun Taijiquan, Wu Yu Xiang style Taijiquan to be exact. Hao himself had studied personally under Wu Yu Xiang's nephew Li I Yu and was a native of Yung Nien where Yang Lu Chan, Wu Yu Xiang and Li I Yu lived. Sun, being already highly skilled, learnt the art from Hao and became accomplished in it. He was now a master of the three internal martial arts.

### **Sun Lu Tang Develops His Own Style**

Sun Lu Tang had studied and mastered the three internal styles. He continued to study them and to research into their theories, refining them and constantly improving his art.

Later, Sun would crystalise his teaching, experience and methods into his own style of Taijiquan. It was primarily based on Hao's Wu Yu Xiang style Taijiquan. That he chose Taijiquan as his final art expressing the essence of his art is indicative. He is supposed to have incorporated the rapid foot work of Pa Kua with the leg and waist methods of Hsing-I with the soft body of Wu Yu Xiang's Taijiquan. In actual terms of the form, it retains many characteristics of the form Hao taught him as well as the sequence of postures.

The postures themselves have not changed all that much, retaining the original applications and still resemble very much the Wu Yu Xiang style as taught by the Hao family. What is evident is that the stepping is more active and smaller, the hand techniques differ only marginally and some Hsing-I characteristics are evident.

In his later years, he preferred to teach Taijiquan rather than Pa Kua or Hsing-I. He was very capable in his application of his Taijiquan and Sun Lu Tang, the great Pa Kua and Hsing-I master, was also now acknowledged as a great Taijiquan master.

Sun was not selfish with his art and wrote several books on them to share them with martial artist everywhere. These books remain important references for the serious martial artist and some contain valuable photographs of Sun's form in the three internal martial arts.

### **Sun Taijiquan Today**

With Sun Jian Yun's presence made available, the Sun style Taijiquan practitioners around the world have access to the direct transmission of Sun Lu Tang via his daughter who was privy to many of the private aspects of his life and art. The popularity of Sun Taijiquan has grown because of that and through continuing efforts of the teachers of this style of Taijiquan is being spread to every corner of the world.

The Taijiquan community throughout the world continues to regard Sun Taijiquan as an authentic expression of the internal arts and one of the major styles of the art. Sun Lu Tang's martial art and spirit continues to bring health, morals and martial skills to all those who practice the system.

## Part 8: The Development Of Zhao Bao Style Taijiquan

Of the popular styles of Taijiquan that have come into prominence in recent years, the Zhao Bao style Of Taijiquan is probably the most well known. Not to mention also one of the most controversial. There are two differing views on the origins of Zhao Bao Taijiquan and both have some logic to their claims.

We shall try to clarify what actually happened in the light of these two claims and present a plausible explanation to the confusion that exists today. Documentation on the Zhao Bao style is scarce and there are few published works to refer to. The Zhao Bao style is becoming increasingly popular and has spread to different countries. Perhaps in the future more primary and secondary sources will become available.

From Zhao Bao style comes a lesser known style of Hu Lei or Hu Long Jia Taijiquan. This style is just becoming known in the West and is arousing considerable interest. Works pertaining to this style are even harder to come by and investigation has been difficult because of this. But as the style is ultimately related to Zhao Bao style and its origins, more time has been devoted to the Zhao Bao style.

### **The Origin Theories Of Zhao Bao Taijiquan**

There are two primary theories concerning Zhao Bao style Taijiquan. One comes from the Chen Villiage and the other from the Zhao Bao Villiage itself. Both, however, have the nexus on one key personage: Chen Qing Ping.

Of this noted personage we can only be certain of a few things. Chen Qing Ping had married and moved to the Zhao Bao Villiage which was his wife's home villiage. There he taught Taijiquan and had considerable influence. How he got the art is at the centre of the differences in opinion.

We shall examine the individual claims by themselves and then view them in the context of each other in an effort to determine the truth.

### **Claim 1: That The Chen Villiage Originated The Art**

This claim was first put forth by Gu Liu Xin based on Chen Xin's seminal work on Chen style Taijiquan. In it, Chen Xin had written a family manual and that manual stated that Chen Xin had learnt his art from Chen You Ben and transmitted the art to the Zhao Bao Villiage.

Chen You Ben is widely acknowledged as the founder of the `new' style of Chen Taijiquan. We do not know for sure if he did know Taijiquan since it is disputed that the Chen Villiage did not invent Taijiquan since their claims have been proven untenable. In any case, Chen Qing Ping was supposed to have studied the Chen family arts from him and that is not what is in dispute. There is not very much material available on the `new' style and on the basis of postures there is not much variance with the `old' style.

This claim is the most widely believed due to the popularity of the works of Gu Liu Xin and Tang Hao. It was only in recent years with the liberation of China permitting more freedom that the Zhao Bao claims have been published and given air to. Beyond the recent work of Chen Xin, there is no other primary collaboration on it.

## **Claim 2: Zhiang Fa Transmitted The Art To Zhao Bao**

In the recently published works of the Zhao Bao Taijiquan masters, there is a common belief that the art did not come from the Chen Villiage but instead was transmitted down by Jiang Fa, whose teacher was Wang Tsung Yueh, and that the art ultimately came from the Wudang mountain. This is in keeping with the early Chen references like that of Du Yu Wan.

The Zhao Bao masters hold that the art was first transmitted to the villiage by Jiang Fa who had once lived in the Zhao Bao villiage. Their placing of the date for Zhiang Fa puts him as a Ming Dynasty personage and could reflect an influence coming from the Chen Villiage on the placing of the dates. In any case, the old manuals in the Zhao Bao villiage record that the art came down from Jiang Fa.

This art passed down several generations to Zhang Yan who was supposed to have taught it to Chen Qing Ping and does not preclude the possibility that Chen Qing Ping was already skilled in the Chen family arts. The characteristics of Zhao Bao Taijiquan seem to bear this out.

Not all the Zhao Bao masters come down from Chen Qing Ping's lineage, some have come down from Chen Qing Ping's contemporaries and so it seems that the contention that Chen Qing Ping founded Zhao Bao Taijiquan may not be tenable.

### **The Zhao Bao Form**

There are two forms of Taijiquan practiced in the Zhao Bao Villiage, one set consisting of 74 postures and another consisting of 108 postures. The postures within these routines are, however, identical so it is really just a matter of arrangement.

The postures resembles the Chen style of Taijiquan but way it is practiced, it resembles more the other major styles of Taijiquan. This makes it quite distinct from Chen style Taijiquan. There are postures in the form that are not found in Chen style Taijiquan but is evident in the other major styles and Zhao Bao style.

We need to note that the Zhao Bao Villiage and the Chen Villiage is in close proximity and so many common arts were practiced. It is entirely possible that Chen style Pao Chui was also practiced in the villiage and later softened by Jiang Fa which parallels what may have occurred in the Chen Villiage.

The form can be done in three heights and in two speeds. Each to achieve a different goal in training. There is only one type of push hands done at the Zhao Bao Villiage and that is moving step push hands. Zhao Bao Taijiquan does not have fixed step or fixed stance push hands. It also has its own weapons sets, two man sets and even its own neigong practice.

### **The Zhao Bao Classics**

The Zhao Bao style Taijiquan lineage has the full complement of Taijiquan Classics in common with the rest of the major styles including the works of Wang Tsung Yueh. But unique to the Zhao Bao style is the 9 important treatises. No one knows who wrote them but for the Zhao Bao practitioners, these 9 treatises are very important and hold pride of place in the Classic writings as they are unique to their style.

### **Zhao Bao Taijiquan Today**

Zhao Bao Taijiquan has now spread to many countries and is making an impact in the West. More and more publications are also becoming available for this unique style of Taijiquan and there is a growing interest in it. The style has since become acknowledged as one of the major styles of Taijiquan by the current masters of the art.

Zhao Bao Taijiquan also spawned an increasing popular style called Hu Lei or Hu Long Jia. Created by a student of Chen Qing Ping with input from another art, it is making its presence felt in the West.

### **Hu Lei or Hu Long Jia Taijiquan**

This style of Taijiquan is becoming popular in the West in recent years. It was developed from the Zhao Bao style of Taijiquan and still retains many of its characteristics. The creator of this style was Li Jing Ting.

Li was a student of Chen Qing Ping and resided in the Zhao Bao Villiage. Hu Lei Jia Taijiquan is often classified under Chen style Taijiquan, much like Zhao Bao style is until recently when the Zhao Bao masters made it very clear that this was a misunderstanding promoted by Tang Hao and Gu Liu Xin. Hu Lei Jia Taijiquan is actually Zhao Bao Taijiquan as taught by Li Jing Ting.

Li spent most of his life around the Fu Ai area in China and there he taught his art. He also interacted with local martial artists and came into contact with styles like the Wang Bao Spear and Yun Qi Chui. All these could have had an influence on his final style.

The form itself consists of 74 postures and is almost identical to the Zhao Bao form. Due to the fact that the early practitioners of Li's lineage were illiterate, much of the information passed down was via oral transmission. This has led to some changes in the wordings handed down. For example, the style is also know as Hu Long Taijiquan. The name Hu Long comes from a name given to the jing usage in the form called `Hu Long Jing' or Sudden Dragon Jing. Hu Lei translates as Sudden Lightning.

The art has been popularised both in China and Taiwan and in recent years by Adam Hsu in North America. There has yet to be a book to be released about this style of Taijiquan and articles in the East and in the West are few and far between.

## Part 9: The Popular Modern Styles Of Taijiquan

Other than the major forms described so far, there are other popular forms of more modern origin. These have become notable in recent years and there is a good number of exponents who practice nothing else.

Some of these forms come from noted masters of the art and are their personal expression of the system which they learnt or those who have created new sequences unique to themselves and their students. Others are forms created for competition and for general health care.

Regardless of origin, these new forms have a definite influence and place in the martial art and health care communities and should be covered in the interest of furthering our knowledge into the expressions of the art.

### **The China National Forms**

Some of the most popular forms practiced today are forms developed by the Chinese government to promote the art both as a form of health exercise and as a sport. The first of these forms was the 24 posture simplified Taijiquan form developed in 1956. This form is by far the most popular of the national forms since the public has been exposed to this form for much longer.

Later a long 88 posture form was standardised. Both these early forms were based on the Yang style of Taijiquan and the postures within are essentially the same. These forms were taught to the masses in China as a form of healthy exercise and do not really stress the martial aspects of the form.

With the adoption of Wushu as an Olympic demonstration sport, the Chinese government has also increased the promotion of competition Taijiquan routines. There is one such shortened routine for each of the major styles of Taijiquan as well as forms that combine aspects of all the different styles of Taijiquan. These amalgamated forms do not contain all the techniques of the individual styles but only some selected techniques representative of the different parent styles.

The competition forms are now taught all over the world to competitors and to people who simply want to take it up for health. Because of the official recognition by the Chinese government and the Olympic Council for these forms, they have become the forms of choice for many people.

### **The Shorter Yang Form Of Zheng Man Qing**

Without doubt, the most influential of these new forms in the West is the 37 posture shortened Yang form of Zheng Man Qing. Zheng was a disciple of the great master Yang Cheng Fu. Zheng developed the short form to enable the art to be learnt more quickly and to be less time consuming so that it can be practiced easily with modern day hectic schedules.

Zheng's great skill in Taijiquan made his form very popular. Today it is one of the predominant forms practiced in the West. Many of Zheng's students are today noted masters of the art and continue to promote his short form for both health and self-defence.

The shortened form is still Yang style Taijiquan but with the repetitions and some postures removed. The theories and techniques remain unchanged. Almost all of Zheng's works on Taijiquan have been translated into English and their influence is substantial.

The form is mostly extent in East Asia and in America, the two places where Zheng lived. The impact that Zheng and his form has on the Taijiquan community at large is great. His contribution to the art was substantial.

### **The Tung Family Taijiquan**

The Tung family Taijiquan began with Tung Ying Chieh who was a student of Yang Cheng Fu. Before studying with Yang Cheng Fu, however, Tung had already studied the Wu Yu Xiang style of Taijiquan from Li Xiang Yun.

Later he would make the Yang style his main form. In addition to the traditional Yang style forms, Tung also created a fast form of Taijiquan unique to his lineage. This fast form was based on the fast form of Wu Yu Xiang style Taijiquan and Yang style Taiji Long Boxing. This new form was taught as an advanced form to worthy students.

Tung's ability at Taijiquan made him a sought after master and he later moved to Hong Kong and popularised the art there. Today, the Tung family Taijiquan has spread across the world to countries like America, England, Europe, Australia and in regions like South East Asia. The Tung family continues to teach their art to a growing number of enthusiasts.

### **The Shorter Chen Forms of Chen Xiao Wang and Feng Zhi Qiang**

Chen Style Taijiquan masters like Chen Xiao Wang and Feng Zhi Qiang have also developed shorter sets to help popularise their form of Taijiquan. Chen Xiao Wang created a shorter set comprising of postures from both the Xin Jia and the Lao Jia of Chen Taijiquan. He currently resides in Australia where he continues to promote Chen Taijiquan.

Feng Zhi Qiang is a noted disciple of Chen Fa Ke. He has been a major moving force behind the popularisation of Chen Taijiquan. With his many years of experience he created a shorter Chen set based on the Lao Jia which he learnt from his master. The set is somewhat longer than the one developed by Chen Xiao Wang but is gaining popularity through Feng's books and promotional efforts.

### **The Kwang Ping Taijiquan Of Kuo Lien Ying**

Kuo Lien Ying was one of the few mainland Chinese Taijiquan masters to make his home in America. Skilled in both external and internal boxing, he was a respected boxer in China. He later moved to Taiwan and then to America. Kuo had learnt his Taijiquan from Wang Chiao Yu in Beijing from a young age. Wang himself was a student under Yang Pan Hou.

An examination of Kuo's Taijiquan shows characteristics of Yang Pan Hou's Taijiquan but it differs somewhat from the old Yang form. Kuo called his form Kwang Ping Taijiquan after the city of Kwang Ping where the Yangs had taught for a while. He did it to differentiate it from the more extent forms of Taijiquan which he felt did not contain all the theories of Taijiquan and that the form he had learnt represent the whole transmission as taught by the Yangs in the city of Kwang Ping before going into the Imperial Court. It should be noted that Kuo's form is not practiced in Kwang Ping city.

Today, Kuo's Taijiquan tradition is being carried on by his wife Simmone Kuo and his son. Based in San Francisco, the style continues its growth primarily in the United States where the number of its practitioners continues to increase.

### **Fu Zhen Song's Taijiquan**

Fu Zhen Song was primarily noted as a Pa Kua master and is famous for his creation of the Dragon Form Pa Kua Chang art. He was also skilled in the art of Chen Taijiquan whom he learnt from Chen Ting Xi. Inspired by the principles of Taijiquan, he incorporated the key elements of Pa Kua Chang into several new Taijiquan forms he created. Fu created unique Taijiquan forms like Fu Style Taijiquan, Taiji Lightning Palm and Taiji Lightning Fist. He was one of the Canton Five Tigers and became head instructor of the Central Guo Shu Institute in 1928.

Fu's Dragon Form Pa Kua Chang contains two man push hand sets like Taijiquan and Fu's Taijiquan has the Dragon like characteristics of his Pa Kua Chang. Today, the Fu family continues to teach these forms of Taijiquan which is unique and differ from the more traditional styles.

### **Chen Pan Ling's Taijiquan**

Chen Pan Ling was one of the greatest modern masters of Chinese martial arts. Both a scholar and a great master, Chen had studied under noted masters in his youth and continued to research Chinese martial arts theory and history until his death in 1967.

Chen Pan Ling had the good opportunity to go to the Chen Villiage to study their arts and also to study under Yang Shao Hou, Wu Jian Quan, Xu Yu Sheng, etc. He also associated with great masters of Taijiquan and learnt much from them. The result of his studies was his own form of Taijiquan that is mainly based on the Yang style and Wu styles he learnt from Xu Yu Sheng, Yang Shao Hou and Wu Jian Quan. It is unusual but there is no evidence of Chen Taijiquan input in the form. The information about Du Yu Wan's Taijiquan in the Chen Villiage does provide the possibility that the Taijiquan Chen Pan Ling learnt at the Chen Villiage was a set similar to that of the Yang school rather than the current Chen Taijiquan.

Chen was also an expert at Hsing-I and Pa Kua and he created some basic practice sets that reflect such influences in his art. The old sequence of learning is preserved with single posture training and fast form training.

### **The Chang Style Of Taijiquan**

The Chang Style Taijiquan is the name given to the Taijiquan set created by Fan Su Fen. She had studied since she was seven years old. Learning Shaolin, Tung Bei, Hsing-I, Pa Kua, Old Yang Taijiquan, qigong, Xin Yi Liu He, Mien Quan, Liu He Pa Fa, Chen Taijiquan from noted teachers like Gu Liu Xin, Wang Qing Jian, Wan Lai Sheng, Wang Ju Rong, etc.

She later studied and made her main style the old Wu Jian Quan style of Chang Yun Jia, whose father Chang Yun Ting had studied with Quan Yu, the founder of the Wu Jian Quan style. Fan integrated the best parts of all the arts she had learnt into the form taught to her by Chang and developed a unique style of Taijiquan. The form itself is low and has postures from both the Old Yang Form, the Old Wu Jian Quan Form. Out of respect for her teacher, she named the new form Chang style Taijiquan.

The Chang style of Taijiquan was first taught in 1981 and through books, classes and a television series teaching it, has become quite popular. Today the form continues to spread in popularity primarily in China and Taiwan.

### **The Li Style Of Taijiquan**

The Li style of Taijiquan was created by Li Wan Dong who was a student of Wang Lan Ting, a treasured student of Yang Lu Chan, and Gan Yan Ran, the grandson of the great internal boxing master Gan Feng Chi. From his two teachers, Li learnt the Wudang internal Taijiquan arts.

Li's Taijiquan form has elements of the Yang Small Frame, the Yang Old Frame and has all three heights of training in the same form. Li was fortunate to receive Wang Lan Ting's boxing manual which Wang had gotten from Yang Lu Chan. Inside it we find several interesting works including a much extended Five Word Formula with unique theories. The Five Word Formula coming down from Yang Pan Hou through Wu Meng Xia is contained within it.

Also contained is the Chen Chang Xin Preface which is purportedly an original document from Chen Chang Xin delineating the details of his teacher Jiang Fa. The information within agrees with some of the earlier testimonies of old masters who had trained under Yang Lu Chan. The letter was given to Wang Lan Ting by Yang Lu Chan, possibly because Yang was illiterate, who in turned gave it to Li Wan Dong.

## Historical Series Notes

1. The Ten Important Points of Chen Chang Xin were first published by Chen Ji Pu also known as Chen Zhao Pi in his book in 1935. Chen Xin's book which was published earlier has no record of these ten discourses. These Ten Discourses are not present in the Yang writings or the commonly accepted classic writings. We are unable to ascertain the authenticity of these writings.

2. Chang San Feng was supposed to have studied at the Shaolin Temple and was proficient in Shaolin martial arts. Later, he became interested in Taoism and incorporated its principles and Dao Yin practices into his art, utilising very different principles from the Shaolin school. His art was very different and was not as demonstrative as the Shaolin school but could be effective against it. To differentiate this new art from the existing Shaolin school and other schools of martial arts that utilised similar principles, people started calling Chang San Feng's art Internal Boxing since it was based on non-aggressive, non-vigorous principles as opposed to the aggressive and vigorous forms of martial arts which were termed External Boxing.

3. Chen Xin did write a book on the art of Tai Ch'i Chuan called 'Chen Shi Tai Ch'i Chuan' which does not mention this story but attributes the creation of the art to Chen Pu, the patriarch of the Chen family. We need to note, however, that the book was published four years after his death and that he had three collaborators. It was they that published the book and in the four years after Chen Xin's death, it is very possible that substantial editing took place. How much of the book is Chen Xin's work and how much of it was edited after his death is uncertain. So there may not be an actual contradiction in Wu Tu Nan's material and Chen Xin's book.

4. An examination of Old Yang Form reveals similar postures to Gan Feng Chi's boxing. Gan was a noted Internal Boxing expert. Postures like 'Playing the Lute', 'Cross Hands', 'Double Fist To Ears' (including the characteristic head to knee smash) and 'Carry Tiger Back To Mountain' are present in both forms. These postures are absent from the current Chen style of Tai Ch'i Chuan but some are present in the Zhao Bao form. Zhao Bao style Tai Ch'i Chuan also traces their art back to Jiang Fa.

5. This theory was first published by Fu Zhong Wen who did extensive research into it. It has since been accepted by the majority of Yang style exponents.

6. This is not to be confused with the Southern Shaolin Hung Gar Boxing which was created by Hung Xi Guan. Shaolin Hung Quan is an old form consisting of two routines, the small Hung Quan and the large Hung Quan. Shaolin Hung Quan is still taught and practiced at the Shaolin Temple to this day. Because of the similar phonetics, this should also not be confused with the Shaolin Red Fist which was one of the types of boxing practiced in the Chen Villiage and probably had some influence on the Chen style of Tai Ch'i Chuan.

7. The story goes that Yang was invited to the abode of a rich man in Beijing called Chang who had heard of Yang's great skills to demonstrate his art. Yang Lu Chan was small of build and did not look like a boxer, when Chang saw him, he thought little of his ability and so served him a very simple dinner. Yang Lu Chan was fully aware of his host's thoughts but continued to behave like an honoured guest. Chang later questioned if Yang's Tai Ch'i, being so soft, could defeat people. Given that he invited Yang on the basis of his reputation as a great fighter, this question was clearly a veiled insult. Yang replied that there were only three kinds of people he could not defeat: men of brass, men of iron and men of wood. Chang

invited out his best bodyguard by the name of Liu to test Yang's skill. Liu entered aggressively and attacked Yang. Yang used only a simple yielding and threw Liu across the yard. Chang was very impressed and immediately ordered a sumptuous dinner to be prepared for Yang. He later asked Yang to work for him, offering him a large sum of money. Yang, knowing the character of Chang, courteously refused the offer.

8. An interesting story comes down to us concerning the quality of Yang's teaching in the Imperial Court. The princes of the Manchu court were very often skilled in martial arts. Emperors like Chien Long were skilled martial artists. Among Yang's students at the Imperial Court were several princes. One day one of them went to visit his brother to practice with him, as his brother prince was not at home, he practiced instead with his brother prince's three bodyguards who were also students of Yang Lu Chan. This prince easily defeated them and when his brother prince returned, he berated him saying: "Who is protecting who brother? Your bodyguards you or you your bodyguards?" Yang Lu Chan and the three bodyguards were summoned and they were questioned on why the skills of the the three bodyguards (they were highly skilled martial artists already having studied other arts) were below that of the princes. The reason was revealed that the bodyguards had many duties in the imperial household and they could not spare the time to train diligently as the princes had. Discovering this reason, the prince lightened the workload of the three bodyguards and asked Yang Lu Chan to train them harder. These three bodyguards eventually became Yang Lu Chan's top three disciples, one of them Quan Yu went on to found the Wu form of Tai Ch'i Chuan.

9. Quan Yu was actually a disciple of Yang Lu Chan but because it was unseemingly that non-royalty were boxing brothers of the royal princes, in some cases, senior boxing brothers. Under Yang Lu Chan's order, all the non-royal disciples bowed down to Yang Lu Chan's son Yang Ban Hou as master. This way the princes were a generation above their staff.

10. Yang Shao Hou's Small Frame, however, retains this old sequence of techniques. This supports the attribution that his Small Frame was the work of Yang Lu Chan.

11. Apparently Tang Yan Kai, the first Prime Minister of the Republic of China was cured of his serious illness after taking up the art. Hence forth Tai Ch'i Chuan has always been viewed as an art that had great curative powers.

12. There are actually three books that are directly related to Yang Cheng Fu. Chen Wei Ming's book "Tai Ch'i Chuan Shu" was written on request of Yang Cheng Fu to record down his oral teachings, it was published in 1925. The second book "Tai Ch'i Chuan Shi Yung Fa" was authored by himself but its language was not so refined so it was quickly taken out of circulation, it was published in 1931. The third "Tai Ch'i Chuan Ti Yung Quan Shu" was written for him by Cheng Man Ching (confirmed by Yang Cheng Fu's son Yang Zheng Ji) based on his teachings, it was published in 1934. He was to have written a second companion volume to document the sword, broadsword, spear, halberd and other weapons. He died before this second volume was completed. We do not know if he began writing it at all and if he did, what happened to the manuscripts if any existed.

13. There is an interesting anecdote attached to this activity. It seems that Yang Lu Chan once inquired about how Yang Ban Hou, his second son, was doing at his studies. Wu Yu Xiang told him that Ban Hou was not good at his studies but very good at studying martial arts. Where upon Yang asked Wu Yu Xiang to let Ban Hou concentrate more on his martial arts.

14. There is an interesting story on how this weapon came about. Yang Lu Chan was famous for his skill with the spear as was his oldest son, Fung Hou. Yang Feng Hou was good natured but his younger brother Yang Ban Hou was bellicos and prone to fights. Because Yang Pan Hou's mother feared that her son might harm somebody seriously in practice and teaching, she removed the spear head from the weapon. The Long Staff is therefore the spear techniques of Yang Taijiquan.

15. According to Mah Yueh Liang, Quan Yu synthesized the Old Yang Form and the Yang Small Frame, forming a new set. The Yang Small Frame set that comes down from Gong Tian Ren who was a student of Yang Lu Chan/Yang Ban Hou is almost identical so this probably didn't occur. But it is entirely possible that Quan Yu knew both sets.

16. Another reason given for Yang Lu Chan's retirement was the early death of one of his most favoured students from small pox. Yang was heart broken and retired from service from the Imperial Court and returned to Yung Nien.

# Traditional Yang Style Training Sequence

*By Peter Lim Tian Tek*

The Yang style of Tai Ch'i Chuan is the most popular form of Tai Ch'i Chuan in the world today. It is practiced all over the world for health and self-defence. The training sequence in modern classes seem to be first doing the form then followed by correction of the individual postures. The traditional method of learning was quite different.

The traditional training sequence can be arduous, long and difficult. We hear of Yang Pan Hou running away from home to escape it and Yang Jian Hou attempting suicide by hanging himself because of it. So harsh was the training in the old days. Wu Tu Nan, who died recently, was made to train under a high table to make sure that he did his form in a low strenuous manner but retained relaxed nature of the art. Yang Zheng Ji, Yang Cheng Fu's son recalls the training he and his brothers had to go through under his illustrious father where after the training he didn't even have the strength to walk up the stairs to his room and had to crawl up on all fours. The postures were done until they got it absolutely right if they made repeated mistakes they were beaten. Training was even more important than their school studies and was their first priority. So harsh was the training, even for such young children.

One thing to note before we go on is that the Yang Postures are learnt in a very extended manner and only later are they refined to using smaller movements to achieve the same effect and at a later stage, expanded again so that each point along the large movement contains an application.

## Basic

### Single Posture Training (Tan Lian)

Here is where the posture in its static form is learnt. All the aspects that contribute to proper structure, rooting and chin development are also taught at this stage. Examples of these aspects are breathing into the abdomen, hollowing the chest and raising the back, sinking the eblows, sinking the kwa, no double weighting, etc.

Here the posture is held statically and gravity allowed to act to allow it to guide the student to an efficient structure held with the minimum effort. Important here is the ability to root stably, the 8 stabilities (Ba Wen) are emphasized, this entails being stable when force is applied to the posture from the 8 cardinal directions, one at a time, this trains proper rooting and strong legs.

To be very clear, this learning of connection is not termed peng or peng jing. In chinese, peng does not denote total body coordination acting towards a point, that is jing. At this time students are yet to develop the proper connection and coordination to manifest jing. They simply develop the ability to allow the centre of gravity to act downward using the leg structure.

At this level, all the aspects of the posture are scrutinised very closely to make sure that the student does not pick up any bad habits that will affect his progress latter on. The chinese have a saying pertaining to this 'easy to learn boxing, hard to correct it' (xue chuan yong yi, gai chuan nan). The bad habits are caught and corrected at this initial stage rather than corrected later when they have become more 'ingrained'. The period of time held for each

posture varies from teacher to teacher though stories coming down have indicated that the standing time for each posture could be as long as 2 hours. This is practiced till the posture's alignment, aspects and focus have 'set', normally this would usually last for about a month per posture.

### **Single Moving Posture Training (Tan Xing Lian)**

Here movement is added to the static posture. All the aspects learnt above are retained. Here is where the student begins to learn about jing and its manifestation through proper coordinative movement of the body.

The application of the posture is also taught here but the individual chins that contribute to its effectiveness are not studied in detail, that comes later. The movement here is taught to be smooth, continuous, like reeling silk, i.e. it is slow, steady and continuous. Sensitivity and relaxation in motion is also trained here, with the emphasis on the movement likened to 'swimming in air' till the air acquires a heavy quality. The origins of the movements in opening and closing and Tun Tu (swallowing and spitting) are also taught here.

The addition of motion and a start and end point of the posture usually caused some of the aspects to be lost along the path of the movement and so close scrutiny was again applied to make sure the student didn't pick up any bad habits. The points usually checked for was proper structure, proper chin generation from the feet and directed by the waist and back, proper rooting and transference of root, smoothness, continuity of motion and lightness. The posture was repeated over and over again until it was perfected, normally this would take another month of training per posture at this stage.

## **Intermediate**

### **Walking Training (Jou Lian)**

The above two steps occur for each posture and then this step is added. The moving posture is linked to the previous one learnt in sequence. Then a new posture is learnt beginning again with single posture training. During Jou Lian, the emphasis is to learn a smooth transition between the postures whilst retaining all the qualities and aspects learned and trained when learning the postures. The whole process is repeated till the entire Jou Jia or walking sequence also known as the form or pattern is learnt. The linking of the newly learnt posture with the previously learnt one in the sequence is usually not very smooth at the start and it takes practice to smoothen out the flow. The momentum from the beginning to the end of the form should remain the same one momentum.

Sometimes certain postures make more sense when they are linked in sequence with others. With the combination of two or more postures a deeper understanding of how they work together in sequence is learnt. The transition of the root from one leg to another is also much more important now as is stability and agility in motion and sometimes this is tested by the teacher to ensure that all the aspects are retained.

### **Form Training (Jou Jia)**

Form Training Occurs throughout the training of the art, from the very beginning to the highest levels. The Middle Frame is practiced initially and at advanced levels the Fast Frame,

Low Frame, High Frame and Large Frame are practiced. These methods of doing the form derive from Yang Pan Hou and Yang Chien Hou.

### ***Medium Frame (Zhong Jia)***

After the entire sequence has been learnt, for a time the practice is confined to the middle height which is the way the form was initially learnt. The objective is to further train in the aspects and the flow of the form as well as improving the moving root. This in time builds up the body in the development and usage of internal strength as well as the focus for each posture and the transition of the energies.

### ***Fast Frame (Quai Jia)***

The next stage of training of the form is to increase the speed of the form and to move from mainly stationary step to moving step for some of the techniques, the same aspects should be retained despite the increase in speed, the postures during this are also a little lower than in the middle height (from now on referred to as the medium frame). Agility is a key goal of this level of training, rooted in Tai Ch'i Chuan is not dead rooting where one is stuck to the ground but a rooted agility that is stable in motion. Flow is very important in this stage of motion as it is easily lost when performing the movements at speed.

An example of the set practiced at this stage is Yang Cheng Fu's Tai Ch'i Long Boxing. The sequence varied somewhat from the normal set but most of the techniques remained the same. This kind of training is more combat oriented though the focus is still on the flow, changes and utilisation of energy rather fixed martial applications, this aids in formless application. At this stage of training the set is often called the 'fast frame' (quai jia).

### ***Low Frame (Di Jia)***

After gaining stability, agility and speed without losing the aspects that make good Tai Ch'i Chuan, the next level is to train endurance and proper alignment at a low height. Here the speed is almost as slow as the middle frame but the postures are done very low with knees about parallel to the ground and later even lower. In lowering the height, one should not sacrifice the aspects which ensure that the posture can be held with the minimum of effort. The progress to this level should be gradual and not rushed, rushing it could cause a lot of bad habits to be picked up resulting in a loss of all the benefits learnt earlier.

Yang Shao Hou and Yang Pan Hou used to make their students practice under a kind of high table which was used in the kitchen for the preparation of food. One should not lose agility and proper structure even at this low height. It trains also suppleness of the body and builds up the musculature and structure for truly great and explosive power generation. But one must bear in mind that the goal of Tai Ch'i Chuan is not the generation of great power but how to beat a great power with a lesser one, great power appropriately applied yields much more than the same brutishly applied. The form at this level of training is called the 'low frame' (di jia).

### ***High Frame (Gao Jia)***

A good root is not based on a low stance but rather on the good connection path from the centre of mass down to the ground so that any force applied on to the mass is directed downwards through the connection path to ground via the legs. Also techniques can be refined so that the same effect can be achieved with a minimum of movement. A combination of

these two requirements gives rise to this level of training where rooted agility and efficient technique are the goals of training. After training the root connection and suppleness in the low frame, this next level of training applies this in refinement. Here the energy is refined until it could be concentrated and released to a point, any point on the body for that matter.

The high frame of training is also evident in the Wu Yu Xiang lineage in which the stances are higher and the movements smaller and more condensed. Yang Cheng Fu's son Yang Zheng Ji practices his form in this high frame. Because of its high standing characteristic, the form at this level of training is called the 'high frame' (gao jia).

### ***Large Frame (Da Jia)***

After refining the technique so that a minimum of effort and movement is required to effect it, the form once again expands out to the proportions of the medium frame, again with large movements and stable steps.

Why so? Though externally these two frames of training appear much alike, in this level of training each part of the movement contains within it a technique. Does it mean that one should be conscious of the specific application throughout? No, this is because what is trained is the transition of energy to counter energy, so only the movement of energy is savoured.

In any attack, it is the energy behind the attacking limb or implement that is the effecting force, so Tai Ch'i Chuan deals with this rather than just merely the physical limb or implement. An understanding of how energy is applied in countering such attacking energy has been built up through all the different frames of training. So at this level of training, the transition of energy throughout the technique has meaning. This is the meaning of the feet, inches, hundredth parts and thousandth parts in Tai Ch'i Chuan.

Yang Cheng Fu practiced his form in this large frame where the energy is internalised. Such was his control over it that he was never defeated. Most practitioners of the Yang style perform the large frame (in reality only doing the medium frame since Yang Chien Hou's form was just as extended) of Yang Cheng Fu and slowly seek to refine the understanding of the energy within the form to a point where each part of the technique has meaning. Because of the large movements of Yang Cheng Fu's form, this type of form is called the 'large frame' (da jia).

## **Advanced Intermediate**

### **Push Hands Or Hitting Hands (Tui Shou, Da Shou)**

Here is where the chin learnt in the form is broken down, isolated and specifically analysed and studied. At the first stage of push hands, the first 4 of the 8 chins of Tai Ch'i Chuan (aka the first 4 effecting chins of the first 4 posture of the 13 are learnt), i.e. Peng chin, Lu chin, Ji chin, An chin. They are studied in terms of their specific characteristics, application, effects against each other. Also isolated and studied here is Advance and Retreat, two of the 5 steps of the 13 postures.

At this stage, knowledge of the effecting chins in TCC prepares them for eventual transition into formlessness where the techniques are no longer confined to those learnt in the form and

where the chins and their correct application learnt through the form take precedence in appropriate response not limited to fixed techniques.

Beginning with fixed step, single hand and later both hands in coordination it progresses to moving step. The practice is centred around the chins being studied and the motion restricted to advancing and retreating. Though the initially the exercise is choreographed, the point is not to make smooth choreography but to learn how each of the chins work with each other and so the techniques need to be carried out in earnest and the sensitivity and understanding of each of the chins at work against the other's centre made an important goal in the practice.

## **Da Lu**

This is actually advanced push hands. Here the latter 4 chins of the 13 postures are isolated, studied, analysed and understood, i.e. Tsai chin, Lieh chin, Chou chin, Kao chin. They are also studied in terms of their specific characteristics, application and effects against each other and the first four chins of the 13 postures. The remaining 3 steps of the 5 steps of the 13 postures, Look to the Left, Watch the Right and Central Equilibrium are isolated and studied. All with the same aim as above.

Da Lu is learnt first with choreographed steps and in a curve with large stepping and later progresses to be practiced in a line with little stepping involved. Eventually it is done in a free fashion with the chins interplaying freely. At a later stage all eight chins and five directions are freely practiced in free style pushing hands. This practice prepares the student for san shou which is the application of all that has been learnt so far in a combat situation.

## **Advanced**

### **San Shou**

There are two primary methods for training san shou, one coming down from Yang Ban Hou and the other from Yang Cheng Fu. We look at the two methods below. Both aim to achieve the same ultimate goal of formless and appropriate application to a random situation with the greatest effectiveness using the principles of Tai Ch'i Chuan.

#### ***Initial San Shou Training Method 1***

##### ***Fixed San Shou***

Once the chins are understood and their application refined, practice of them in the postures is introduced in a fixed fashion where one technique in the form is pitted against another, this adds a new dimension and refinement of the techniques because of the deeper understanding of the key elements and jings that make them effective and also because they are used against each other in pseudo-combat application. Push hands should be understood to be just practice drills when fixed and unfixed, so free style push hands is not the same as free style San Shou.

Fixed San Shou is learnt one couplet at a time and may eventually be linked to form a two man practice set. Important to note here is that very realistic situations are practiced, including breaking contact, timing, approach and angles. The practice though fixed is in earnest to gain an advantage over the opponent but the goal is not winning or losing but to train each other. This is the same for push hands practice.

## ***Initial San Shou Training Method 2***

### ***San Tui Shou***

San Tui Shou is where the san shou techniques are worked into the free style push hands repertoire, one at a time, gradually progressing to free style san shou with fixed techniques. Free style san shou with fixed techniques is the free interplay of the san shou techniques learnt at this stage but kept to within the taught repertoire. Later this progresses to free style san shou.

### ***Free Style San Shou***

This is where initially the techniques from Fixed San Shou and San Tui Shou are practiced in a free unsequenced manner then evolves to emphasize appropriate action suited to the random situation even if that action is not a standard technique. Here the free play of the effects of chin are truly given and is as close as you can get to actual combat but without the intent to harm. Experience is built up here and formless application of the art developed.

## **Weapons Training**

Normally the weapons were learnt only after becoming accomplished in the fist set (medium frame), push hands and san shou. The weapons forms are the application of the aspects and principles of Tai Ch'i Chuan in the use of weapons. Yang Tai Ch'i Chuan has three weapons: the double edged sword (jian), the broadsword (dao) and the spear (chiang). The training sequence for the weapons are much the same with the fistic training with the form, the two man practices like the sticky sword, broadsword and spear.

# Tan Jing (Talking About Jing)

By Zhang Yi Zun

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

Because Taijiquan expands upon external boxing methods, researching the internal flow of jing, that's why there is the appearance of sticky jing (nien jing), neutralising jing (hua jing), holding jing (na jing), emitting jing (fa jing), peng jing, long jing (chang jing), short jing (duan jing), etc commonly known traditional names. There are always some people who like to do according to their will and create new names.

In Taijiquan, how many types of jing are there? So many its a mess. And even the explanation of each type of jing are not the same. Because internal jing (nei jing) is a combination of many elements not all visible, and training methods are mostly combined with movements, some are really not easy to explain, and since every one's understanding through practice is not exactly the same, its very hard to come to a concensus.

For example: "what is peng jing?" is already hard to get a simple and clear explanation. One day there will definitely be some hard working compilers of a "Wushu Terms Dictionary". Some people explain it thus:

"Peng Jing is after long periods of sincere practice of Taijiquan and push hands, resulting in a type of sung (no tension) yet not sung, soft but carrying in it hard, active but sunk and heavy, elastic and pliable type of jing, which includes sticking (nien), neutralising (hua), bouyant (fu) and capable of trapping (kun) kind of jing, also called internal jing (neijing)". Also we have from from myrid schools and students who hold "Taiji is peng jing, movement goes in spirals (luo xuan)" as the central maxim.

These two explanations, are all too much on the surface, not able to grasp peng jing's reality. At the very least, with expert's peng jing, its not exactly the same.

If we say "it is sung but not sung", "sunk and heavy" then it is peng jing, then when pushing with teacher Ya Xuan (here he refers to his teacher Li Ya Xuan who was a noted disciple of Yang Cheng Fu), he feels extremely without tension, very soft, insubstantial, only lightly contacting with the skin. Is this kind of jing peng jing? Actually its does not really feel as if he has a pliable characteristic, much less "sunk and heavy". He only feels insubstantial, empty and we can't feel his jing. Does this count as peng jing? If we say that he does not have peng jing, then why is it that we can't get him? Why is it that he always wins?

Saying "Taiji is peng jing, movement goes in spirals", is even less accurate. How can Taijiquan be totally explained by peng jing! If we say that Taijiquan is sinking jing (chen jing), that is also a way to get a taste of it; if we way it is sticky jing (nien jing), we see that it is not necessary wrong either. Spiraling is specifically guided by a continuous rounded shape, only if we say Taijiquan goes by different kinds of curves, and also in straight lines, then we are closer to the truth.

Another saying "the stronger nei jing is, during push hands you can bully your opponent more". This is the saying of beginning students who have have only beginning push hands skills. When one attains the level where "people don't know me" then can one be considered an expert. "Using four ounces to deflect 1000 pounds, strength does not necessarily win" says that great strength is not the correct way of Taijiquan. "Wonderous way is being able to borrow strength", being able to use and express our agile sensitivity, to control the opponent's

movement of jing, using lesser strength to beat a greater strength. Using soft and weak to beat hard and strong. This then is the direction we must work hard towards for those of us who practice Taijiquan.

Saying "peng jing is also called nei jing". Rollback (Lu), Press (Ji), Push (An), etc, jings become external jings then? If they are all nei jing. Then why specially point out that "peng jing is also called nei jing"? Isn't this baselessly saying things, creating your own classifications?

I have thought about it alot, spent alot of time, then wrote out the explanation: "peng jing is agile, formed in a curve, can neutralise oncoming strength, can also elastically bounce out whilst soft and sticking jing". Such a long winded explanation, many people will definitely shake their heads in disapproval, even I myself am not satisfied with it, but it is very difficult to condense it. Because it is like that, the line of expression was broken earlier. Questioning those famous practitioners within our country, we don't know whether they will agree or not.

Nei jing's large and small, cannot depend on one's own feeling, saying "the stronger nei jing is, during push hands you can bully your opponent more", actually, this is your opponent making the mistake of resisting jing (ding jing). If your opponent is moving, he knows how to remain attached but not resisting, and so is not receiving your strength, then where does the bullying come from? Then stronger nei jing is, doesn't that mean that it makes it easier for your opponent to listen to your jing (ting jing)?

When I was young in my village, there was alot of water and paddi fields, I loved to play with mud. When I got bored, I would sling mud at my companions. The mud also exhibited the bouncing out power like the opening of a flower. If I scored, it can also stick on to the nose of my opponent and remain there for a long time. I have also used a stone to sling at my opponent but it won't stick on to him.

Hard things cannot stick. From observation, we come to understand the theory that only soft things can stick. This then is the reason why Taijiquan uses soft jing (rou jing).

What Taijiquan researches, mainly is sticking jing (nien jing). How then to get sticking jing to a high level is the goal of our hard training.

The myriad other jings, all are just different uses of sticking jing.

Sticking a result of being sung and soft with sensitivity. Like sticky things, like a stamp stuck on an envelope, causing myself to stick to my opponent, in not letting go and not resisting, listening to his jing, this is the reality of nien jing.

Sticking is the method for understanding completely your opponent's condition.

Only when you have good sung then you can stick well. When you can stick, then you can fully utilise sensitivity's agile characteristic. Agility comes from sung and comes when one is calm and quiet. Not being light means not being able to be sung, this skill is all from practicing the boxing form. Boxing theory is from nature and is so made complete, we need to express it completely when doing the form. The postures in the form have high and low, every person's sung and softness level is different, so sticking jing's sensitivity will come according to each person differently.

When beginning to learn push hands, normally the sticking is very heavy, even if you want to lighten it you can't, the feeling is like having both person's bones against one another, in actual fact it is still resisting (ding). A little more advanced, when you can lighten it, the bones will no longer be in contact, you can only feel the flesh being in contact. High level sticking, the contact is only on the skin surface. The higher the level, the lighter the contact, the clearer and faster you can listen to jing, the easier it is to control your opponent.

Sticking is the feeling when both are in contact. Skill levels have deep and shallow, internal jing (nei jing) has large and small, its quality has soft and hard, the feeling of sticking is never always the same. "Not resisting and not letting go" (Bu Tiu Bu ding) then becomes the bridge for getting to a high level.

If we look at the classics, in it there are large sections that talk about being sung and soft, about being light and agile, about correct body coordination (completeness), because only in this way then you can you train a high level sticking jing with soft and agile qualities.

Sticking jing is one of the big treasures of Taijiquan. Experts need only lightly stick to totally control the other causing him to topple to the east or lean to the west, not be able to stand stably like a drunkard, causing him to knit his brows and bite his tongue in effort, a big calamity coming down on him, his life feels like a fainting spell. Teacher Ya Xuan has this ability, causing people to call it ultimate, even more causing people to aspire towards it. Where does it have "the stronger nei jing is, during push hands you can bullying your opponent more"?!

In pushing hands, the ward off (peng), rollback (lu), press (ji) and push (an) and in Big Rollback (da lu) the pluck (tsai), split (lieh), elbow (chou) and lean (kao), normally is termed as eight kinds of jing. From external appearances they have obvious differences. Actually it is sticking jing's eight types of usage. Calling them the eight methods of Taijiquan (taijiquan ba fa) is more suitable.

Taijiquan uses soft jing, dissolving hard jing (ying jing); is internal jing (nei jing) and not obvious jing (ming jing). Internal jing cannot be seen. Hard jing and obvious jing can be easily seen; strictly speaking, it is hard strength (ying li), and cannot be called jing.

Ward off, rollback, etc eight methods when in use, mostly use sticking jing, peng jing and sinking jing in combination, in actual fact is a combined jing. Its not individual jings being used alone.

In combat, Taijiquan strongly uses soft neutralisation, very much welcoming the opponent to rush in, and does not aim at making the first attack. Previous generations have created a complete method of training for gaining victory from opponents. With sticking jing, neutralising jing (hua jing), holding jing (na jing), emitting jing (fa jing) these four types. This is the combat theory that is stored in each of the eight methods, it is the essence of Taijiquan. If internal jing is not soft, we can mostly only get the external structure, without a way of getting to a high level.

Sticking jing is coming into contact and knowing your opponent.

Neutralising jing (hua jing)'s meaning is neutralising to nothingness the incoming force. It emphasizes enticing the opponent to lead him into nothingness, causing his attack to come to nothing.

Holding jing (na jing) is used after neutralising the incoming force, following the opponent's jing path, cause him to come into danger.

Emmitting jing (fa jing) is after determining the weak point of the opponent, focusing available resources, emitting a return attack and gaining the fruits of victory.

We, in sticking, neutralising, holding and emitting, which is wonderfully complex, and always without limits, are learning to understand internal jing. Like climbing a famous mountain or touring a famous garden, every step, every scene, we receive the trueness, causing one to stay even longer and forget the normal world, becoming a boxing lover. But it is because it is so hidden, so complex, so deep, our intelligence limited, our skill insufficient or teacher's undertaking not high, it is like entering a treasure mountain and returning empty handed, and there are many such people. That is why those after learning boxing and training the body, only a few are able to gain effectiveness in combat and are seldom seen. It is because the internal and external requirements are too numerous and too lofty.

Now lets talk about peng jing.

One of the goals of training boxing is to gain the qualities of the whole body being sung and soft and the joints gaining a high level of agility, we can see that peng jing is not hard jing (ying jing).

The original rationale of pushing hands is in sticking circularly we entice into emptiness, following others, not letting go and not resisting. We can also see that peng jing is not using strength to go against (di kang) the opponent, pushing him out the door, instead should welcome the opponent in. When two forces go against each other this is resisting (ding). Resisting (ding) is solid jing (Kang Jing), it is the exact opposite of using soft to overcome hardness. We can see that peng jing is not hard jing (ying jing).

From the above analysis, it is clearly explained that pushing hands only uses soft jing (rou jing). If both parties use soft jing (rou jing), then who overcomes who? In comparison, whose sticking jing (nien jing) level is higher, listening jing (ting jing) ability is higher, sung and soft more complete, is definitely the victor. Natural neutralising jing (hua jing), is nothing but the wonderous usage of a whole body that is extremely soft. Spectacular emitting jing (fa jing), also comes from softness transformed. The boxing classics tell us "from extreme softness comes extreme hardness"!

Therefore, peng jing is a agile, curved structured, can neutralise to nothingness the incoming force and can also bounce out, is soft and sticking type of jing only.

Many people, because they misunderstand peng jing, think that resisting (ding) is peng, and going against the opponent is peng, making this a matter of great importance, causing aspirations of the lovers of Taijiquan to come to nothing. Training hard in boxing for a lifetime, obtaining internal jing (nei jing) that is not soft (rou), sticking jing (nien jing) that is not good. The flavour of their boxing not correct as a consequence, this is something pitiful.

Here we have only analysed peng jing, the rest, the reader in reading it over will not find it hard to conceptualise.

How many types of emitting jing (fa jing) are there in pushing hands?

Looking from external form, emitting jing (fa jing) has many types and different kinds, but in actuality there is only long jing (chang jing) and short jing (duan jing) these two types.

Long and short denotes the time the strength remains acting on the opponent's body.

When beginning to learn emitting jing (fa jing), those who have not developed sinking jing (chen jing) will normally emit long jing. Those with higher levels of development and skill and who know sinking jing (chen jing) can emit both long and short types of jing.

Emitting jing (fa jing) it is important to be fast for emitting jing (fa jing) to obtain satisfactory results. You cannot let your opponent discover your intention before hand. Really spectacular, shocking emitting jing (fa jing), results only after obvious jing is totally gone, it's intent-transmission is very fast and very agile with quick responses. Only when skills reach a fairly high level can it be manifest. Definitely not a normal obvious jing using grasping to prevent his movement, then pushing out the so called 'emitting jing', you can make a comparison.

If obvious jing is not complete gotten rid of, emitting jing will not be as quick, and the opponent can easily neutralise it away; even if the opponent's skill is inferior and cannot neutralise it, he knows its coming and he will not let you have your way.

Long jing (chang jing) is from the back foot directing to the front a thrust to the ground as being the primary source of power, requires all the joints coordinated, from bottom going to the top, following the structure to express out the jing. Because the duration of the execution of strength is long, it is possible to cause the opponent to be thrown a great distance away. The advantage is that it won't injure the opponent. For those who power attainment (kung li) is not deep such as beginning students whose waist (yao) and inguinal region (kua) are not limber, they should use more long jing (chang jing).

Short jing (duan jing) is a very high speed bouncing out strength, like compressing a spring and it suddenly springs (bounces) out. Because the duration is short, the speed fast, internal jing (nei jing) complete, it creates a very great pressure and sudden intentional strength. If we can penetrate into this, we can cause the opponent to panic and make mistakes, hitting him down more often, even scare him till he sweats cold sweat, even fainting, this is a good means of completely defeating the opponent. Those whose power attainment is not deep, or physique is not strong, its best not to lightly emit short jing. If it causes internal injury, doctoring it will waste time and effort and is quite a bother. Experts emitting short jing (duan jing) are able to understand heavy and light application, testing the opponent's ability to take it, and do not exceed it, but for normal practitioners it is very hard to attain this.

Cold jing (leng jing), cold (leng) as in cold without defence in meaning, is an even faster spectacular short jing (duan jing).

Intercepting jing (jie jing) is to receive the opponent's strength and turn around its direction back against him and emit jing (fa jing), or when the opponent's jing has not been fully emitted, I use a even faster jing to suffocate his jing back against him. This requires quite a high level of skill then it can be done.

As for hard jing (ying jing), hard soft jing (jiang rou jing), sung and sinking jing (sung chen jing), light and agile jing (ching ling jing), empty without jing (xu wu jing), is what teacher Ya Xuan, in the process of teaching Taijiquan, separated out into five types of jing flow. Its a pity that understanding teachers are always few, boxing theory is obscure and hard to

understand. Normally what learners are familiar with may not be the real thing, their real skill is still not enough, most stop between the first two types of jing flow. Those able to enter into the third type of jing flow are already considered quite well skilled. Those able to get to the fourth type of jing flow is even harder to find. If we want to get to the empty without level, it is like refined through fire, a big achievement. In this world it is not easy to get many.

# On Internal Strength And Internal/External Martial Arts

*By Peter Lim Tian Tek*

---

In Chinese martial arts strength and power is divided into two distinct groups: External and Internal. This should be distinguished from the other division in martial arts which divides them into Internal and External martial arts. This second definition divides the martial arts according to their approach to combat whilst the first distinguishes the method by which strength and power is utilised and generated. The two definitions are related but one does not determine the other.

The common Chinese term to refer to strength is Jing or Li, in common usage both terms are interchangeable. It was only more recently that the word Jing was used to distinguish a refined focused, efficient strength as opposed to Li which is used to denote brute strength. This understanding of the terms is only in the context of martial arts, the common usage of these two terms remains interchangeable.

## **Jing**

Jing, as referred to in Chinese martial arts, is a coordinated, rooted, efficiently focused strength. A clear definition of this kind of strength is found in Li I Yu's Five Word Formula. At this point, Jing still has not been defined into Internal or External types. This definition of Jing applies both to Internal and External types of martial arts.

There are several pre-requisites for the proper generation of Jing. They are:

### **Rooting**

For strength to be properly generated, it needs to have a base to provide the resistance to form a base for it to push against. The emphasis on pile standing in many martial arts is to build up this base by lowering the centre of gravity of the body to enhance stability and the efficient transfer of force from the centre of gravity to the ground. This means that the centre of gravity should first be identified by the practitioner and isolated so that it can be distinguished clearly. The stress is on strong support with the minimum of effort utilising the efficient structure. Lowering the qi to the Dan Tien which roughly corresponds to the body's centre of mass helps achieve this.

### **Coordination**

The different joints and muscles in the body must be coordinated to work together to produce a strength born of the whole body working efficiently together. When antagonistic groups of muscles do not work in a coordinated fashion, tension is created which lessens the resultant force. The coordination is also with breathing which affects the state of the body. Coordination using the centre of mass as a base which is supported by efficient structure allows an efficient path for strength to flow. Hence the importance of the Dan Tien not only as a origin point of the root and the exertion of strength but also as a region where qi is stored and emitted from.

### **Alignment**

The proper alignment of the bones in the body provides the structure by which the force is transmitted and provides a clear path for strength to flow from the point of focus to the ground. With the bones efficiently bearing the stress of the reaction force, the musculature can work efficiently without unnecessary exertion.

## **Focus**

The above three characteristics are dependent on the focus of the strength which determines its efficiency. Focus denotes a point where all the body's potential is directed at and also to the task to be accomplished by the resultant force.

With the above four factors in place, one is capable of generating Jing which means that one can properly Fa-Jing or emit Jing. Fa-Jing is present in both internal and external martial arts and simply denotes an emission of strength. It should be noted that in Taiiquan, the aim is not great strength but beating a great force with a smaller one. The ability to Fa-Jing does not denote ability in Taijiquan or other martial arts since no art is based on Fa-Jing alone. Knowing when and where to appropriately Fa-Jing is far more important. Fa-Jing inappropriately can be disastrous.

## **External Jing**

External Jing is where the Jing is derived from the three external elements of musculature (jin), bones (gu) and skin (pi). This kind of jing is delivered through the exertion of the muscles, hardness of the bones and the toughness of the skin. It relies on hard physical impact and physical exertion to bring its effects to bear.

## **Internal Jing**

Internal Jing is where Jing is derived from the three internal elements of essence (jing), vital energy (qi), and spirit (shen). This kind of jing is effected through the strengthening of the essence to provide the generation of qi which nourishes both the musculature, bones, organs and the mind which is the seat of the spirit.

The body's essence (jing) is built up to ensure a plenteous supply, this is transformed into qi which nourishes and provides the vitality to the musculature, bones, organs and also the mind. Qi in traditional Chinese medicinal theory is the basis of life in the body and its presence and relative volume determines the health and vitality of the body. Qi itself is directed by the Mind/Spirit which is itself dependent on qi for its mental capability.

The Spirit is an expression of the thought, knowledge, feelings and intent (mental focus) of the mind. A strong spirit makes for clear thought, enhanced perception, better intent (Yi) which are assets to all situations, including martial ones. Intent brings about the physiological changes which opens the blood and qi flow along the path and at the point of focus. Hence the theory the mind leads and the blood and qi follows.

With increase circulation and qi flow, the musculature attains better tonus which results in the 'filled' feeling that is experienced by those who do some form of internal work (nei gong). It is this increased tonus and tenacity that serves as the origin of Internal Jing. It gives Internal Jing its 'propelled' and 'hydraulic' characteristics. This increase qi flow is directed by the mind

which results in the creation of Internal Jing. The musculature remains relaxed with no undue tension.

Internal Jing transfers the strength smoothly into the opponent, not relying on hard impact to damage. This transfer of energy/force into the opponent's body and structure can cause injuries that are not obvious externally.

## **Visible Jing**

Visible Jing is also called Ming Jing. It denotes Jing (internal or external) that is obviously visible when it is utilised. The motion of the limbs and the point of focus is exhibited physically. One can also discern if the jing is hard (ying jing or gang jing) or soft (rou jing).

## **Hidden Jing**

The opposite of Visible Jing is Hidden Jing which is also called An Jing. Whereas Visible Jing is easily observed, Hidden Jing is hard to discern. It is based on the internal flow of strength within the body rather than the external manifestation. Like the flow of air inside a beach ball, it is certainly present but it is not obvious when observing it externally yet it provides a reaction upon contact. Contact with someone using Hidden Jing often shows that his external movements may not correspond to his internal flow of strength and its focus.

## **Hard Jing**

This is jing manifested rigidly to the point of focus. Its path is fixed and exhibits hardness and stiff resistance.

## **Soft Jing**

This is jing which has a pliable path which shifts to accommodate changes in the structure which is in contact without losing the point of focus.

## **External Martial Arts And Internal Martial Arts**

Does it mean that a martial art that uses Internal Jing is automatically classified as an internal martial art? Or that a martial art that uses External Jing is automatically an External martial art? It does not. The distinction between the two classes of martial arts has historically always been rather arbitrary but in general its classification is based on the art's approaches to combat.

The earliest distinction between the two is recorded in the 'Inscription For Wang Zhen Nan' (written in the early Qing Dynasty <1644-1911>) where the Shaolin school of martial arts was called the External system because of its techniques focus on attacking the opponent. The Wudang school of martial arts founded by Chang San Feng is called the Internal school because it overcomes its opponents by neutralising his force instantaneously in a tranquil manner.

Later, schools which attribute their origin to the Shaolin school were generally classified as External martial arts and those who are said to have their origins in the Wudang school were

generally classified as Internal martial arts. Also, those whose characteristics matched the above description for the External system and emphasized physical exertion were also classified under the External system and those whose characteristics corresponded with the above description of the Internal system and stressed relaxed tranquillity were classified under the Internal system. These are broad classifications, it does not mean that within schools considered in general as external there are no internal elements or vice versa.

Martial arts classified under the external system sometimes also have Internal Jing training and vice versa so classifying them by their Jing usage is inappropriate.

## **Jing Nomenclature**

Now that we have defined what is Jing and its basic types. It can be noted that the characteristics of the Jing and its usage determine its name. This has resulted in myriad different definitions of an arbitrary nature. There is no standard system that is used across the board to all martial arts.

For example, Lu Jing (Rollback Jing) is so named because it is the primary type of Jing used in the technique of Rollback. It is considered a Internal Jing because of its mode of generation and also a Hidden Jing at higher levels of accomplishment where its application is not physically obvious.

In the above example it can also be seen that the term Lu can refer to both the technique and the Jing usage in the technique so one must be careful when using such terms and distinguish between the technique and the Jing.

## **The Importance Of Breathing**

In all internal practices, correct breathing is of paramount importance. It ensures that the body receives an adequate supply of oxygen and sufficient ventilation of carbon dioxide created during respiration. This creates an internal body environment that is suitable for training the mind which takes up much of the oxygen in the body. Deep breathing also massages the internal organs, ensuring that there is smooth flow of blood and lymph through them, this aids in the creation of essence (Jing).

Breath itself is intricately tied to the exertion of strength. The body exhales when exerting strength, bringing into play the musculature in the torso in its exertion, allowing the full body to be used.

## **Some Practices Used To Train Internal Strength**

### **Standing (Zhan Zhuang)**

Standing is a fundamental practice in both internal and external martial arts and is an excellent way to build up the pre-requisites of Jing generation. Still standing allows the practitioner to adjust his body so that the centre of mass and hence the weight of the body is efficiently transferred to the ground. This forms the root and so the base for techniques to act from. It allows the body to relax and find its most efficient structure. This adjustments occur within the body and are not always visible externally.

Stillness is conducive to relaxation and the removal of tension to allow musculature to work in a coordinated fashion. It also allows the mind to be still and to train a relaxed focus without mental distractions, the relaxed body with efficient structure also frees the mind from bodily discomfort which can interfere with its efficient function. Breathing is trained to be smooth, efficient and with increased capacity through a relaxed body rather than one in physical tension which can constrict the torso, decreasing capacity and costing more in terms of energy consumption and increase muscular fatigue. This relaxed breathing is carried on into the moving postures of Taijiquan. A relaxed body without tension is also conducive to good circulation as there is no tension to restrict blood flow.

Some standing practices also focus the mind on the flow of qi in the meridians, leading first along the main loop in the body formed by the Ren and Du meridians. This is called the small microcosmic orbit (xiao zhou tian). Later it is extended to the limbs forming what is called the large microcosmic orbit (da zhou tian). There are many types of postures which can be assumed during standing practice, each school usually has its own preferred practice. These postures allow the focus of the mind to bring about the proper jing flow and path in them.

Still sitting (Jing Zuo) is akin to this and shares the same principles except that one is not standing. Still lying is similar except that a horizontal posture is taken.

### **Moving Exercises (Dong Gong/Xing Gong)**

These have the same principles as standing except that instead of still standing, the body is in motion but without losing any of the requirements of the standing. Taijiquan's boxing set is an example of such moving internal strength exercises. These can be trained on their own but full benefit is derived from first attaining the necessary attributes from still standing and then transferring them into moving exercises as it is much easier to cultivate them in standing.

The physical movements themselves can help increase the flow of qi in the body by the points of focus in the movement. Stretching the musculature also brings about increase qi and blood flow. It can also help in training efficient focus which aids in the proper generation of Jing within a moving posture.

### **A Proper Understanding Of The Term Peng And Its Relation To Taijiquan And Martial Arts**

There is a current movement that uses the term Peng to denote Jing and who regard Peng Jing as the core Jing in internal martial arts. This emphasis on Peng Jing did not come into being until the 1963 work by Gu Liu Xin and Shen Jia Ren on Chen style Taijiquan. This emphasis is absent from all works on Taijiquan and internal martial arts prior to that and so it is a new innovation and not a traditional one.

Traditionally, in Chen Taijiquan, Chan Si Jing (silk coiling jing) was considered the Internal Jing in Chen style Taijiquan. The Yang related lineages placed emphasis on correct Jing generation and the usage of the 8 Jings which were in the basic 8 postures of Peng (ward off), Lu (rollback), Ji (press), An (push), Cai (pluck), Lieh (split), Chou (elbow), Kao (shoulder).

Peng Jing in the Yang related lineages refers to a expansive, blending, upward and outward moving type of Jing. The Peng that this movement refers to is actually just simple Jing which has the four pre-requisites. This wrong usage of the term leads to wrong interpretation of the classic writings and the words of the masters. This changes the art and should be curbed.

The Peng Jing used by this movement uses the resistance of an incoming force by alignment to the floor which is at variance with what Master Mah Yueh Liang says should be the correct application of Peng in which one should never hold up against a person's force. This is in line with the Taijiquan Classics which says one should not resist nor should one let go. Their test does show proper body alignment in which the path of the strength goes from the floor to the point of focus but it is certainly not the classical definition or understanding of Peng. It is also present in other martial arts but is certainly not called by that name. The misconception stems from the use of the Peng posture to show rooting by resisting the push of several men. This is not the correct way to use the posture though it does show good rooting.

It should be noted that the understanding of Peng by the Chinese differs from that which is currently expounded by some in the West as can be seen in the above example. So in interpreting the words of masters from China and the East, it is important to take that into account.

Peng Jing is distinctively Taijiquan and it is not a term present or can be correctly applied to other forms of internal martial arts. Though the term Jing applies across the board since it does not denote technique but simply the efficient application of strength. Each of these internal martial arts has its own characteristics and theories which make it distinct from each other. The insertion of Taijiquan theories and terms into their terminology assumes that these internal arts are all the same which is not the case. Whilst they may share some common characteristics, their expression of the is distinctly unique. That is why they are separate arts and not one and the same one.

# **The Basis And Methodology Of Internal Martial Arts**

*By Peter Lim Tian Tek*

The internal martial arts have often been shrouded by much mysticism and some have come to consider the theorems contained therein as being superstitious and even superfluous to these martial arts. The effect has been much like throwing the baby out with the bath water and what remains only has the outward semblance of the original art but its essence has been lost.

To understand the underlying theoretical foundations we must first understand the Chinese world view which is at the heart of Chinese culture and its philosophies. The history of Chinese thought is a long one, stretching back thousands of years. Much of it came through empirical observations made by the Chinese people and distilled to its essential logic. Some of it may not be so alien to the West as it may initially seem.

## **The Philosophical Basis - Understanding The Point Of Perception**

### **The Yin and The Yang**

This is probably the most fundamental of the theories that contribute to the Chinese world view. Philosophically speaking this is the theory of duality which is also known in classical western philosophy except that is not used as a basis to explain the nature and composition of the perceived universe. It represents the positive and negative in the perceivable universe. In the martial arts the represent stillness and motion, hardness and softness and other opposites.

### **The Trigrams And Hexagrams**

The 8 trigrams (Ba Gua) and the 64 hexagrams are all derived from the interaction of Yin and Yang. They form the fundamental changes that are possible through these interactions. It was in the Jesuit Priest Father Joachin Bouvet, who did missionary work in China, who showed the sequence of 64 hexagrams to German mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, the father of calculus. Leibnitz discovered the binary notation system in the hexagrams by taking 0 for each solid line and 1 for each broken line. This system is the fundamental building block of today's computer systems which all work on the binary system. These computers, through the use of the binary system (aka western Yin-Yang notation) are now able to simulate the real world which lends credence to the Chinese theory that the perceivable universe can be explained using the interaction of Yin and Yang. For martial arts these changes represent the possible situations and counters in a combat situation.

### **The Five Elements**

The five elements derived from the ancient Hou Tu diagram which groups the Yin and Yang interactions into five distinct groups is a representation of the 5 material types which the Chinese were able to classify the perceivable universe. Similar to the Western classification of Animal, Vegetable and Mineral, the Chinese classified them into Metal, Water, Fire, Wood and Earth. The five elements also represent the five motions since the interactions of these elements which forms the cycle of matter in the perceived universe have their innate motions. Their creative and destructive cycles and their motions have lent their principles to the martial arts.

# **The Internal Approach To Combat**

For all martial arts there is a common set of requirements that need to be addressed when it comes to success in combat. They can be broadly classified into 4 categories:

1. Power
2. Speed
3. Placement
4. Technique

These 4 categories are fundamental combat and the different internal martial arts have different emphasis on each but all strive for efficiency in combat with minimum effort to achieve maximum effect. We will deal with them individually.

In addition, in the case of Taijiquan, there is the requirement for sensitivity. In this modern age, information is power and in the world of Taijiquan it is no different. Information about the opponent is instrumental in being effective in combat against him. As the Art Of War states 'know the opponent as you know yourself, a hundred battles a hundred victories'.

## **The Internal Training Methodology**

The Internal martial arts place their main emphasis on training the internal factors of a person as a means of preparing the body to be effective in combat. The three internal elements trained are Jing (essence), Qi (vital energy - akin to life force) and Shen (spirit). The body needs to be strengthened and healthy before it can engage in combat. The internal methods train the body for the improved generation of Jing (essence) through keeping the body at the optimum stress level for its healthy functioning which means also the removal or dealing with destructive stress. This returns the body to its natural relaxed state which encourages the proper smooth circulation. This forms the basis for a regulated and healthy endocrine system which leads to the improved generation of Jing.

This in turn leads to the improved output of Qi which is a result of the improved metabolism through the abundance of Jing. Qi is derived from the nutrients we eat and the air that we breath. Qi itself flows with the blood and both can be controlled through mental focus. Proper mental focus leads the qi round the body improving vitality through improved blood flow and sufficient supply of nutrients, gaseous exchange and vital energy. The breath is very important in qi generation and deep breathing efficiently utilising the capacity of the lungs is important but never to the point where it becomes unnatural. This leads to an improved tonus in the musculature and ultimately leads to a healthy body.

The mind which leads the qi also benefits from this optimum supply of its nutritional and respirational requirements and allows it to function at its best. Coupled with a destressed body and controlled emotions, it is able to develop a relaxed concentration with deep calm. This is used in mental training which supplements physical training resulting in better results in shorter time. It also improves confidence, increased awareness and deliberateness in dealing with situations as well as greater ability to concentrate and be able to maintain it. The Shen (spirit) which is a manifestation of consciousness is thus trained and is an indispensable part of this cyclic system. The West has only just begun to realise the benefits of mental training as a supplement to physical training.

## **Power**

In martial arts, it's not how great the power is but how efficiently it is generated and how appropriately it is used that is the key to success. Great power without control, focus and a clear mind having sufficient information to apply it appropriately is quite useless.

The framework for power generation is a good root born of a lowered centre of gravity for stability and the efficient structure for force to flow from it to the ground to form a base of resistance for the power generated to push against. Also important is proper body alignment so that the force is efficiently transmitted through the structure. We should note that these two factors do not constitute internal strength and are present in most martial arts, both internal and external.

Internal strength is a result of training the Jing, Qi and Shen and is a combination of efficient physical power (Jing - not the same as essence, it's a different Chinese character) generated through muscular tonus, appropriate application through mental focus and stability, and a healthy body capable of handling the stress of combat which forms a basis for both of the former. Mental focus determines how efficient this is since it is the focus that defines whether the action is efficient or not. The resultant motion is smooth because it does not have any retained power in the form of tension and rounded because of the nature of motion of the joints and their efficient usage. Because of its mode of generation Internal Strength (Nei Jing) can flow even without apparent outwardly visible motion.

## **Speed**

The speed striven for is effective speed. In internal martial arts, the faster technique may not be the victorious one. Efficient motion is essential for speed, as is a structure that is conducive to quick motion (i.e. no double weighting). There are two main points on speed when it comes to combat. The first is to get out of the way of the attack, the second is to counter the attack with the minimum speed requirement. The speed trained in the internal martial arts is the speed of the whole body which is a co-ordinated whole. In Taijiquan, the speed of training is mainly slow, this allows one to train the body to move in an efficient fashion with no tension. It also allows obstructions to the flow of movement due to structure or tension to be detected and removed.

## **Placement**

The placement and position of the body and body structure in relation to the opponents is very important in martial arts. It allows one to be in the optimum position to counter or to attack with minimum effort with maximum effect and to be difficult for the opponent to counter. This minimises the danger to the exponent whilst giving him a good vantage point to initiate his counter or attack.

Proper placement is a result of knowing the opponent(s) centre and structure. It also requires knowledge of effective attacking angles and inherent flaws in body structures in each type of posture. Placement changes in relation to the opponent and so there is more or less constant change in a combat situation.

## **Technique**

The technique of the art is how the body is used effectively in combat. A technique is only good if it is applied appropriately. Each martial art has its own set of techniques to deal with the different combat situations. Each conforming to the principles governing and defining each individual martial art style.

In the internal martial arts, the techniques are grounded in efficient structure and motion. The movements are naturally rounded, this turns aside incoming force from reaching and affecting the centre of mass of the body and the body itself to cause damage. The incoming force is either redirected out of its intended focus or turned against itself or to the attacker's disadvantage. This also entails intimate knowledge of the opponent's centre and structure. Most internal martial arts have a set of core techniques from which the rest of the techniques in the system are derived from. In Taijiquan it is the 13 Postures, in Ba Gua Zhang it is the 8 Mother Palms, in Xing-I it is the Five Element Fists. These fundamental techniques embody the principles on which the art is based. Whilst there are common elements in these techniques in all 3 arts, they are distinct in flavour and their application.

The techniques are taught individually and then usually strung up into a pattern for them to be practiced sequentially, the sequence itself showing the flow techniques in combination. Two man practice refines the technique by putting it into action with a live opponent and bringing all the principles and technique together.

## **Sensitivity**

Sensitivity is key to Taijiquan as a martial art. The ability to stick and adhere to the opponent allows the Taijiquan exponent to 'listen' to the opponent's structure and to detect its flaws, to locate and effectively control his centre of mass from which all his body motion ultimately relies on. Sensitivity is trained in the form when it is done slowly. This teaches sensitivity to one's own structure and centre as well as sensitivity to the environment as one does 'push hands' with the air, being so relaxed that it can even react and neutralise air. In push hands, one trains sensitivity with a reactive opponent able to take over the initiative. This is knowledge of self and knowledge of opponent from which victory will come.

## **Health Benefits**

The training of Taijiquan as a martial art complete with its inherent mental focus which is essential to it trains a healthy, strong and efficient body and mind. While one need not train with the intention of going into combat, the combat focus in the art provides a focus for the postures and the internal flow of energy which brings about the full benefits of the art. Without this focus, one will not fully realise the benefits of Taijiquan.

# Internal Strength Definitions And Elaborations

By Peter Lim Tian Tek

Below are some definitions from Chinese sources concerning Internal Strength. Whilst important, Internal Strength is not the sole purpose of Internal martial arts.

## General References

Neigong is more properly translated as Internal Work and internal strength refers to nei li or nei jing. The term neigong is defined as follows by the following sources (translations my own):

1) Refers to martial arts' specialised techniques and methods to train the human body's internals to attain the goal of a strong internal and robust external. It is martial arts basic skill but also martial arts highest attainment. In the book 'Taijiquan Methods Truth', it states: "This specifically trains the hollow and solid organs (zhang fu), the nervous system (shen jing), sensitivity/feelings (gan jue), the so referred to Essence (jing), vital energy (qi) and spirit (shen) is called internal work (neigong)". 'The Encyclopedia of Chinese Martial Arts' (zhong hua wu shu shi yong bai ke), ISBN 7-81003-403-0

2) Martial arts, qigong term. Refers to activities that focus on the internal aspects of the human body (intent [yi nian], breath [qi xi], hollow and solid organs [zhang fu], meridians [jing luo], blood flow [xue mai]) in training, in the bid to attain a robust internal (nei zhuang). For example, silent work (ching gong), sinew changing internal robust work (yi jin jing nei zhuang gong), pile standing (zhan zhuang), eight trigram turning revolving work (ba gua zuan xuan gong), etc, are all forms of neigong. 'The Big Dictionary Of Chinese Martial Arts' (zhong guo wu shu da ci dian) ISBN 7-5009-9463-0

3) Refers to the specialised system of training of a martial artist to increase Essence (jing), vital energy (qi) and spirit (shen) beyond normal quantities to attain internal robustness. 'Chinese Martial Arts Dictionary' (zhong hua wu shu ci dian), ISBN 7-212-00042-6

4) Nei Jing - Martial arts jing method term. Refers to the kind of strength obtained after martial arts training that is able to change direction in accordance to the mind's intent, able to be great or little. Because its movement is within and not external it is called Internal Jing (Neijing). This kind of Jing gathers the whole strength of the body to a single point of power and is called Coordinated/Neat Jing (Zheng Jing). 'The Big Dictionary Of Chinese Martial Arts' (zhong guo wu shu da ci dian) ISBN 7-5009-9463-0

## Some Taijiquan References

'When the breath is concentrated in the Tan tien, it may bring the vital fluid everywhere. The vital fluid is the well known "biotin", which consists of air and other nutrients including dissolved food. According to Taoism, it may sublimated intoe Essence (Jing), Vitality (Qi) and Spirit (Shen), in sequence. That is to say, the physical "ingrediants" are transformed into psychical "beings" or energies. When one's body is full of it, one will not only be strong and alove but also attain longevity, even immortality.' Primordial Pugilism (Tai Chi Chuan) by Dr Tseng Ju-Pai, 1975, Paul H. Crompton Ltd (Dr Tseng was a disciple of YCF)

The same process is mentioned in 'The Principles Of Taijiquan' by Yue Tan (his father Yue Huan Zhi was famous for his Kong Jing in his Taijiquan), 1991, Shanghai Translation & Publishing Centre, Inc, ISBN 7-80514-779-5/G.222

Chen Wei Ming mentions the same process in his Taijiquan Da Wen (Questions & Answers On Taijiquan) which unfortunately is not completely translated by Ben Lo, I have the original book which has this statement and will fax the relevant section to anybody who wishes to verify it (its in Chinese unfortunately).

Cheng Man Qing mentioned the process in his 13 Chapters (last part of treatise 2). English translation: Cheng Tzu's Thirteen Treatises on T'ai Chi Ch'uan, North Atlantic Books, 1985, ISBN 0-938190-45-8

Chen Xin refers extensively to TCM material that which has as its basis the 3 treasures in his book 'Chen Shi Taijiquan Tu Shuo'.

Chen Zhen Lei also refers to the same medical qi in a disseration on it in the book 'Taijiquan Ming Jia Tan Zhen Di', 1992, China Television Broadcasting Publishing, ISBN 7-5043-2032-3/G.757 I translate this portion: 'The Qi mentioned in Chen style Taijiquan...It does not refer to the oxygen we breath into the chest and the human body's different kinds of strength (li), but refers to the widely known in Chinese Medicine's Correct Qi (Zhen Qi), Original Qi (Yuan Qi), Meridian Qi (Jing Luo Zi Qi), Refined Qi (Zhen Qi), etc kinds of Qi; also includes martial arts and qigong study's Internal Jing (neijing), Internal Work (neigong), etc kinds of Qi.

Hao Yue Ru (Wu Yu Xiang style) mentions it in his 'Wu style Taijiquan Important Points', his first point was 'hand, eye, body, step, Jing, Qi, Shen'. This reference is found in Hao Shao Ru's book 'Wu shi Taijiquan', 1992, Peoples Physical Education Press, ISBN 7-5009-0756-7/G.725

## **From other sources:**

Ba Gua Zhang master Yan De Hua stated in his book: 'Whoever practices the fist techniques, ought to train in the essence and convert it into Qi, use the Qi to convert into Shen, to transport and apply internal Qi to become Gong.'

There is a whole chapter on the 3 essences in the book 'Cheng Pai Gao Shi Ba Gua Zhang Pu' edited by Liu Feng Cai, Tianjin Scientific Technology Publishers, 1991, ISBN 7-5308-0997-0/G.234

## **Elaborations**

Firstly, TCC in terms of combat relies on a robust body and mind that is capable of being efficient in combat. That comes from training the internal 3 elements with Jing and Qi building up the body's robustness and also conciousness (Shen) so that a higher level of conciousness and perception is attained through both a healthy body supporting the neural activity as well as quietness to get the mind to a state of deep relaxed calm (I think some call it the 'Alpha state') which brings forth more fully the capabilities of the mind. Being able to perceive better in a combat situation is always an asset, more so since it does increase sensitivity to external stimulii which is required when 'touching' and 'listening' to an

opponent's strength, structure, centre and root. Sounds complicated but when one comes to an understanding of what one is detecting, it's only a matter of a touch to know what's going on. This is of course additional information one can glean on the external structural and spatial relationship between oneself and the opponent by visual and even sometimes auditive sensitivity. Combine this with mental training to supplement physical training and one gets a pretty good scheme for improving skills and developing capabilities not to mention probably being one or two steps ahead of your opponent perceptually and mentally.

Jing (Essence) is said to come from the kidneys and if we equate that to the Western adrenal hormones, some of which regulate metabolism as well as blood flow within the body, we get an idea of how this might energise the body for health and further development. Deep abdominal breathing not only brings in air to the body for good gaseous exchange but also messages the organs in the abdominal cavity and the kidneys.

Promotion of good circulation in the internal organs (zhang fu) forms a good basis for bodily development. Such bodily development is usually attributed to Qi which is, for the Chinese at least, the life force of the body. It consists of the jing of the kidney, refined food transported and digested by the spleen and the stomach and clear air taken in by the lungs. In other words it is the vehicle for bringing nutrients and energetic elements (the result of good organ function) to the body, including the bones and musculature. Good circulation means a healthier body and mind. The deep breathing and mental focus to bring physiological changes to improve circulation are a result of the mind which is a part of the consciousness (Shen).

Raised levels of consciousness also means raised levels of perception and awareness which in a combat situation is certainly relevant. Differences in levels of perception is crucial in combat and is a major determining factor in the outcome of any encounter. The efficient structure of the body reduces internal 'noise' in the nervous system and the increased metabolism and efficient functioning of the organs in the body all form a good basis for developing the brain's capabilities. With a more efficient and effective mental process and focus linked intimate with physical control of the body the cycle repeats and forms a basis for even greater development. The Jing, Qi and Shen paradigm is therefore cyclic in nature and the robust body and mind formed by this process is a result of such internal work and strength.

Even removing the terms and concepts that are regarded as esoteric by some, it still forms a good method to build up a foundation through good aerobic respiration, good circulation, proper/enhanced organ function to form a basis for mental and physical development.

With a robust body and mind formed, then comes the question of how to efficiently use it, or in the case of Taijiquan, how to efficiently use it in combat.

Paramount is the consciousness (Shen) which forms the intent which leads the body. The generation of physical power via mental intent brings together both the mind and the body in combination with the physiological changes in the musculature caused by mental focus being the foundation. To support efficient transfer of such power, a good efficient structure is needed. For such power to be transmitted out the centre of mass should be isolated and a good root (line of force transmission from the centre of mass to the point of resistance, usually gravity) is required. In combat, here is where method, strategy, technique and positioning come in. Techniques and body usage in a martial art can be based on internal or external generation of the movements. This determines the place internal work has in the martial arts system and its usage.

The training sequence, principles and practices behind it, etc, for Taijiquan can be found on the other pages on this website. Each stage in the training sequence builds up and trains the art in a progressive manner. The form training trains the body and mind's focus and structure as well as the efficient execution of the techniques. It also enables the practitioner to be more aware of his body and what it's doing, this eventually helps him understand what the opponent is doing in his body. Push hands is more than just merely training sensitivity, it also teaches how the 13 techniques work technically, how they feel like and how they are countered. The 8 techniques and 5 directions which form the thirteen techniques represent the 8 was which an attacking force and structure is dealt with and turned to one's own advantage and the 5 directions direct the positioning and spatial awareness to be in the right place at the right time to execute it (I believe the Aikido people call it Ma-ai).

In addition to the combative elements delineated in some pages on this website, I think I'll elaborate a little on the mechanism of push hands here. Contact is the means by which sensitivity to the opponent is cultivated, maintaining that contact through continuous sticking, adhering and following is achieved by cultivating zhan nian jing (adhering sticking jing) which is distinct from peng jing (ward off jing) which is an outward and upward type of jing. This kind of jing maintains contact even when the structure is 'disconnected' from the centre of mass to prevent the opponent from detecting it and controlling it via contact (a very possible case when in contact with another Taijiquan exponent). The structure only connected to the centre when using jing in any of the techniques to blend, redirect, take initiative, counter, strike, etc. The centre and root always being kept out of harms way through information gleaned through this sensitivity. This allows the centre to 'suddenly appear and disappear'. It also conforms to the principles of 'not resisting and not losing contact' and the opponent ends up entering into emptiness, finding no purchase for his techniques. This sticking and following without resisting brings forth the characteristic of softness in Taijiquan. Their aim is to beat a greater force with a lesser one appropriately applied and to beat a faster one with a slower more effective one and of course not getting hit in the process. All the while keeping good structure and not exposing one's weaknesses to the opponent.

It's not just the opponent's structure, centre, root and strength that can be sensed but also his intent and his 'reading pressure'. This allows one to actually present a false centre, one that can be moved out of focus quickly, or an illusion of a centre by emulating it via structure and so 'entice' him into emptiness. This is a form of trap. Neutralisation need not be linear, one can actually flow around the structure to get behind it and the strength in it to add to it and so take over control of it though control of the centre is paramount since in controlling that you effectively control the whole body.

Efficient power and its flow should be smooth and unimpeded by structure and generation. This brings out the Taijiquan characteristic of 'sung' which can be both 'relaxed' and 'without tension'. It also brings out the fluidity and multidirectional capability of the flow of power in a technique.

In my view this mode of traditional training can bring results in both combat, health, even mental and spiritual (due to elevated awareness/consciousness) development.

# The Ten Essentials of Taijiquan

**Narrated by Yang Cheng Fu**

**Recorded by Chen Wei Ming**

*From the book "Yang Style Taijiquan" by Yang Zhen Duo*

## **1. Straightening The Head**

Stand straight and hold the head and neck naturally erect, with the mind concentrated on the top. Do not strain or be tense; otherwise, the blood and vital energy cannot circulate smoothly.

## **2. Correct Position Of Chest And Back**

Keep the chest slightly inward, which will enable you to sink your breath to the dan tian (lower belly). Do not protrude your chest, otherwise you will feel uneasy in breathing and somewhat "top heavy".

Great force can be launched only when you keep the vital energy in your lower belly.

## **3. Relaxation Of Waist**

For the human body, the waist is the dominant part. When you relax the waist, your two feet will be strong enough to form a firm base. All the movements depend on the action of the waist, as the saying goes: "Vital force comes from the waist". Inaccurate movements in taijiquan stem from erroneous actions of the waist.

## **4. Solid And Empty Stance**

It is of primary importance in taijiquan to distinguish between "Xu" (Empty) and "Shi" (Solid). If you shift the weight of the body on to the right leg, then the right leg is solidly planted on the ground and the left leg is in an empty stance. When your weight is on the left leg, then the left leg is firmly planted on the ground and the right leg is in an empty stance. Only in this way can you turn and move your body adroitly and without effort, otherwise you will be slow and clumsy in your movements and not able to remain stable and firm on your feet.

## **5. Sinking Of Shoulders And Elbows**

Keep your shoulder in a natural, relaxed position. If you lift your shoulders, the qi will rise with them and the whole body will be without strength. You should also keep the elbows down, otherwise you will not be able to keep your shoulders relaxed and move your body with ease.

## **6. Using The Mind Instead Of Force**

Among the people who practise taijiquan, it is quite common to hear this comment: "That is entirely using the mind, not force". In practising taijiquan, the whole body is relaxed, and there is not an iota of stiff or clumsy strength in the veins or joints to hinder the movement of the body. People may ask: How can one increase his strength without exercising force? According to traditional Chinese medicine, there is in the human body a system of pathways called jingluo (or meridian) which link the viscera with different parts of the body, making the human body an integrated whole. If the jingluo is not impeded, then the vital energy will

circulate in the body unobstructed. But if the jingluo is filled with stiff strength, the vital energy will not be able to circulate and consequently the body cannot move with ease. One should therefore use the mind instead of force, so that vital energy will follow in the wake of the mind or consciousness and circulate all over the body. Through persistent practice one will be able to have genuine internal force. This is what taijiquan experts call "Lithe in appearance, but powerful in essence".

A master of Taijiquan has arms which are as strong as steel rods wrapped in cotton with immense power concealed therein. Boxers of the "Outer School" (a branch of wushu with emphasis on attack, as opposed to the "Inner School" which places the emphasis on defence) look powerful when they exert force but when they cease to do so, the power no longer exists. So it is merely a kind of superficial force.

## **7. Coordination Of Upper And Lower Parts**

According to the theory of taijiquan, the root is in the feet, the force is launched through the legs, controlled by the waist and expressed by the fingers; the feet, the legs and the waist form a harmonious whole. When the hands, the waist and the legs move, the eyes should follow their movements. This is meant by coordination of the upper and lower parts. If any part should cease to move, then the movements will be disconnected and fall into disarray.

## **8. Harmony Between The Internal And External Parts**

In practising taijiquan, the focus is on the mind and consciousness. Hence the saying: "The mind is the commander, the body is subservient to it". With the tranquility of the mind, the movements will be gentle and graceful. As far as the "frame" is concerned, there are only the Xu (empty), shi (solid), kai (open) and he (close). Kai not only means opening the four limbs but the mind as well, he means closing the mind along with the four limbs. Perfection is achieved when one unifies the two and harmonizes the internal and external parts into a complete whole.

## **9. Importance Of Continuity**

In the case of the "Outer School" (which emphasizes attack) of boxing, the strength one exerts is still and the movements are not continuous, but are sometimes made off and on, which leaves opening the opponent may take advantage of. In taijiquan, one focuses the attention on the mind instead of force, and the movements from the beginning to the end are continuous and in an endless circle, just "like a river which flows on and on without end" or "like reeling the silk thread off cocoons".

## **10. Tranquility In Movement**

In the case of the "Outer School" of boxing, the emphasis is on leaping, bouncing, punching and the exertion of force, and so one often gasps for breath after practising. But in taijiquan, the movement is blended with tranquility, and while performing the movements, one maintains tranquility of mind. In practising the "frame", the slower the movement the better the results. This is because when the movements are slow, one can take deep breath and sink it to the dan tian. It has a soothing effect on the body and the mind.

Learners of taijiquan will get a better understanding of all this through careful study and persistent practice.

# Talks On The Practice Of Taijiquan

**Narrated by Yang Cheng Fu**

**Recorded by Zhang Hong Kui**

*From the book "Yang Style Taijiquan" by Yang Zhen Duo*

There are many schools of Chinese wushu (martial arts), all with technical skills based on philosophy. Since ancient times, many people have devoted their lifetime and energy to probing the nature and essence of wushu and mastering the maximum skills, but few have succeeded. However, a learner can improve his skill if he keeps on practising and someday he will become an expert. As the saying goes: Drops falling, if they fall constantly, will bore through a stone.

Taijiquan is a part of the rich cultural heritage of China. It is an art in whose slow and gentle movements are embodied vigour and force. As a Chinese saying aptly puts it, "Inside the cotton is hidden a needle". Its technical, physiological and mechanical qualities all have a philosophical basis. For learners, the guidance of a good teacher and discussions of the skills and techniques with friends are necessary, but the most important thing is persistent and untiring practice. Indeed, there is nothing like practice, and learners of taijiquan, men and women, young and old, will get the best possible results if they keep at it all the year round.

In recent years, the number of people studying taijiquan in various parts of China has been increasing. This is an indication of the bright prospects of wushu. Many learners are conscientious and persistent in training, which will enable them to attain a high level of achievement. It should be pointed out that two wrong tendencies should be guarded against. The first is that some people who are young and talented acquired a quicker understanding than most other people and so become complacent and stop half way. These people can never achieve great success. The second wrong tendency is that some learners are too anxious to achieve quick success and get instant benefits. They want to learn everything in a short time, from shadow boxing to wielding the sword, broadsword, spear and other weapons. They know a smattering of each, but do not grasp the essence and their movements and postures are full of flaws to the expert eye. It is difficult to correct their movements, for a thorough "overhaul" is needed and, as often as not, they might change in the morning and return to the old habits in the evening. Hence the saying in Chinese boxing circles: "Learning taijiquan is easy but to correct a wrong style is difficult". In other words, more haste less speed. And if these people pass on their mistakes to others, they will be doing a great harm.

In learning taijiquan, one should first of all start from the quan jia or frame of boxing; he should practise according to the routines and follow the master's every movement carefully, and keep each action in mind. Meanwhile, he should pay attention to the nei, wai, shang and xia. Nei means using the mind rather than force. Wai means the relaxation of the limbs, shoulders and elbows, making the movements from the foot to the leg to the waist gentle and continuous. Shang means straightening the head, and xia means sinking the breath to the lower belly.

For a beginner, the most important thing is to remember these points, grasp their essence and practise each basic movement correctly over and over again, never seeking quick success and instant benefit. It is advisable to make slow and steady progress, for this will pay in the long run. In practising taijiquan, it is necessary to keep all the joints in the body relaxed, so that the movements will be natural and unrestrained. Do not hold your breath (that may lead to puff and blow), and do not use stiff strength in moving the arms, legs and waist and body, but try

to make your movements gentle and continuous. These two points are well-known among the wushu experts, but many trainees have difficulty putting them into practice.

The learners should bear in mind the following points:

1. Keep your head erect and do not incline it forward or backward. As the saying goes, "Its like there is something on your head, and you should take care not to let it fall". But you should not hold your head in a stiff manner, and though your eyes look straight ahead, they should follow the movements of the limbs and body. Although your eyes look into vacancy, they are an important component of the movements of the body as whole. Your mouth should remain half open and half closed, with the nose breathing in and mouth breathing out naturally. If saliva is produced in the mouth swallow it.

2. Hold the torso straight and the backbone and free end of the sacrum vertical. When moving, always keep the chest slightly inward and the back upright. The beginners should keep these key points in mind, otherwise their movements will become mere formality or dull-looking, and they will not be able to make much progress in spite of long years of practice. 3. Relax the joints of both arms, letting the shoulders droop and the elbows curve naturally; the palms should be slightly extended and the fingers slightly bent. Move the arms by consciousness and send qi (breath or vital energy) to the fingers. Remember these key points and success will be yours.

4. Take note of the difference in stance between the two legs which move as gently as those of a cat. When one foot is planted firmly on the ground, the other is in an empty stance. When you shift the weight on to the left leg, then the left foot is firmly on the ground, while the right foot is in an empty stance, and vice versa. though the foot is in an empty stance it is always ready to move. When the foot is firmly on the ground, it does not mean that you should exert too much force on that leg, for if you do so, your body will incline forward and you will lose your balance.

5. The action of the feet is divided into kicking upward and kicking downward. When you kick upward, pay attention to your toes, and when you kick downward, pay attention to the sole; consciousness of the action will be followed by vital energy, and vital energy will be followed by strength. When you do all this, you should relax the joints and avoid stiffness.

In practising taijiquan, one should first master and practise the "frame" as above mentioned (bare-handed forms), such as Taiji shadow boxing and changquan (long shadow boxing); then one can proceed to single-hand pushing, one-site pushing, pushing with feet moving and free-hand fighting, and after a period one can take exercises with weapons such as taiji sword, taiji scimitar and taiji spear.

Learners should practise regularly every morning or before going to bed. It is preferable to practise seven or eight times during the daytime; if one is hard pressed for time, then at least once in the morning and once in the evening. Do not practise immediately after meals or after drinking. The best place is in the gardens or parks where the air is fresh and the environment conducive to health. Do not practise on windy days or in a filthy place. For when you do exercise, you might breathe in too much dust or dirt which is harmful to your lungs. It is advisable to put on sportswear and comfortable cloth or rubber shoes. When you sweat, don't take off your clothes or wipe with cold towels, lest you catch cold and fall ill.

# Yang Style Eye Usage

*By Yang Zheng Ji  
Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

Yang style Taijiquan is very particular about the method of using the eyes. Tradition has it that when Yang Cheng Fu pushed hands or engaged in combat, when emitting jing would look at the opponent and the opponent on receiving the strength would fall in the direction which he looked. Looking at Yang Shao Hou's precious image, his eyes appears to have brightness shooting forth, this is a result of long term training fully concentrating on the eyes as well as the internal qi.

Yang Cheng Fu said: " The eyes though should look forward levelly, sometimes following the body and so shift, the line of sight though may be fixed on emptiness is an essential movement in the change, this compensates the body method's inadequacies."

Yang style Taijiquan's requirements regarding the eyes are:

1. The eyes should look forward levelly. In normal circumstances, the eyes look levelly forward, looking through the hand in front towards the front, caring for the hand, but not fixed dead on the hand. The eyes can also look downward to the front, it must follow the boxing posture's main hand movement and so determine the direction to look.
2. The expression of the eyes is in accordance to the movements, the principle of the eyes's turning follows the body's movements. The body moves the eyes follow, the body faces what direction, the eyes gaze towards that direction. Taijiquan's practice has continuous forward advancing backward retreating left and right turns, when forward advancing backward retreating, left turn right rotate depends on the waist and body turning, the eyes in left looking right glancing must follow the waist and body's turning to turn.
3. The eyes and the intent are consistent. The eyes are the mind's focal point, what the mind is considering, the eyes is concentrated upon, if the eyes and the movements are not in accordance the internal and external are also not in agreement, the usage of the eyes have an important use in push hands, necessary to observe the opponent's upper and lower portions, closely observing the direction of movement of the opponent's back, in the course of movement catching hold of the opportune time to cause the opponent to be in a predicament.
4. The method of the eyes must be natural. When utilising the eyes, do not stare, do not close the eyes, keep the spirit held within. The correct use of the expression of the eyes has a relationship with the energy at the top is light and sensitive (xu ling ding jing), the energy at the top is light and sensitive, then the spirit can be raised, then the eyes will naturally have expression.

# Tung Ying Jieh's Taijiquan Basic Instructions

1. Relax
2. Use slow, continuous Movements
3. In learning, do not apply any force in the movements. In practicing the exercise, one will gradually gain strength and know how to apply it.
4. In learning, use natural breathing through the nose, but keep the breathing slow and gentle. With practice, breathing will be gradually matched with the movements. Intentional matching of breathing with movements for beginners may, however, be harmful. After about one year's practice of Tai Chi Chuan when the movements become correct, smooth and effortless, the teacher may be requested to give instructions on the method of breathing during the exercise.
5. In the various movements, pay special attention to the shifting of the body weight between the two feet. This is accomplished by shifting the position of the torso, whether forward, backward or sidewise. This torso should be maintained in a vertical posture.
6. Pay attention also to the change in the direction the body is facing, through the twisting of the waist.
7. During the exercise, knees and elbows are always bent, although the extent that they are bent is different and keeps changing.
8. The knees, when bent, should not be further forward than the toes. This helps to keep the balance.
9. Whenever the hands are raised, keep the elbows slightly lower than the hands. This helps to relax the shoulders.
10. In making steps, lower the heel first. Try to step in the way of a cat or a crane.
11. Always use the mind to lead the movements. Hence the eyes should lead the movements, although in appearance, it may look as if the eyes follow the movements.
12. Tai Chi Chuan may be played any time of the day, but the best time is in the early morning before breakfast and one hour before bed time. Avoid doing it immediately after a heavy meal, and do not sit down or take a cold water bath immediately after the exercise.

# Dr Tseng Ju Pai's Taijiquan Principles And Techniques

*Taken from his book 'Primordial Pugilism - Tai Chi Chuan'. Dr Tseng was a disciple of the great Master Yang Cheng Fu.*

The principles and techniques of Tai Chi Chuan are somewhat unusual. All however are contained in the Golden Maxims handed down by Wu Ho-Ching. For beginners it is necessary to give here a summary.

1. The vertebral column, especially the neck, should be kept upright, so that the vital fluid (qi) can easily rise to the top and the spirit can constantly rise as well. But in making movements, the chest must be slightly concave and the back slightly convex, so that the breath can sink to the Tan Tien.
2. The shoulder should be lowered, and the elbow down. If the shoulders are raised they may cause the breath to "float" and the body become feeble. When the elbow rises horizontally, it makes the arm feeble, giving the opponent an opportunity to dislocate it.
3. The stances and the movements of the hands should be alternated with Yang (the real or exerted strength) and with Yin (the unreal or lesser strength).
4. The vital fluid (qi) must always be sinking to the Tan Tien, so that it makes the body not only full of vigour but also tireless.
5. The whole body, especially the abdomen, must be completely relaxed, thus freeing it from nervous tension to ensure smooth flowing of the vital fluid (qi). On this account, the actions in practice must be in accord with respiration, and taken in a relaxed manner, slowly and smoothly. It is advisable to let the body sweat to accelerate the metabolism and to turn out many internal complaints, since sweating is a cleansing as well as a cooling process.
6. The mind must be fixed and calm, then the sense is sober and unafraid. Thus it can freely apply the techniques of the art.
7. The actions of the body must be co-ordinated with the mind. In emergency the mind works swiftly, and when psychical and physical forces join together they give rise to super-strength (unusual) immediately.
8. One must keep one's mind on the waist, at all times, loosening it, so that it revolves like a wheel. It must be in harmony with the limbs as an integrated whole, so that the technique is flawless and efficient in application. Do not forget that while putting forth strength the waist must be utilised and keep it unmoved, simply loosen and concentrated only in one direction.
9. Never use strength against strength. An opponent's force should be yielded to. When the left side is pushed (when force is applied to it) it should become unreal (empty, yielding). Same with the right. The rest can be treated in a similar way. These are negative ways. The positive way is to use the opponent's force, even to throw him, pound or subdue him. The technical term here is "borrowing strength". The techniques of Tai Chi Chuan are the most useful in general to attain this end.
10. A quick action is received with a quick action. Likewise a slow action with slow. How can one act in response more quickly than the opponent? Attention should be paid to the triangle of his upper body. The top and two shoulders. When the top moves, his leg would be lifted. When his right shoulder moves his right hand would be out. Same with the left. As soon as it moves, action should be taken immediately.

# Principles And Practices In Taijiquan

By Peter Lim Tian Tek

Taijiquan is both a martial art and a health art. Its correct practice brings benefits in both areas. To practice correctly, a proper understanding of the theories behind the practice is required. Here is a short discussion on some of the more important ones pertaining to both health and combat.

## Principles

### *Loose, No Tension (Sung)*

Relax and loosen all the joints and sink them so that they are flexible, connected and are able to integrate into proper structure. Proper structure is held with the minimum of muscular exertion with gravity providing the downward stacking providing power from the root into ground. Proper relaxation of the musculature provides more efficient use of it resulting in a pliable strength rather than tensed strength.

I prefer translation 'no tension' than the word relaxation which can imply limpness. Why is there a need to sung? Very simply because if you don't the muscles are not able to work efficiently. Tensed muscles occur when the antagonistic muscle groups have in some way impeded the motion of each other, as such tension is the retained energy (inefficiency) of the move. This results in reduced mobility, promotes fatigue and reduced power. Jing travels through a strike much like a wave or pulse with relaxed musculature conducting it with no retained tension, much like a whip which has no tension but is able to deliver a telling strike.

### *Stability By Sinking (Wen, Chen)*

Stability is a result of coordinated body structure in relation to the downward pull of gravity resulting in a net force against the earth from both body weight and downward projection of mass through a singular point identified as the root. Lowering the centre of gravity is essential to stability, we should lower it to the centre of the sphere of influence of our physical body.

### *Agility (Ling)*

Agility is a result of non-double weighting and non-dead rooting. By only maintaining one point of substantial contact with the ground you gain the ability to move quickly, much like a ball which moves easily across the ground because it only has one point of contact with it.

The key is the word "centre". We should avoid "dead rooting". The idea is to lower your centre of gravity to your proper centre which is at the Tan Tien, there it should have a net downward force but is "hung" from the torso in the correct location. This would give you a centred but light feeling. If you are trying to get your centre to the oot of your feet, that is not centredness. Ask yourself where the centre of your body should be and there is where the mass of the centre should be. Some information on the external and internal methodologies adopted to train this. The external way of training is to force the centre down as far as it can go and then slowly the reaction force from the ground would build up the musculature to support the downward force back up to where it should be centred. The internal method would be to centre the centre of gravity first, get a proper structure to support it and when that

is done then slowly lower the stance through time to foster proper development without sacrificing efficient structure and alignment.

### ***Sensitivity (Ming Gan)***

One of the keys in TCC combat, trained by bringing the mind (Yi) along each point of the motion and each point on the body. Use the conscious mind to bring the focus but train the subconscious to respond and become more aware. We need Sensitivity to detect where the centre is and where there are flaws in the structure that can be exploited., also to detect where his energy is and its movement.

### ***Yuan (Roundness)***

The roundness of the structure denotes a smooth connection and efficient transfer of force and energy. Hence in your postures, seek roundness. Roundness also helps in the dissipation of incoming energy like an egg or a sphere.

### ***Not Losing Contact, Not Resisting (Bu Tiu Bu Ting)***

This means literally "not losing contact, not resisting" and is perhaps one of the most descriptive terms of Taiji combat. Peng and its characteristics is what enables this to occur. Peng is expansive in nature, it has the qualities of sticking and bouyancy and stability. If your opponent retreats, it follows, if he advances its sticks and redirects.

In cultivating this principle, we need to understand that sticking is necessary in order to "listen" to your opponent's strength and understand it in order to counter it by turning it against himself. It makes it possible for you to detect gaps and flaws in his structure and balance and turn them to your advantage. At the same time the bouyant quality makes it hard for your opponent to detect your centre.

### **Breathing**

Breathing initially should be natural and into the abdomen but as you learn how to "swim in air" and air attains a heavy quality not unlike water, you will find that it takes relaxed "effort" to generate the movement. As a result of this the breathing pattern will naturally change to your abdomen expanding when you push out, much like the way it does when you are pushing a car. This is the point where reverse breathing becomes natural. It should be a natural transition and should not be forced. Practicing reverse breathing by itself to isolate the tan tien and its movements in qigong should also not be forced. (Reverse breathing is to pull in the abdomen on inhaling and extend it on exhaling)

## **Practices**

### **The Three Heights And Four Frames (San Pan Si Jia)**

The three heights and four frames. The three heights are high, middle and low, the four frames are slow, fast, large, small. These denote the different ways of doing the form, each for a specific purpose.

### ***The Three Heights***

### **Middle**

This is the normal way we practice with the knees bent and the body lowered. Here is where we learn the movements, their coordination, transition and focus.

### **Low**

At this level, our thighs should be at least parallel to the ground. It gets to this level progressively from the middle frame. It adds to the difficulty of the form and aids in further development in regards to endurance, body connection and coordination, stability and strength.

### **High**

At this level, we refine the connection and coordinations so that the techniques can be effected with minimal movement.

## ***The Four Frames***

### **Slow**

This is where we learn the coordination and transitions, focus and putting the many factors that make good boxing together.

### **Large**

This facilitates stretching and developing resiliency, good circulation and proper muscular development through large movements. It also allows the movement in the technique to be savoured and fully understood. It is usually done slowly as well.

### **Fast**

This is where the techniques are executed quickly but without losing the qualities obtained by training it slow and large.

### **Small**

This is to refine the techniques to their essentials so that they can be effected with minimum effort and movement.

Normally in training, after the learning the set in the middle height and slow frame, we go on to fast at a slightly lower height whilst retaining the same relaxedness, sinking and connection as the before. Then we go to low height at a lower speed with a large movements. And finally to a high height with small movements. This was the way Yang Pan Hou trained his students.

## **Form And Training**

The form teaches us the content of the art, allows us to know ourselves and how we function. Tui Shou and other two man exercises expand on this knowledge and teach us also how to know others. In knowing ourselves and knowing others we can conquer them a hundred times out of a hundred. The form teaches us how our body can function efficiently and how it moves, what makes it live and and what makes it effective. We learn here how to experience and control what we loosely refer to as "energy", "vitality principle", "vector energy", "jing" or "qi". The form is a means to experience, cultivate and learn how to effectively use this energy.

This energy is manifested through opening and closing and has its origins in breath. This energy movement denotes the internal form (nei xing) and the physical movement denotes the external form (wai xing). In the beginning the internal form comes from and is molded by the external form but later the external form follows the dictates of the internal form. In the beginning the mind directs the movements and is distinct from it, later the mind and the movement are one. The mind and body,

internally and externally, fused to become one entity, one reality. This is necessary for quick reactions and for the body and mind to act together to make the most of the situation. This mind-body coordination and synthesis should become instinctive.

As one becomes more dependent on the internal form, or flow of energy, the external form becomes less focused upon as the energy is manifested through it and it acts in accord. Till both internal and external fuse and become one with the internal form determining the external form and one reaches the level where mind and energy are the only considerations. Here is where the mind-energy being one acts as the mind dictates and the body acts as the energy that powers it dictates. Ego has no place, nor thoughts as one reacts accordingly, to the principles of the energy, to blend, nullify and balance (read direct back to origin) with the incoming flow of energy from your opponent's attack. The physical weapon is driven by the force within it, the force is an energy that is distinct from the weapon, it is upon this that we act. This is internal boxing and its internal strategies in combat.

### **Push Hands (Tui Shou) and Sparring Hands (San Shou)**

In Taijiquan, Tui Shou is a practice to achieve several major goals:

- (1) Develop sensitivity to your opponent's motion and its origin
- (2) Develop the ability to effortlessly redirect your opponent's motion by detecting and utilising the weak vector of his motion
- (3) Apply and practice a flexible rooting with fixed and moving steps whilst responding to your opponent's strength and motion.

Tui shou was also called Rou Shou (soft hands) to emphasize non-resistance. It is not a combat practice. San shou which is the application of the sensitivity and effortlessness developed through tui shou in a combat situation (blows, kicks, locks, grabs, etc) is the actual combative training in Taijiquan.

Free fighting is free form san shou and is as close as you can get to combat without being actually having someone out to hurt you. The Yang school has an 88 posture (44 per person) fixed form san shou which is akin to fixed form sparring to slowly guide the person into free form fighting or sparring. Ting jing is paramount in Taijiquan as only in being sensitive enough to detect your opponent's motion, its qualities and its origin (this is the most important) that you can control him.

The two man Taijiquan set have specific training methodologies and goals. Fixed steps trains the sensitivity, stability and power within a limited range of motion. Moving steps expands this to a simple back and forth motion with transference of centre and control of it in motion whilst keeping it from being under control of your opponent. Ta Lu adds the corner movements so that the repertoire is not limited to back and forth and teaches that retreat is also a form of attack, plus the use of the remaining four fundamental techniques. Free form push hands combines all the elements but still limiting it to basic push hands parameters. The goals:

- (1) To achieve sensitivity through contact

(2) To use that sensitivity to find the flaws through "not resisting and not letting go" which should be proactive in that you don't resist his motion but redirect it using its flaws in a motion that not only neutralises it but in turn is an attack on his centre

(3) To apply the principles cultivated in the form (correct posture, rooting, sensing energy, knowledge of your own centre, etc) in a reactive situation with a partner

(4) To learn the basics of attack and defense through the use and neutralisation of effortless power born of proper rooting, posture and motion.

Attracting to emptiness simply means presenting the opponent a target which is actually a trap to lead him into emptiness (neutralising and causing his force and momentum to act against himself), when done properly your opponent's thousand pound force can be deflected and used against himself by the simple application of four ounces on the weakest vector of the incoming force to alter its trajectory back to the origin. One of the keys of Taijiquan is to never use more than four ounces and never receive more than 4 ounces (not exactly four ounces mind you, it simply indicates a light force). Space creation and destruction is necessary knowledge.

Is pushing hands a win or lose competition? No, it isn't. It is a form of training in which both parties benefit. Oft times you will get good teachers who will let one party do the pushing and the other do the countering to teach one to detect the centre and the other to avoid detection and to counter. Winning or losing should not be important at this level of training as the goal is for the partners to train each other in knowing themselves and each other.

### **Beating Big with Small, Fast with Slow**

Beating Big with Small usually means overcoming a big force with a lesser one. This is attained by not directly opposing the big force but redirecting to our advantage by adding a smaller force to change the trajectory of the larger force.

Beating fast with slow means beating a fast opponent with a slower technique. How is this achieved? No matter how fast an attacking limb is, it is always slower than the body behind it or the last joint between it and the body. By affecting the body directly via the centre, by avoiding the fast moving end and attacking the middle or last joint of the limb, we need not move as fast as we would normally need to meet the fast end of the limb and stop it. It is also easier to change its ultimate trajectory by affecting it closer to the trajectory's origin.

Ultimately by focusing in on the origins of his strength which is his centre and his root, we need not move as fast as his attacking limb since that is not our focus.

### **Training the Mind's Eye (Perception)**

The Mind's Eye is the way we perceive the outside world in relation to ourselves. In Taijiquan we alter the normal perception via the way we practice. In doing the set slowly and with full intent, we become aware of the transition of the movement through time and creates an internal division of time according to the stages of movement. When doing the movement quickly this internal division still applies but because it was previously set at a slower pace, the movement though quick to others

still has the same quantity of time internally which allows us to function at speed without losing perception due to it.

Much of how we perceive time, space and movement is determined by how fast that information reaches the seat of our consciousness. If our attention is divided by many internal messages coming in, an external stimuli, even if slow, will appear quick and catch us by surprise. Fear and discomfort are two major causes of such internal 'noise' that clouds our ability to perceive "real time". Hence the requirement for most martial arts to develop a clear mind. By calming ourselves, sinking and relaxing to reduce tension and discomfort, losing our ego to put aside the fear of loss we can see what is coming much more clearly and the quick is no longer that quick because you know where its coming from and going to, and when it will arrive.

### **Point Focus In Jing Generation**

An example of point focus using the An (Push) posture:

Taijiquan technique is manifestation of having qi in your meridians powering the musculature. Qi is what gives the musculature the tenacity or tonus to manifest the technique using the bones as a base (at least according to the chinese). The qi would travel through the meridians originating at Yung Chuan (Bubbling Well, K1, wonder why its called that, now you know) causing the musculature to be "qi-filled" to exhibit tenacity directed to a focal point denoted by mental focus at Lao Gong (Hard Work, P8, now you know why its named like that). Which is why there is the saying that the mind leads the qi. This tenacity is what gives the five bows of the body (i.e. the back which is the main bow, and the four limbs which are the secondary bows) the stored potential energy which can be released or 'shot' into your opponent. The back needs to be loose but straightened to allow the unrestricted use of tenacity from the muscles connected to it and to provide a clear 'signal' with as little peripheral stimulus to the nerves emanating from the spinal cord to the muscles.

The connection path and the manifest energy is referred to as jing (sometimes transliterated as chin). Hence Taijiquan movements are often described as 'propelled'. Qi is present in the body all the time but it is its specific gathering, focus and transmission that makes it relevant in terms of martial arts

# Yang Style Tai Chi Long Boxing -Yang Cheng Fu's Advanced Set

*By Peter Lim Tian Tek*

Most people think of Yang Tai Chi Chuan as transmitted by the standardiser of the style Yang Cheng Fu as consisting only of one routine. And that Yang Cheng Fu taught the art only as a health art rather than as a combat one. This is a wrong perception. Yang Cheng Fu viewed his art as a combat art that was also a means of gaining good health. His two books on Tai Chi Chuan all focused on it as a martial art and provided martial explanations for the postures, martial theorems and he taught his art not as a form of moving calisthenics but as a combat art. So great was Yang Cheng Fu's combat skills that he was never known to have been defeated. And he did teach a second advanced set: Tai Chi Long Boxing.

So where did the misconception that Yang Tai Chi Chuan was mainly health oriented come from? Mainly from those who cannot understand how a soft appropriate response to an attack is more effective than a reposit with great power which may not necessarily be efficient or appropriate. And those who cannot see the how the slow can beat the fast and how a lesser force can conquer a larger one.

Yang Lu Chan and his son Yang Ban Hou both were known for their combat skills, earning the title 'Yang the invincible'. Their teaching in the imperial court, rather than lowering the combat standard of their art, made it all the more imperative that they turned out exceptional students with high attainment. Their lives and status depended on it. Yang Cheng Fu, likewise, was mainly noted as a martial artist, not as a health expert. Tai Chi Chuan's curative capabilities was also promoted but that was not the main thrust of Yang Cheng Fu's teachings. Those who learnt from him learnt the art as a combat art and in time gained the health benefits of practicing the art as a combat art.

## Historical Background

Before going to Shanghai in the 1925, Yang Cheng Fu taught not only the now well known large frame (also known as the 'Six Routines' since it was normally broken up into six sections and practiced one section at a time when learning and eventually linking all six together to form one long routine) but to his advanced students he also taught a set of Tai Chi Long Boxing.

After he went to Shanghai at the invitation of Chen Wei Ming to popularise Tai Chi Chuan, he dropped Tai Chi Long Boxing from the public syllabus he taught. This was because all the elements needed for success were present in the large frame, the Tai Chi Long Boxing being a refinement of the principles within the large frame. Another reason being that in his teaching tours to the major cities in China, he did not have much time to teach the students gathered there and so the large frame alone was taught.

The early large frame of Yang Cheng Fu included Fa-Chin (explosive emission of strength) with slow and fast movements. Later the explosive strength emissions were replaced with extending the limb with qi which is a basic method of practice. It must be noted that not all the movements were practiced with Fa-Chin and that even with the changes in speed the requirements for smoothness, continuity, relaxation and rootedness remain.

Till today, it is still only taught as an advanced set (by only a handful of teachers) after one has attained a sufficiently high level of practice in the large frame. Normally, only when one has learnt the large frame and does it with Fa-Chin in it does one progress to the Tai Chi Long Boxing. It is relatively unknown but remains the advanced set of Yang Cheng Fu's Tai Chi Boxing.

## **The Form**

Tai Chi Long Boxing consists of 59 postures, less than the large frame but most of its postures are derived from the large frame. It is an agile form, much more mobile than the large frame and is even more combat oriented than the large frame.

In order to practice this form effectively, one should have already attained all the aspects of the large frame. All the joints should be 'open', supple and relaxed. The root should be sunk and clearly single weighted, the five bows of the body utilised coordinatively, the spirit and head raised and musculature relaxed. Energy is generated from the feet, directed by the waist and functions through the hands and fingers.

The speed of practice is faster than the large frame. Fa-Chin is present so there are fast movements during explosions of strength. It is also relatively higher standing than the large frame. Proper rooting isn't just standing low and one should already have gained an understanding of that before learning this form. It is a lively form and imbued with much spiritedness and intense focus. It is similar in many ways to Yang Shao Hou's small frame combat set.

At advanced levels both the large frame and the Long Boxing forms are practiced. Because it is so combat oriented, some have referred to it as Yang Cheng Fu's fighting form. Others, because of its faster speed its often called the Fast Form as well. Tung Ying Jieh's fast form is derived in part from Tai Chi Long Boxing and still retains some of its postures.

Because it is a relatively short form, some masters have added postures to the original to lengthen it. This has resulted in versions of Tai Chi Long Boxing with as many as 150 postures in the form. Fortunately, the original form was recorded down by Chen Wei Ming and Yang Shou Chung, Yang Cheng Fu's eldest son, taught it (there were some additional posture names given to the interim movements but upon close examination, the form is almost exactly the same).

## **Combat Characteristics**

The main type of attacking chin used in Tai Chi Long Boxing is Leng Chin or Cold Chin as in Cold Without Defense, it is a spectacular very fast and short Chin that so shocks the enemy that he breaks out in a cold sweat.

The closing of distance to the opponent is done quickly, sometimes in a leaping fashion. The movements, though fast, are neat and succinct, relaxed and sunk. In postures like 'Detecting Root' which is similar to 'Apparent Closure', the fingers are used to detect the root of the opponent as a prelude to a Fa-Chin attack. Very important for an effective attack. There are quick changes in direction, deliberate avoiding of incoming attacks and smaller circular movements. High, middle and low level attacks are accounted for and are present in the form.

Foot stomping, slaps and whipping attacks are present as are limb breaking and dislocating techniques.

There are chin na techniques as well as releases from chin na techniques in the form, most of these are targeted at anatomically vulnerable locations like accupoints. Specific accupoints are also attacked by a variety of different methods and 'illegal' applications are present as well, since in a real fight there are no rules. Like the large frame, each part of every technique has an inherent application and the form, though fast, is subtle as well. All this while still conforming to the principles set out in the Tai Chi Chuan Classics.

Because the movements of the form are relatively high standing and small, they are very practical to use either in rather restrictive work clothing and in small places. Control and usage of the opponent's centre and momentum play a part in all the techniques and in every technique there are inherently 4 techniques of neutralising (Hua), holding (Na), hitting (Da) and emitting (Fa). Listening to Chin or Ting Chin is a crucial element in combat Tai Chi Chuan and this sensitivity is present throughout the form.

## **Tai Chi Long Boxing Today**

Yang Cheng Fu's Tai Chi Long Boxing is seldom taught today. It is practiced by relatively few Tai Chi Chuan exponents even in China. Only those who trained in the earlier period with Yang Cheng Fu or his close disciples got to learn the form. It was kept quite secret and in Chen Wei Ming's lineage, its sometimes referred to as Tai Chi Kept Boxing (kept or keep in Chinese is pronounced 'chang' which is phonetically the same as the Chinese term for long, so this is a Chinese pun), meaning that it was kept within doors and not transmitted outside.

Yang Shou Chung, Yang Cheng Fu's son, taught this form to his three daughters and some of his close disciples like Mr Yip Tai Tuck and Mr Chu Gin Soon. They continue the family tradition of teaching this rare form to advanced students. There are also other teachers who continue to teach this advanced set. It is fortunate that this rare form is not lost and continues to guide serious Tai Chi exponents on the intricacies of Tai Chi combat.

# The Practice of Tai Chi Long Boxing

by Peter Lim Tian Tek



## Foreword

I'd like to share some of the aspects pertaining to the practice of Taiji Long Boxing. It was an advanced form taught by Yang Cheng Fu to supplement the main form. It must be noted though that to achieve combat capability and health results, practice in the main form is all that is necessary, the Taiji Long Boxing is simply a more active method of practice. There are six characteristics to note when practicing Taiji Long Boxing:

### **1) Loosen And Open All The Joints, Loosen All The Way To The Bottom**

Loosen all the joints and extend them to enable ease of motion, this should be done from the head to foot. At no point should a joint be tightly unextended.

### **2) Chin Comes From The Foot, The Whole Body Acts As One In Coordination**

Chin comes in two forms, grounded chin which makes use of the ground or objects attached to the ground as a base and ungrounded chin which makes use of the centre of mass of the body as a base. In TCC, for the most part uses grounded chin. It is generated from the ground and passes through the body like pulse, the body's joints transmit and amplify it with coordinative usage of musculature. The chin is thus focused and efficient strength refined thus to achieve the purpose of the move.

### **3) Use Internal Chin, Don't Use Brute Strength**

Chin which is not obvious from external observation is denoted as being internal, for example if you push a rod against the wall, the rod can have strength which push it upwards instead of straight perpendicularly to the wall but that upwards strength vector is not obvious. So in TCC the internal flow of directed, efficient strength is more important than the external appearance. Don't use inefficient, unrefined, loosely focused strength.

### **4) In Looking Backwards Don't Break Or Lose, Continuous And Soft Without Breaks**

In turning of the head to look backwards in some postures, use a small circle to turn the head without using the upper torso to effect it or you will break and lose the chin connection and coordination of the rest of the body, the turning of the body should be done with the feet and waist in conjunction, any defect in the posture can ultimately be traced to this. Movement should be continuous to retain efficient usage of momentum and soft without hard muscular tension. Tension occurs when muscles fight against one another and this reduces the efficient usage of the musculature which should be used coordinatively for maximum efficiency.

### **5) Testing Chin**

Here is where the teacher lightly holds or attaches his hands to that of the student to detect any mistakes like not generating the chin from the legs, any postural defects which would

cause a weakening of the structure, that the strength is not brutally used, that it is continuous and relaxed, etc.

## **6) Seek Insubstantiality And Calm, Use The Mind And Not Use Strength**

One must seek calmness and emptiness in practice, to be one with the posture and unagitated so as to respond appropriately to any situation. Use the mind to focus the body and its actions and not just use brute strength to crash through.

Use the mind along each point of the movement, you'll be surprised how many 'dead spots' there are when you try doing that.

The Yang TC Long Boxing is an agile form with movements done quite fast and there is fa-jing inside.

# Yang Shao Hou's Small Frame

*By Peter Lim Tian Tek*

Yang Tai Chi Chuan first became well known through the prowess of its founder Yang Lu Chan. So skilled was Yang Lu Chan that he gained the prestigious title "Yang The Invincible". The art that Yang Lu Chan taught and was practiced by his sons and students is quite different from the Chen style of Tai Chi Chuan as popularised by Chen Fa Ke.

The art Yang practiced was supposed to have been the modified Chen form of Chen Chang Xin who studied under Jiang Fa. According to Wu Tu Nan, one of the most respected masters of the art, in his conversations with Chen Xin, learnt that Jiang Fa had taught Chen Chang Xin resulting in a modified art. It was because of that that Chen Chang Xin was forbidden to teach the family art of Pao Chui which the Chen family was famous for several generations, gaining the name "Pao Chui Chen Family". This could explain why Chen Chang Xin taught his classes in the back courtyard and only at night. The very place where Yang Lu Chan spied on his lessons and began to learn the art.

The old Yang form as taught by Yang Lu Chan and his sons in Yung Nien, before he left for the capital to teach at the imperial court still exists and it is quite similar to the modern Yang form and is quite distinct from the Chen style of Tai Chi Chuan. So the art taught by Yang Lu Chan was not Chen style Tai Chi Chuan, even from the very beginning. It retains the characteristics of the modern form and even though it retains the strength explosions (fa-chin), it is still quite different posturally from the modern Chen style of Tai Chi Chuan.

Yang Pan Hou also earned the name "Yang the Invincible" and his skill was second only to his father, Yang Lu Chan. He did not have many disciples because he was bellicose by nature. His brother's son, Yang Shao Hou, was given to him as a foster son and gained both his uncle's skill and his nature. Of the third generation of the Yang family, we are only certain that Yang Shao Hou had seen and probably was also personally taught by his grandfather, Yang Lu Chan. His skill was superior but because he spared no one, not even his students and attacked viciously during training, he had very few students. He shared the same prestige as his more well known younger brother Yang Cheng Fu and was well known to be very combat capable. Like his younger brother he was also never known to have been defeated.

## Yang Shao Hou's Art

When Yang Shao Hou first taught the art publicly, his form was the same as that of his younger brother Yang Chen Fu. That is to say he taught the large frame. Later in his life, he taught only advanced students who had already become accomplished in the large form. To these he taught a 'small frame' which was done very quickly but without losing the qualities of the large frame such as relaxation, sinking, calmness and continuity. The 200 over movements in the form was done very quickly, aiming to do the whole form in 2 or 3 minutes.

It was known as the 'small frame' because of its compact movements and should be distinguished from the 'small frame' taught by Yang Lu Chan and Yang Pan Hou in the Imperial Court. That form comes down to us today in the Wu Chien Chuan lineage. But there are common elements in both small frames. Yang Shao Hou's small frame is essentially a combination of the elements of the large frame and the small frame and done at speed. According to Wu Tu Nan, Yang Shao Hou's small frame was also known as the 'usage frame'. The form was supposed to have been created by Yang Lu Chan by distilling the essence of Tai Chi Chuan into this advanced combat set.

This set can only be learnt after attaining a high enough level in the large frame and is not the large frame done fast. It is also quite different from the Tai Chi Long Boxing taught by Yang Cheng Fu though again there are similar elements and common training theories.

Yang Shao Hou's Tai Chi Chuan exhibited the little known advanced level skills that an extension of the basic combat skills of sensitivity, control of centre and positional advantage to overcome a stronger force. These skills included attacking accupoints, bone locking, bone hitting, sinew splitting, blocking and controlling pressure points relating to blood flow, spectacular fa-chin at great speed and continuous motion with one technique flowing into another so that there were no breaks for counters. Without first gaining the basic skills, the advanced skills cannot be properly learnt and applied.

When he did his form, his eyes led the way, blazing and looking in all directions, he often had a grim smile on his face and would shout and roar to distract during a bout. Though his movements were relaxed, sunk and continuous, his form was so swift that he appeared to be darting all over the place. Those who saw him do his form were in awe of him and many aspired to gain his skill but few could take his harsh training.

Though he had only a few students, we are fortunate that the form still exists today though it is known and practiced only by a very limited number of exponents. It is in danger of becoming extinct. The advanced skills are present in the form but proper understanding of it is required before they can be gained. Just learning the form by rote without this understanding gains only the shell and not the marrow of the art. In doing so one does not gain the art at all.

## **The Small Frame-Usage Frame Form**

Yang Shao Hou's small frame consisted of 73 postures making up a total of over 200 movements. In postural arrangement it follows the large frame and retains some postures from the old Yang form like 'Turn Body Double Lift Legs'. The postures are a mix of the large frame and the Yang Small Frame as taught by Yang Lu Chan and Yang Pan Hou in the Imperial Court. In the early days before the art was taught publicly, only a few learnt the large form, those in the Imperial Court only learnt the small frame which was more suited for combat in the long Imperial Robes. It thus has some postures more similar to the Yang Small Frame as handed down by Quan Yu to his son Wu Chien Chuan. The 'Fist Under Elbow', 'Repulse Monkey' and the first 'Downward Posture' all resemble the Wu Chien Chuan form.

When the postures are first learnt, they are practiced in a low, tiring manner at a speed that is faster than the large frame though not quite at the full speed of the form yet. The form is learnt one posture at a time and in short sequences until the student's endurance and power attainment allows him to link up all the short sequences together and form the whole form. In teaching the form, Yang Shao Hou would often make his students practice under a kind of high table to ensure that they took a low tiring stance.

The form makes frequent use of the Single Empty Stance which has the legs together and the knees bent with the weight and root only on one leg. It is frequently used as a quick closing of distance from a Bow Step or Empty Step. The entire form is performed in an agile rooted manner and the upper body should not weave and bob back and forth. The power behind each technique is the power of the whole body working in coordination.

## **The Yang Style Combat Skills**

The forms of Yang Tai Chi Chuan are the vehicles in which the combat skills are carried. All the Yang forms have the advanced skills innate in them but each of the different forms and the way that they are done imparts different yet significant aspects to these skills.

The basic combat requirements are stability, efficiency, unity of mind and body, sensitivity, controlling the centre, positional advantage and agility. It is from these that the advanced skills develop. Controlling the centre is the most important aspect of Yang Tai Chi combat, once you control your opponent's centre you control his whole body. Contrary to what most people think, uprooting - that causing both your opponent's feet to leave the ground as you bounce him out, is not the only technique used in Tai Chi combat though it is used quite often when there is no intent to cause harm or serious injury.

For opponents that require more serious discouragement the advanced level skills come in very handy. These skills all stem from the sensitivity and control of centre to efficiently defeat the opponent. There are several type of advanced skills employed. All of which can only be properly learnt directly from a competent teacher.

One of the most esoteric of these skills, which should not actually be considered esoteric since it is simply the attacking of the body's vital points is accupoint striking or 'Dian Xue'. Accupoint striking involves striking or grasping accupoints to cause injury, incapacitation or death. Unlike external accupoint striking, the opponent's own momentum and body mass is utilised to contribute to the power of the strike with minimum exertion from the exponent.

Bone Locking is also found in external martial arts. The idea is to restrain the opponent with joint locks. In Yang Tai Chi Bone Locking the opponent's body mass and momentum are the major motive forces, once so restrained, the opponent can be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Bone Hitting is a quite different, this involves actually breaking of the bones. No matter how soft and supple a person is, the bones will always be hard and substantial. Bone Hitting utilises knowledge of the range of motion of the joints, the connection between the different bones in the body to break them and so incapacitate the opponent. Once again the opponent's mass and momentum are used to get them into the appropriate position where this skill can then be applied.

Sinew Splitting is akin to causing sprains and muscle tears deliberately. The mass and momentum of the opponent again being the main motive forces. The musculature is specifically targeted and a good knowledge of the musculature, origins and insertions of muscles and tendons is necessary to apply this skill effectively.

Blocking and controlling blood flow pressure points can cause incapacitation by causing the opponent to faint or loose the use of one of his limbs due to inadequate blood flow. This is different from accupoint striking. Here the junctures of major and important blood vessels are targeted. As in typical fashion, the opponent's own mass and momentum are the primary motive forces causing him to be his own undoing.

Psychological attacks are also an advanced skills, playing on the emotions and psyche of the opponent. Both Yang Pan Hou and Yang Shao Hou were recorded to have changes in facial expression and emotion when doing the form as well as shouting and roaring at the appropriate moments. These serve to cause fear, shock and indecision in the opponent.

## **The Yang Shao Hou Small Frame Today**

Unfortunately, because Yang Shao Hou only taught this form to a handful of disciples. There are very few people who know this form and practice it. Like Yang Tai Chi Long Boxing, this form was an advanced form taught only after the large form was learnt. And due to the rapid spreading of the art, only the closed door disciples and early students got to learn these advanced forms. This was due primarily to the lack of time on the part of the Yang masters since their travelling tours only permitted them a short time in each city.

This form represents a facet of Yang Tai Chi Chuan that few know about and realise exists. Though the Yang Shao Hou Small Frame is done differently from the large frame, its principles and theories remain the same. It is a clear representation of Yang Tai Chi Chuan at its finest: a deadly combat art and a wonderful health art. Providing long life by both preserving it in combat and building up fitness and efficiency of the body.

# Taijiquan Training Speed

*By Peter Lim Tian Tek*

While the main method of practicing Taijiquan has always been the slow method. And this, despite all variants, remains the basic method of training which is indispensable for forming a firm foundation for the art. There is, however, evidence that indicates that Taijiquan was practiced at other speeds as well.

## Some Records Of Other Speeds Of Taijiquan

From early writings of those who recorded the art of Taijiquan we have some descriptions of how these sets were done. We begin with Gu Liu Xin, a noted Taijiquan historian who was responsible for organising the publication of much of the published material on the different styles of the art during the 1960s. He writes in his introduction to the book 'Yang Shi Taijiquan' (Yang Style Taijiquan) by Fu Zhong Wen in 1963 and also in Yang Zhen Duo's English book the following about how Yang Shao Hou, Yang Cheng Fu's older brother, practiced his form:

"His taijiquan 'frame' style was originally similar to his brother's, but later it gradually changed to the style of high 'frame' with lively footwork and well-knit small movements, alternating quick with slow actions. He was swift and powerful in delivering his blows and, with eyes blazing like torches, a grim smile on his face and roaring and howling as he darted back and forth, he was held in awe by others" (Gu Liu Xin, his introduction to 'Yang Style Taijiquan' by Yang Zhen Duo, 1988, page 7)

Fu Zhong Wen later wrote in his last book that Yang Shao Hou's

"movements swift, boxing frame sunk". (Fu Zhong Wen, 'Yang Shi Taijiquan Jiao Fa Lian Fa, 1989, page 5)

Years earlier, Chen Yen Ling, who wrote what is still considered a standard text for Taijiquan, had this to write about Yang Shao Hou's form:

"Boxing set small and strong. Movements fast and sunk." (Chen Yen Ling, Taijiquan Diao Jian Kan San Shou He Pian, 1943, page 6)

In a later chapter, he writes the following about the small frame of Yang Taijiquan as transmitted by Yang Shao Hou:

"The small frame strives for each posture to be compact. Movements agile and swift. This was transmitted by Yang Shao Hou." (Chen Yen Ling, Taijiquan Dao Jian Kan San Shou He Pian, 1943, page 24)

In his last chapter, this is found in one of his 23 fundamentally important points concerning the practice of the form in Taijiquan:

"neither fast nor slow" (Chen Yen Ling, Taijiquan Dao Jian Kan San Shou He Pian, page 295)

Tung Ying Jieh noted 3 ways of practicing the form in the Yang family:

"Seeing Mr. Feng Hou's son Chao Ling's boxing. He was personally trained by Mr Yang Ban Hou. His compact frame. Practiced neither fast nor slow. Mr Cheng Fu his is great softness and gradual. Mr Shao Hou his compact and swift." (Tung Ying Jieh, Taijiquan Shi Yi, 1948, page 33)

Chen Long Xiang and Li Min Di who studied with Li Ya Xuan, who trained directly under Yang Cheng Fu had this to write about Yang Shao Hou in their book 'Yang Shi Taijiquan Jing Jie' (Yang Style Taijiquan Essential Explanation):

"movements fast and sunk, boxing frame small and strong, everywhere seeking compactness". (Chen Long Xiang and Li Min Di, Yang Shi Taijiquan Jing Jie, 1992, page 34)

Yang Zhen Ji, the second son of Yang Cheng Fu has this to say of his uncle Yang Shao Hou's boxing:

"frame high movements small and alternating quick and slow." (Yang Zhen Ji, Yang Cheng Fu Shi Taijiquan, 1993, page 4)

Yang Shou Hou had few disciples, one of them was the famous master Wu Tu Nan who lived to be 105. Before Wu Tu Nan died, he published a book in which he recorded Yang Shao Hou's boxing set and the only known photographs of the set being performed by Wu himself. He writes this concerning how the form is performed:

"This set of small frames has two hundred over movements, these must be performed and completed within a time of around three minutes." (Wu Tu Nan, Taijiquan Zhi Yan Jiu, 1984, page 100)

Wu lists the small frame set as consisting of 73 postures in total. According to Wu, Yang Shao Hou told him that this set was passed down to him by his grandfather Yang Lu Chan. (Wu Tu Nan, Taijiquan Zhi Yan Jiu, 1984, page 97-98)

Wu Tu Nan's student Xu Zhi Jun wrote a book on the small frame In it he states the set should be performed within 2 minutes. (Xu Zhi Jun, Yang Shi Taijiquan – Xiao Jia Yi Qi Ji Ji Ying Yung, 1991, page 36)

Yang Cheng Fu himself is known to have taught a set called Taiji Chang Quan (Taiji Long Boxing) which consisted of both fast and slow movements. As Gu Liu Xin records this was the case with Yang Cheng Fu's early form:

"When he gave demonstrations in the 'Zhirou Wushu Association' during his early days in Shanghai, which was setup by his disciple Chen Weiming, an editor working in the 'Qing Dynasty History Institute', he performed the movements of kicking with speed and force. Later, however, to suit the needs of treating chronic disease, he changed them into slow movements with inner exertion of force. And in such movements as punching downward and punching the opponent's pubic region, he only made imitations instead of manifest exertions of force, thus making the set of movements continuous and evenly paced." (Gu Liu Xin, in his introduction to 'Yang style Taijiquan' by Yang Zhen Duo, 1988, page 7)

This quick kicking is present when we view the film of Tung Ying Jieh doing his long Yang form in Thailand in the 1940s and serves as a visual record of such a method of doing these postures. A film of his son Tung Fu Ling doing the form also shows this. (A video containing the above footage is available from Master Alex Dong)

Taiji Long Boxing was taught by Yang Cheng Fu and the set he taught was recorded by Chen Wei Ming .(Chen Wei Ming, Taiji Jian, n.d., page 32) Chen Wei Ming also expanded the set as the original set consisted of only 59 postures. Others who have studied under Yang Cheng Fu also expanded their sets to include over 100 postures. Yang Shou Chung, Yang Cheng Fu's oldest son who assisted his father in teaching his classes, taught a variant of the set recorded by Chen Wei Ming but the set in remains essentially the same. (Xie Bing Zhong, Zhong Guo Taijiquan De Xue Yue Shu, 1992, page 157-160)

Taiji Long Boxing is also described in the Encyclopedia Of Zhejiang Martial Arts where several sets of it are listed. The description of the practice of states that the movements in the set 'have both fast and slow' (Various, Zhejiang Shen Wushu Quan Ji Lu, 1988, page 291) that 'this fist's unique characteristic is sometimes fast sometimes slow, alternating between fast and slow' (Various, Zhejiang Shen Wushu Quan Ji Lu, 1988, page 292)

Mah Yueh Liang, the son-in-law of Wu Jian Quan is recorded as having seen Yang Cheng Fu practice a set of fast Taiji when he came over to push hands with Wu Jian Quan at his home. The Wu Jian Quan style itself has a set of fast Taijiquan which is being transmitted by Mah.

Mah and his wife Wu Ying Hua, the daughter of Wu Jian Quan, and their student Shi Mei Lin authored a book in 1987 titled 'Wu Shi Taiji Quai Quan' (Wu Style Taiji Fast Boxing). It is also interesting to note that the Wu Yu Xiang style also has record of a fast set though information on this set is scarce.

Master Yang Yu Ting who was the primary promoter of the Wu Jian Quan style in Beijing has this to write about training speeds in his works which are recorded in Master Wang Pei Sheng on the third stage of practice:

"Vary the speed of practice from time to time: the normal; the slower than normal; the faster than normal; as slow as you can without showing any discontinuity of movement and wavering of attention; and as fast as you can without exhibiting any rash and incorrect movement or a hasty and careless attitude. However, most of your practice should be done at normal speed or slower than normal speed." (Yang Yu Ting, recorded by Wang Pei Sheng in 'Wu style Taijiquan', 1983, page 213)

The Wu Yu Xiang Style also has a fast set that is sometimes also called 'Feng Quan' or Wind Boxing. Information on this is scarce and the set very rare, we are fortunate that the set itself has been recorded down by conscientious catalogers of the martial arts. Consisting of 96 postures, it emphasizes both neutralising energy and emitting energy. (Various, Sichuan Wushu Da Quan, 1989, page 1663-1664)

Zhao Bao style also records a fast method of doing the set which is practiced after proficiency in doing the set slowly. Zhao Bao has a secretly transmitted short advanced form that can be appended to or can precede the large form or practiced entirely on its own, called Quan Mao or Boxing Cap because it can be capped at the end or at the beginning of the normal form though it is usually practiced at the end. Consisting of 22 postures, it includes jumping kicks and vigorous toe slapping. (Zhao Zheng Fu, Zhao Zao Chao, Wudang Zhao Bao Da Jia Taijiquan, 1995, page 159-164)

## **The Existence Of Other Frames Of Practice**

The Taijiquan Classics state, in Li I Yu's 'Notes on Push Hands and Form Practice' (literally translated 'Walking Frame Hitting Hands Practice Important Words') that:

'Daily practice of the form is training to know oneself. While moving, first ask yourself if your whole body meets the requirements mentioned here. If not, then immediately correct yourself. To do this you must practice the form slowly, not fast.' (translation taken from 'On Tai Chi Chuan' by TY Pang, 1987, page 169)

What Li I Yu writes on is the Walking Frame or Jou Jia method of doing the form. In this initial and most important method, the emphasis is on not doing the form fast to build up a good foundation in the art. This mode of practice remains the most important in Taijiquan but the art is not confined to just the Walking Frame. That it is specifically categorised as such implies the existence of other frames of practice not recorded in the limited number of works that comprise the Classics.

Master Yang Cheng Fu himself writes:

'Only when the height of our stance and the speed of our hands is guided by the proper measure can we be free of the necessity for fixed rules of height and speed.' (translation of the introduction to Yang Cheng Fu's Taijiquan Ti Yung Quan Shu taken from Douglas Wile's Tai-Chi Touchstones – Yang Family Secret Transmissions, 1983, page 157)

This makes clear that there does come a point where such rules no longer apply, hence the existence of a set like Taiji Long Boxing which Master Yang Cheng Fu taught to those who had attained the proper measure from training in the normal Taijiquan set.

In Master Yang Cheng Fu's 'Talks On The Practice Of Taijiquan', the sequence of training is first to learn Taijiquan, then Taiji Long Boxing before going on to Push Hands, Sparring Hands and Weapons. Taiji Long Boxing can then be viewed as a mode of practice to ready the student for the practice of Push Hands which is not always slow. ( Yang Cheng Fu, recorded by Chen Wei Ming, found in Yang Style Taijiquan by Yang Zhen Duo, 1988, page 10-12)

Chen Yen Ling also records multiple frame methods to practice a single set. He records that for many people only know one method and not others and that for a single set, it can be done in three heights of high, level and low and for each height, the set can again be done in three ways of large, medium and small, each height and method constituting a different frame of practice. He then goes on to give examples of Master Yang Cheng Fu's set as being a large frame method, Master Yang Jian Hou's set as being a medium frame method and Master Yang Shao Hou's frame being a small frame method. (Chen Yen Ling, Taijiquan Dao Jian Kan San Shou He Pian, 1943, page 24)

## **The Place Of Fast Sets In Taijiquan**

The main mode of practice in Taijiquan is to do it slowly. This ensures that good fundamentals are built, the Classics themselves exhort us to do the same. None of the sets described in the previous section which contain faster movements is a set that is done first and none of them is the main set in the system.

Yang Shao Hou only taught the small frame to those who had achieved a high enough proficiency in the slow form. Yang Cheng Fu and his son Yang Shou Chung only taught Taiji Long Boxing to students who had attained a good level of skill in the slow form. This was the same for his disciples who taught the form. The Tung family fast form is also an advanced set only taught to advanced students as is the Wu style fast form taught by Mah Yueh Liang and Wu Ying Hua.

These sets never superceded the slow set as the main mode of practice and represent only another way of doing a set after proficiency in the slow set has been achieved. None of the fundamentals and principles trained in the slow set is lost in these faster sets, in fact the stress is that these are retained. These sets, though fast, are not done in the same way as external boxing, and this is stressed also as a taboo.

## **Conclusion**

Though the main mode of practice for Taijiquan is slow and rightfully so. There are other frames other than the 'walking frame' described in Li I Yu's work and one of them is a method of doing the postures in a speedier way while yet retaining all the fundamentals, principles and requirements of Taijiquan as trained in the slow method. To ready the body to retain these essentials in a more combative context.

Yet even with this speedier mode of practice, it is not fast beating slow or big beating small. Beating fast with slow and big with small is still primary but the ability to call forth speed to

counter great speed without losing all the qualities and without losing the principles of Taijiquan is important. As the Taijiquan Classic of Wang Tsung Yueh states:

'You respond quickly to a fast action, slowly to slow action. Although the changes are numerous, the principle remains the same.' (translation taken from T'ai Chi by Cheng Man-Ch'ing and Robert W. Smith, 1967, page 109)

## **Bibliography**

Fu Z.W. (1963) Yang Shi Taijiquan [Yang Style Taijiquan] Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Ban She, Beijing

Fu Z.W. (1989) Yang Shi Taijiquan Jiao Fa Lian Fa [Yang Style Taijiquan Teaching Method And Practicing Method] Tong Ji Ta Xue Chu Ban She, Shanghai, ISBN 7-5608-0333-4/G.40

Chen L.X. & Li M.D. (1992) Yang Shi Taijiquan Fa Jing Jie [Yang Style Taijiquan Essential Explanation] Si Chuan Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Ban She, Chengdu, ISBN 7-5364-2159-1/G.490

Chen W.M. (n.d.), n.p. Taiji Jian [Taiji Sword]

Chen W.M. (1925) Taijiquan Shu [The Art Of Taijiquan] Zhong Hua Shu Ju, Shanghai

Chen Y.L. (1943) Taijiquan Dao Jian Kan Sanshou He Pian [Taijiquan Broadsword, Sword, Long Staff, Sparring Hands Combined Publication] (1988 reprint) Shanghai Book Store, Shanghai, ISBN 7-80569-358-7/G.19

Chen Y.K. (1947) Tai-Chi Chuan – Its Effects And Practical Applications Cheng M.C. & Smith R.W. (1967) T'ai Chi (1989 reprint), Charles E. Tuttle, Rutland, ISBN 0-8048-0560-1

Mah Y.L., Wu Y.H. & Shi M.L.(1987) Wu Shi Taiji Quai Quan [Wu Style Taiji Fast Boxing] Henan Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Ban She, ISBN 7-5349-0121-0/G.122

Sun N.S. (1994) Yang Shi Taiji Chang Quan [Yang Style Taiji Long Boxing] Beijing Ti Yu Da Xue Chu Ban She, Beijing, ISBN 7-81003-864-8/G.633

Pang T.Y. (1987) On Tai Chi Chuan, Azalea Press, Washington, ISBN 0-9612070-1-9

Tung Y.J. (1948) Taijiquan Shi Yi [Taijiquan Explained] (1989 reprint) Ying Jieh Taiji Jian Shen Yuan, Hong Kong

Various, (1989) Sichuan Wushu Da Quan [Encyclopedia Of Sichuan Martial Arts], Sichuan Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Ban She, Chendu, ISBN 7-5364-1123-5/G.77

Various, (1988) Zhejiang Shen Wushu Quan Ji Lu [Record Of Boxing And Weapons Martial Arts In Zhejiang], Zhejiang, ISBN 7-5341-0096-8/G.9

Wang P.S & Zeng W.Q., (1983) Wu Style Taijiquan, Zhaohua Publishing House, Beijing, ISBN 962-238-015-8

Wu T.N. (1984) Taijiquan Zhi Yan Jiu [Research On Taijiquan] (1988 reprint) Shang Wu Ying Shu Guan, ISBN 962-07-5024-1

Yang Z.D. (1988) Yang Style Taijiquan, Hai Feng Publishing Co., Beijing, ISBN 962-238-092-1

Yang Z.J. (1993) Yang Cheng Fu Shi Taijiquan [Yang Cheng Fu Style Taijiquan] Guang Xi Min Zhu Chu Ban She, ISBN 7-5363-1984-3/Z.166

Xie B.Z. (1992) Zhong Guo Taijiquan De Xue Yue Shu [The Principle And Implementation Of Yang's School Of Taijiquan] Ever Ben Publishing Co., Hong Kong

Xu Z.J. (1991) Yang Shi Taijiquan – Xiao Jia Yi Qi Ji Ji Ying Yung [Yang Style Taijiquan – Small Frame And Its Combat Applications] Beijing Ti Yu Xue Yuan Chu Ban She, Beijing, ISBN 7-81003-509-6/C.383

Zhao Z.F. & Zhao C. (1995) Wudang Zhao Bao Da Jia Taijiquan [Wudang Zhao Bao Large Frame Taijiquan], Shanxi Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Ban She, Xian, ISBN 7-5369-2397-X/R.568

# The Importance Of Yi And Chi In Tai Chi Chuan

Written by **Chen Yen Ling**

Translated by **Tchong Ta-Tchen**

*From the book "The Annotated Theoretical And Practical Tai Chi Chuan" by Tchong Ta-Tchen*

Yi (mind) and chi (breath) are found inside the human body without form or colour. The eyes are unable to view but the chi has a very important role. Our bodies are full of chi circulating and cultivating the body. The chi is formed with fire from the 'ming men'. The fire refines the 'jieng' to become chi. The Taoists describe it as 'water and fire already present or the 'nei dan'. It is stored in the area of the dan tien. The Taoists value chi very much. Usually, people think the blood is the most important essence in the body, they do not know that chi is even more important than blood. Chi is the chief while blood is the assistant. We need blood that contains the essentials (vitamins, minerals, etc.) but chi is the transportation, making it more important. Chi is heavy while blood is light. If we do not have enough blood, we can still temporarily survive. Without enough chi, we die immediately. Therefore to cultivate chi is very important. The importance of Tai Chi Chuan is to concentrate in order to cultivate the chi. We always say, "External to exercise are the tendons, bones and skin. Internal is the breath." For those who practice Tai Chi Chuan, after practising the forms, push hands, roll back or two-man forms, the breathing is still smooth and natural, the face colour does not change and the internal chi flows through the entire body. The feeling is more comfortable than before the exercise. This is the result of cultivating the chi. After exercise, they never are short of breath or feel tired. When the chi fills up the body, the blood is healthy. As the blood flows through the body, the body is strong. A healthy body strenghtens the mind. A strong mind leads to a great spirit. A great spirit is able to prolong our life.

What about yi? Yi is the heart (mind) and heart is yi. In definition, there is a slight difference between heart and yi. The heart is the chief and the yi, the assistant. When the heart moves (intentions), the yi starts to work. The yi leads and the chi follows. Therefore, the heart, yi and chi are all interconnected. If the heart is troubled then the yi is diffused. If the yi is diffused, the chi floats. On the other hand, when chi sinks, the yi will be concentrated. When the yi is concentrated, the heart is stable. Therefore the three are melded together and cannot be separated from each other. The chi moves and can motivate the blood and the spirit. Then we can use the chi in practice. Chi is the principle and Tai Chi Chuan is the method. If we have a principle without the method, we cannot transfer it to the practical. If we have a method without principle, we give up the major and look for the minor. Therefore, yi, chi and Tai Chi Chuan have a interconnected relationship as well.

In Tai Chi Chuan, the use of yi and chi for the beginner is very difficult but not without a way to get to the entrance. When we first practice the Thirteen Postures, or even a single movement, we have to use our imagination. For example, if we use both hands to perform a push movement, we imagine there is an opponent in front of us. Actually, at the time, there is no chi in the palms to release. But when we start to imagine. Our chi rises up the spine to the shoulder, arm, wrists and palms, finally being released to the opponent's body. This kind of imagination, for the beginner is very dull. After practising for a long time, you will know how to use imagination.

The chi has two kinds circulating in the body. There is an upper level chi (post-birth) and lower level chi (pre-birth). When you exhale, the upper level chi exits from the nose while the lower level chi sinks to the dan tien. When you inhale, the upper level chi enters from the nose while the lower level chi rises up the spine from the dan tien to the hands and legs. When the yi moves, the chi follows to any part of the body. Practising Tai Chi Chuan, closing and

opening while breathing in and out, is to exercise the chi to fill the entire body, to create the sensitive from the body, tendons, touch and even spirit. This is why "An Internal Explanation Of Training" by Wang Dsung Yueh says, "The mind should be concentrated on the spirit and not the chi. If focused only on the chi, one will be clumsy and not agile. If focused on the chi, one will become powerless. If one does not concentrate on the chi, one will be strong as steel."

Some believe that chi is useless. However, there is a misunderstanding. Such a belief pertains only to certain kinds of chi such as stiff chi, impetuous chi or brutal chi that arises with anger. This type of stiff, impetuous, brutal chi causes both feet to float and the body to become unstable, indicating that both are without li. But the chi in Tai Chi Chuan is the chi from the dan tien. This chi is clear and calm. Because it is calm, the chi is fluid. Because it is fluid, the chi circulates without interruption. There is no relationship with the undesired stiff, impetuous and brutal chi.

In "An Internal Explanation of Tai Chi Chuan", many points can be found that describe chi. It says 'Use the mind to direct the movement of chi. The mind must be calm so that the chi can condense deep into the bones. When the chi circulates around the body, the chi must flow like a fluid and smoothly, then it is able to follow the mind easily,...The mind and chi must interchange and coordinate between substantial and insubstantial such that there will be no harm...The mind is the commander, the chi the flag...The abdomen is completely relaxed and the chi condenses into the bones.' It is also written, "The yi and chi are the rulers and the body the subject." These words all talk about the importance of chi. The learner must discriminate between the clear, calm chi and the stiff, brutal chi. To cultivate the clear, calm chi and giving away the stiff, brutal chi.

Generally, the relationship between yi and chi is like the relationship between the driver and the engine in a car. The yi is the driver, the chi the engine. We cannot forget either of them.

# Tai Chi Chuan Method Of Breathing And Chi Direction

Written by **Chen Yen Ling**

Translated by **Tchong Ta-Tchen**

*From the book "The Annotated Theoretical And Practical Tai Chi Chuan" by Tchong Ta-Tchen*

Some people call Tai Chi Chuan an "inside family fist". There are three reasons for doing so. First of all, Confucianism discriminates against foreign influences. Secondly, the Tai Chi Chuan technique concentrates upon grabbing the joints of the opponent's body so that whatever bodily harm that is inflicted is internal and invisible to the opponent. Third of all, Tai Chi Chuan concentrates upon directing the chi to circulate inside the body (to cultivate vigour, chi and spirit).

The basic breathing of Tai Chi Chuan uses the nose only, not the mouth. This differs from the common people who use the nose to inhale and exhale through the mouth. After mastering Tai Chi Chuan to a higher level, the chi inside the chest can be separate into two levels (usually people call this "pre-birth chi" and "post-birth chi"). When exhaling the upper level chi (post-birth chi) is breathed out from the nose and, at the same time, the lower level chi (pre-birth chi) sinks to the dan tien. When inhaling, the upper level chi is breathed in from the nose and, at the same time, the lower level chi rises from the dan tien, along the spinal cord, to the area between the shoulder blades. When a person can achieve this technique, we call it "unobstructed chi" (the chi is able to circulate through the body freely). Everyone who practises the correct form of Tai Chi Chuan for a certain period of time and to a certain level may achieve this "unobstructed chi". However, the beginner does not have to concentrate upon this breathing technique, but concentrate instead on the forms for the correct movement and postures. The only requirements for the beginners are slow movements, natural breathing, and a relaxation of the entire body. If there is too much pressure to push the chi to sink into the dan tien, it will head in the wrong direction. This may cause interstitial diseases or haemorrhoids may flare up.

After practising to a certain level, we have to know how to breathe. If we do not understand the breathing theory then we cannot strive to attain the highest level of Tai Chi Chuan. The Tai Chi Chuan classic, "Thirteen Postures: Comprehending External and Internal Training", states: "Able to breathe, one may be agile and alive." Meaning that the breathing and movements must be coordinated. When one should exhale, then one must exhale; when one should inhale, one must inhale since inhalation is insubstantial whereas exhalation is substantial. If performed correctly, the body will be agile and alive. Otherwise, one cannot discriminate the substantial and insubstantial, and the meaning of practising Tai Chi Chuan is lost since Tai Chi Chuan emphasizes the substantial and insubstantial.

Usually a teacher teaches the students to learn Tai Chi Chuan in two parts: the internal and the external. The internal is breathing while the external is the forms. If both parts are taught simultaneously and the student is unable to get it right, then there will be difficulties. Therefore, the beginner should let the breathing be natural and not emphasize the breathing technique. In this chapter, we study the breathing knowledge. Therefore we cannot avoid discussing the breathing technique in detail simply due to the above problem.

The details of the method are: when practising the forms, one exhales when extending the arm and inhales when withdrawing the arm; one inhales when rising and exhales when sinking; to lift is to inhale, to lower is to exhale; when opening up, one inhales, when closing, one exhales. When turning the body and in between movements, there should be a "little breathing". A "little breathing" means taking short breaths quickly and has the quality of

relaxation and stoppage. Generally, breathing is used to lead the movement. The movement must be coordinated with the breathing. The body opens up and the chi closes. The chi opens up and the body closes. In push hands, to push is to exhale; to roll back is to inhale; to ward off is to exhale; to neutralize is to inhale. If one is rolled back by an opponent, there should be a natural "little breathing". This "little breathing" should direct the mind to calmness. When the mind is calm, then one is able to see and hear the opponent's movements and void being caught off guard. If one is pressed or pushed by an opponent, one should inhale. However, if one is unable to inhale, then one should exhale because the chi from inhaling circulates to the hands and legs. Therefore when one exhales to the extreme, there should be conversion to inhalation; and when one inhales to the extreme, there should be conversion to exhalation. Inhalation and exhalation can be converted alternately.

In big roll back, to strike the face is to exhale; to push is to exhale; to shoulder strike is to exhale; to roll back is to inhale. If one is shoulder struck by an opponent, one should inhale. If one is rolled back by an opponent, there should be "little breathing". When turning the body and just before pushing, a "little breathing" should occur. When performing other footwork and before striking, there should be a "little breathing" as well so that one is calm and able to see and listen as well as have a sticking power. The method in which the breathing is performed in the use of knives, swords, spears, and sparring is the same as that when practising the forms.

The method to circulate the inner chi is separated into two types: from pre-birth to post-birth and from post-birth to pre-birth. The first is from the front to the back, meaning that the dan tien chi travels down to the hai ti and reverses to the tailbone, travels along the spine to yu zhen up to tian ling, down the forehead and the nose to ren zhong, to the throat, chest, navel and finally back to the dan tien. The second is from the back to the front, meaning that the dan tien chi heads up from the navel to the chest, throat, ren zhong, forehead, reaching tian ling, down to yu zhen and continues along the spine to the tailbone, and finally reaches hai ti and returns to the dan tien. Note, the second is the opposite of the first.

This type of "chi moving method" may seem very vague at the beginning but after a long period of time, one will be able to fully understand and achieve it. These two types of inner chi circulation must be used during solo practice as well as in sparring practice with an opponent and in striking practice. Otherwise, even if the strike is made with much power, it is still not good enough. Tai Chi Chuan masters not only use the inner chi circulation method but can even listen and know the opponent's inner chi: when it rises or lowers, moves to the front or back, move left, right, up and down. This kind of supreme technique is never achieved until after a few decades of good training. Of course, for the beginner, this is difficult to understand.

There are two sounds "Heng" and "Haah" produced when inhaling and exhaling (the great masters can also use mouth or nasal to do their inhaling and exhaling). The masters, when they practice, whether in solo or with an opponent, their mouths produce these two sounds naturally for three reasons. Firstly, it makes the internal chi smooth and comfortable; the internal organs will not get hurt by the pressure. Secondly, the internal power can be released completely; none of it remains inside. Thirdly, it scares the opponent (if an opponent experiences fear, their movements become loose or scattered, their mind gets lost, their footwork becomes undisciplined and therefore is unable to defend themselves and one has a chance to win). Therefore, the two sounds of "Heng and Haah" are very useful and the learner must pay close attention to them. One makes the sound "Heng" when one is neutralizing and the inner chi is inhaled. The sound "Haah" is usually produced when one grabs or strikes and

the inner chi is exhaled. The Old Tai Chi Chuan Classic of Ching Chyan Long Dynasty states: "Hold the dan tien to practice internal kung fu. The two chis of Heng Haah are wonderful. Move open, quite close, bend and extend to follow your opponent. Slow or fast, respond, follow the thoery and understand thorughtly." Another Tai Chi Chuan Classic state: "To apply (push hands) on forth and back earlier or later, to close or to strike is like an arrow. It cultivates a lot. ONe chi "Haah" then push far away. It needs to be taught by mouth and secretly then open the door and see the sky." From that we can understand the two sounds of "Heng Haah" are marvellous and infinite.

# Discourse On Taiji Pushing Hands

**Narrated By Yang Cheng Fu**

**Recorded By Chen Wei Ming**

Translated By Peter Lim Tian Tek

Those in the world who have heard about Taijiquan, are not few in number. They know how to differentiate between the pure and the sundry, that their flavours are different. Pure Taiji, is such that arms are like cotton wrapping iron, soft and heavy. When pushing hands, one can distinguish. When holding a person, the hands are extremely light but one cannot pass. When emitting a person, its like discarding an elastic ball, rapidly crisp, not receiving any strength. Those tumbled out, only feel a single move, but don't feel any pain, and are already tumbled out more than three and a half metres. When adhering to a person, there is no grabbing or seizing, lightly sticking, like being stuck to glue and not being able to discard it, causing the person's arms to be unbearably sore and numb. This then is real Taiji. If one uses strength to press and push a person, although one can control a person and hit him out. But it will definitely entail great effort, the one receiving will feel pain, although hit out it cannot be crisp. In reverse, if one uses strength to seize and control one capable in Taijiquan, its like catching the wind and clutching at shadows, everywhere entering into emptiness. Also like being on water and plucking a bottle gourd, one just cannot seem to exert the strength.

# A Slow Discourse On Push Hands (Part I) (Partial)

*By Zhang Yi Jun, translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

Push Hands is the way of learning combative methods in Taijiquan, the way to practice defensive skills, but it is not the goal of learning Taijiquan. What is the goal then? One is the goal of strengthening the body - ridding illness and adding years; one is the goal of combat - sparring hands (two people engaging in combative exchanges without fixed forms).

Push Hands is the ingenious method to practice 'understanding energy' (Dong Jing). It is also the ladder connecting form learning to sparring hands.

Those who learn external boxing, have an old saying, it goes 'to learn hitting first learn to suffer'. Therefore when learning boxing, you need to learn qigong, to make yourself able to bear heavy blows. Taijiquan's theory is different, it emphasizes 'attracting into emptiness, using softness to defeat hardness' (Yin Jin Ru Kong, Yi Rou Zhi Kang). That is to learn how not to be on the receiving end of your enemy's strength, which means having 'to learn boxing first learn not to suffer'. That's why only after learning sticking jing (nian jing), neutralising jing (hua jing), after being able to stick and able to neutralise then taking the next step to learn holding jing (na jing) and emitting jing (fa jing).

In researching the usage of Taijiquan, the methods left to us by our forebears who created the method of Push Hands, in interactions between two people of Ward-off (peng), rollback (lu), press (ji) and push (an), to study the rationale behind the usage of Taijiquan. Both seeking out the opponent's weak points, initiating the attack, watchful namely of emitting jing and neutralising jing. In order for oneself to be undefeated, it is necessary to learn neutralising jing, attracting strength into emptiness, causing one self not to be on the receiving end of your enemy's strength. Through not letting go and not resisting of the two hands in contact, learning continuous sticking, learning how to 'understand jing'. First learning how to neutralise energy, being undefeatable, what remains then is learning the method of learning achieving victory over your enemy (that is holding jing and emitting jing).

That is why, when beginning to learn Push Hands, it is very important not to have a heart set on winning. One must concentrate the heart and mind solely on 'listening' to the enemy's strength and neutralise it. Only through a relatively long period of Push Hands (of course needing instruction from a teacher who understands), causing oneself to be able to understand jing, able to neutralise jing, then proceeding to learning holding jing and emitting jing would then be easy. It can also be said, that being able to neutralise jing, emitting jing is also from there.

But because in Push Hands there can be victory and defeat, the matter concerns what we Chinese regard with special importance of face value, those beginning to learn Push Hands, all only think of winning and am not willing to lose when pushing hands, what overcoming hardness with softness, attracting into emptiness, is completely forgotten; the rationale being first learning how to neutralise jing is also not bothered with; concentrating the heart and mind solely on winning. Therefore even the strength for nursing milk is also completely taken out, seeking to use great strength to create a situation of pressing to topple, attempting to win over the opponent, this is abandoning reason in the eagerness to gain victory, committing the mishap of 'resisting' This is definitely a common problem with most who are learning Push Hands, what is being learnt is Taijiquan, what is talked about is overcoming hardness with softness, but when its put into use its great leaning strength, using strength to gain victory over the opponent. Its really laughable and something to sigh about!

Those who are mainly observers, careless people, the self-opinionated and those who have too great a desire to win, as well as those who have attained a good standard in external martial arts, all cannot learn well Taijiquan Push Hands. Only those who do not possess the above mentioned dispositions and conditions have hope of fathoming Push Hands Skill's essence and wonders.

Hsu Chen in his 'Profundity of Taijiquan' says "rather follow reason to seek the essence, don't abandon reason in the eagerness to gain victory". This is certainly a great insight, precisely the good medicine to cure this illness. On the basis of these two admonishments, they have caused me to remain constantly cautioned and alert in my studies, making less mistakes during Push Hands, benefiting much.

Push Hands is the mutual probing of the internal jing, its dependent on the sense of touch, seeking out the opponent's centre of mass and flaws, definitely not the same as the methods of external martial arts, even more unlike what is called "horizontal defeating the straight". At the start is the study of fixed stance Push Hands, which must emphasize 'ward off, rollback, press, push must be diligent', must not simply go through the motions, cultivate careful listening to jing, completely neutralising, not messily moving, etc, the above good habits. Then proceeding to study Big Rollback (Ta Lu), using pluck, split, elbow stroke, shoulder stroke, also equally emphasizing on listening to jing. When highly skilled people Push Hands, they mutually seek out each other's jing, not conforming to any fixed forms, this is also known as Sparring Push (San Tui).

Push Hands can be considered as a type of cultured combat, the form being more refined, content abundant, striving for meticulousness, opposing coarseness, therefore focused on fighting with intellect and skill, disdaining fighting with strength. Even though emitting jing's results are relatively shocking, hitting a person over 3 and half metres is a common thing, but this is not normally like external martial art's bumping hand, hitting until the nose is green and the face is red. Not only can we from it raise our skills in attack and defense, as well as a friendly competition, not only moving and lively, also winding and lingering, if being emitted jing by an expert, also can be deeply feel shock till it moves the soul, the attack being the same as being electrocuted. Many of those studying Taijiquan, once they meet they love to Push Hands, to the point to becoming Push Hands addicts, this is because within there is some kind of interest, outsiders are not aware of this. The pleasure during Push Hands advances friendship, improves health, increases the skill and thought. A single thing with many benefits, why would one not be glad to do it!

In Wu Zhi Qing's book "Traditional Taijiquan", there is a record of Mr Xiang Qi Ran's experience in practicing Taijiquan, there is a part which discusses the usage of Push Hands, it is discussed carefully, it is repeated here:

"We martial artists, whether its Taijiquan or some other martial arts, all should know the meaning of the word 'fast', not in the two hands, the speed of extending and retracting, also not the speed of the feet in advancing and retreating, possessing the same kind of hands and feet, the speed of extending, retracting, advancing, retreating, other than the amputated, the aged and the senile, as well as the frail, fatigued and deformed, mostly are about the same. It is necessary to know the difference of fast and slow, the importance is in the eyes. But possessing the same two eyes, what then is the difference, it is in the speed in seeing opportunities. If the enemy does not expose a viable opportunity, even if the hands and feet strike his body, it does not have the desired effect, rather every time it presents the enemy opportunities to penetrate. When two are in combat, where are the opportunities? The instant

the opponent loses control of his centre of mass, that is the opportunity. The two eyes see the opportunity, taking this precious opportunity to attack, is it certain to hit down the enemy? It is not certain. It is still necessary not to lose position, not to lose direction, then it is effective. Because the enemy's control over his centre of mass is lost, having ascertained where the flaw is, from that place attacking, from which direction to attack from, then can using less strength gain greater success. If the direction, position is not measured and settled, though the opponent originally has already lost control over his centre of mass, sometimes in being attacked can regain it. It is the occasion of two people in combat, opportunities appropriate for attack consistently occur for each other, the only difficulty is in the two eyes not discovering them, sometimes discovering it too late, the opportunity is past, sometimes because the attacking position and direction is wrong, even attacking cannot bring results, this is also missing the opportunity. Practicing Push Hands listening to jing, the emphasis is on seeking opportunities, also learning what kind of opportunity requires which position, which direction to attack. Two eyes not losing the opportunity, attack not losing position and direction, this is the excellence of martial skill, completely not on what is the speed of the hands and legs. Differentiating the depth and shallowness of the art, the martial skill's high or low, completely depends on this. If not waiting for opportunity, not knowing direction and position, this is only brutish hitting, brutish seizing...".

In this portion, Xian Qi Ran emphasizes the usage of the two eyes (sense of sight) in Push Hands, this is naturally important. But it should be supplemented clearly, during Push Hands, listening to jing (sense of touch) is even more important, definitely not less so than the sense of sight. During Sparring Hands, it is also necessary to add the sense of hearing and the sense of reasoning (intellectual judgement), the usage of four senses. Teacher Ya Xuan likewise strongly emphasized this "four senses to face the opponent" in sporting usage.

Other than training the boxing set, Push Hands is Taijiquan's other content, it is with the boxing set, mutually promoting, mutually complementary, mutually completing.

Push Hands has different natures, it can be divided into the Study type Push Hands and the Sport type Push Hands types. These two types of Push Hands in form do not have any difference, but the guiding idea is completely different. Study type Push Hands is researching how boxing theory can be applied in actuality, the goal is to raise one's skill level, winning or losing should be outside its context. Sport type Push Hands, its goal is on gaining victory, two soldiers in conflict, there can never be too much deception in war, insubstantial insubstantial substantial substantial, there are myriad changes, fighting on intelligence, fighting on skill content, is therefore even more.

If only for training the body to be healthy, if only practicing the boxing set, not learning Push Hands, it does not make much difference. If one seeks to fathom the marvelous combative skills of Taijiquan, then it is imperative to study Push Hands. When pushing hands with an expert, one can discover one's non-conformity and shortcomings, learning the opponent's good points. When pushing hands with someone of inferior skill, one can also understand one's own good points and the opponent's flaws. From there we can correct the inaccuracies in the boxing form, whilst continuing to promote one's good points. Flaws in the boxing form, in Push Hands will definitely show up, it is not possible to hide them even if one wanted to. Therefore, if one does not practice Push Hands, one can only think that one's form is correct, not being able to get an objective assessment; not practicing Push Hands, one cannot also know the meaning of the two words 'Taiji' in the boxing, the content of the boxing theory, also cannot be understood. Only practicing the boxing set, at most one has only learnt half of Taijiquan. In actual fact, not studying Push Hands, one cannot learn well Taijiquan.

Push Hands has the form as its basic exercise, it is the usage of relaxed and soft skill, but within has also some other methods that definitely require a teacher to transmit. Especially when first learning Push Hands, there are certain rules, these must be observed. If one does not meet a teacher who understands, always blindly stirring things up, beginning with fighting with strength first, gambling to conclude, there is no way to enter into correctness.

After understanding Push Hands, both hands conduct a sense of touch in a lively manner, without transmission other than the two eyes, gaining another two eyes. When pushing hands with others, if the opponent's skill is relatively inferior, I can sense from the hand's touch and know my opponent's entire situation, like the magnitude of his strength, direction, map of his intentions, etc. Feeling that the opponent has flaws and weaknesses everywhere, being able to attack him at anytime from anywhere. As to the opponent's incoming strength, in a state of proper and natural relaxed lightness, attract it into emptiness, neutralising without form. Those who have not gone through long periods of Push Hands training, their hands will never be able to have this kind of ability. This then is what the boxing manual says 'from familiarity gradually realising understanding jing', the meaning of 'understanding jing'.

(translation still on going and not yet complete, to be continued....)

# San Shou (Sparring Hands)

By Cheng Man Qing

*Translated by Ben Lo and Martin Inn in "Cheng Tzu's Thirteen Treatises On T'ai Chi Chuan"*

San Shou means free fighting. There is no definite method to it. Both T'ui shou [Push Hands] and Ta Lu issue from familiarity with the correct touch. From familiarity with the correct touch you will learn to t'ing jing [listen to strength]. After learning t'ing jing, you will gradually comprehend tung jing [understanding strength]. After comprehending tung jing, nothing any longer seems touched or not touched, scattered or not scattered, adhered to or not adhered to, followed or not followed. All are unnecessary explanations. They do not touch on the main point. The way of San Shou is located in the Five Elements and called chin, t'ui, ku, pan, ding. If you can tung jing and know the technique, then the application is complete. I followed Professor Yang for seven years and only one jing was difficult to learn. It was chieh jing [receiving jing]. If your achievement reaches this level then you do not have to worry about the other kinds of jing. The explanation of chieh jing found through the analogy of someone throwing a ball to hit me. If I resist the ball or hit it, it will bounce out. This is the jing of colliding and is not chieh jing. If the ball is light, it will be easy to bounce it out. However, if the ball's weight is several hundred pounds, how can I bounce it out? Hence, colliding is not correct. You must attract it and then toss it out. This is chieh jing. If the ball is moving slow or fast, or is light or heavy it is still the same. Chan [adhere], t'ing [listen], t'i [raise], fang [discharge] are all in it. Combine attraction and discharge almost simultaneously. The power is intensified in a very small space. This almost attains the highest wisdom in which San Shou becomes meaningless. Therefore, I say nothing can replace T'ai Chi Ch'uan. It is the supreme. Besides chieh jing there is nothing else.



## The Taiji Sword

This weapon appeared rather late in the Taiji repertoire being first taught in Beijing. The manuals of Wu Yu Xiang do not record a sword form even though there is a sword form in the current Wu Yu Xiang style syllabus. The manual only records the sabre and the spear/staff, this would be in keeping with the times where the sword had already played a lesser role in combat having largely been replaced by the sabre.

The form that was handed down by the Yangs was recorded by in pictorial form by Chen Wei Ming who had studied under Yang Cheng Fu and by Chen Yan Ling who had studied under Tien Shao Ling who was a student of Yang Chien Hou and Yang Shao Hou. The form recorded by both are by and large identical and remains the most extent traditional form of Yang Taiji sword in practice today.

The Chinese government also created a shorter sword form based on this traditional 56 posture form of the Yang family and taught it as a health exercises to the masses. It is much shorter and the postures have been rearranged somewhat.

Also in the sword repertoire is the two person sticky sword practice which is akin to the pushing hands exercise. The 13 techniques of the Taiji sword are thus practiced actively with sensing the opponent's move and countering it using the principles of Taijiquan. The thirteen sword techniques commonly referred to are:

- 1) Whip (Chou)
- 2) Lead (Dai)
- 3) Lift (Ti)
- 4) Obstruct (Ge)
- 5) Strike (Ji)
- 6) Pierce (Ci)
- 7) Dot (Dian)
- 8) Burst (Beng)
- 9) Stir (Jiao)
- 10) Press Down (Ya)
- 11) Split (Pi)
- 12) Intercept (Jie)
- 13) Wash (Xi)

The sword used in Taiji Sword practice is a normal Chinese sword or chien. It is a straight sword with two edges but only the top 1/3 of the sword is sharpened to razor sharpness. For modern practice, an unsharpened sword is often used, in some cases a wooden one is used. The length of the sword should suit the individual and the old way of determining correct length is by reverse holding the sword with a straight arm so that the sword points upwards and is behind the arm, the sword tip should be at the same level as the ear lobe.

Though any kind of sword may be used, avoid soft swords which are too springy and swords that are too stiff, the sword should be slightly springy. Its weight should not be too light, it should feel like a natural extension of the arm. Too heavy and it may cause undue strain which is an impediment to relaxation. One should not move to a heavy weapon straight away

but start with one that is most comfortable and progress to a heavier weapon when one improves and finds the first weapon too light.

The finish of the traditional sword is smooth and one should be able to see the grain of the metal through the polish. Modern swords tend to be chromed with a layer of copper or brass underneath the chrome layer. The older swords were hand beaten and sometimes had the name of the maker inscribed or at least the seal of the place of manufacture. Modern swords tend to be cut from sheet metal and then shaped by machines. Hand made sword are preferable because of better balance, the better quality of the finish and the more compact grain of the beaten metal. The handle should be properly fixed and not lose, it should also not be too thin and narrow but have a large enough width for proper gripping. Check that the handle does not have cracks due to flaws in the wood or improper finishing or seasoning of the wood.



# The Taiji Sabre

Arguably the oldest short weapon of Taijiquan is the sabre, it is usually taught after one has learnt the sword form and consists of 13 postures (each consisting of several subpostures). The sabre form was first recorded by Li I Yu in his manuals and first recorded pictorially by Chen Yan Ling in his book. The song formula in the old Li manual corresponds to the pictorial form and this is the traditional sequence that has been preserved and taught to this day.

As with the sword, the sabre also consists of 13 techniques and also has a two man sequence. From Yang Pan Hou's lineage we have a set sequence of four movements that are practiced in continuous cycles. There also exists a 52 posture two man sequence which is similar to the bare handed San Shou set.

The 13 sabre techniques consist of:

- 1) Hack (Kan)
- 2) Chop (Duo)
- 3) Scratch (Hua)
- 4) Scrape (Gua)
- 5) Hold Up (Liao)
- 6) Bind (Zha)
- 7) Draw Back Diagonally (Lu)
- 8) Split (Pi)
- 9) Coil (Chan)
- 10) Incite (Shan)
- 11) Obstruct (Lan)
- 12) Intercept (Jie)
- 13) Slip (Hua)

The sabre is also recorded to have four basic techniques for two man practice, they are:

- 1) Inner wrist cut
- 2) Outer wrist cut
- 3) Press down wrist cut
- 4) Hold up wrist cut

The method of measuring the sabre to see if it is suitable for you is the same as the sword. There are two type of sabres used for the practice of the Taiji Sabre. First is the traditional sabre with its enlarged head and curved handle. The other is a thin tapering sabre with a straight handle and a ring at the end of the handle. The form can also be done using a wooden sabre. Ensure that the hand guard is fitted on tight and that the blade is straight. It should feel comfortable in your hand and be like a natural extension of your arm.



## The Taiji Spear/Staff/Halbard

Yang Lu Chan, the founder of the Yang style of Taijiquan was famous for his use of the spear and his feats with it are legendary. Traditionally this form was kept very secret and only passed on to trusted students. Even in Yang Cheng Fu's time the two man sticky spear sequence was taught but the full form was reserved for advanced students. His book 'The Uses of Taijiquan' records the two man 'sticky spear' practice and has some notes for solo practice.

The techniques of the Taiji spear can be applied to both the staff and the halbard. There is an interesting story to how the Taiji spear came to be transmitted as the Taiji staff. Yang Ban Hou, the son of Yang Lu Chan was always getting into fights and for fear that her son might kill some one in advertantly, his mother cut off the spear head of his spear so that he could only use it as long staff. Yang Ban Hou was also very skilled with the spear as was his brother Yang Feng Hou (he died early).

The Li manual only records a short spear sequence and Chen Yen Ling's book only a short solo exercise with the staff. In a recent book recording the old Wu forms of Yang Yu Ting, only a short solo sequence is shown also. The spear form has only been described in detail in very recent history. The Yang Taiji spear consists of 41 postures. The spear forms of the other schools of Taijiquan have yet to be comprehensively recorded.

Other solo exercises or short forms are known, some of them very short indeed but still encompassing the major movements of the spear techniques. The spear techniques are also applicable to the long staff and the halbard which is a kind of spear with a crescent knife edge at one side.

The staff like all the Taiji arts consists mainly of 13 techniques, the are:

- 1) Open (Kai)
- 2) Close (He)
- 3) Burst (Beng)
- 4) Split (Pi)
- 5) Dot (Dian)
- 6) Bind (Za)
- 7) Poke (Bo)
- 8) Hold Up (Liao)
- 9) Coil (Chan)
- 10) Lead (Dai)
- 11) Slip (Hua)
- 12) Intercept (Jie)
- 13) Stab (Cuo)

The spear/staff used for this weapon is usually made of a kind of wood known as 'white wax wood' which is light in colour and springy in nature. Its length should be about 2-2.5 metres and should be rather stout and tapering at one end. Hard wood staffs can also be used.

# The Combative Elements of Yang Taijiquan

By Peter Lim Tian Tek

Other than the fact that its name can be translated as 'The Supreme Ultimate Fist', Taijiquan has always been noted as a highly effective combat art. It first became widely noted as a combat art when the art was brought to the capital of China, Beijing, by Yang Lu Chan when he taught at the imperial court. Yang was challenged many times but no one ever came close to defeating him. So great was his skill that the martial artists bestowed on him the title 'Yang The Invincible'.

More recently Yang Lu Chan's grandson, Yang Cheng Fu, promoted the art until it spread far and wide. Yang Cheng Fu taught his art as a combat art which can be used to strengthen the body, his three books attest to this fact. There is no substance to the commonly believed assumption that Yang Taijiquan is solely health oriented and not combat effective. By practicing Taijiquan as a martial art, one can gain the health benefits.

Yang Cheng Fu, in his book "The Practical Application of Taijiquan" wrote:

*"In Taijiquan, the ability to cultivate oneself physically and spiritually, but not to defend oneself, is civil accomplishment. The ability to defend oneself, but not to cultivate oneself, is martial accomplishment. The soft Taiji method is the true Taiji method. The ability to teach the art of self-cultivation and self-defense, both cultivation and application, is complete civil and martial Taiji."* (translation adapted from Douglas Wile's translation)

In these modern times, with the advent of modern weapons of both individual and mass destruction, the civil or health giving aspects have been emphasized more. The full art, however, as the above words explain, consists of both civil and martial portions. One without the other is incomplete. The civil aspects of Taijiquan have been much written about but the martial or combat aspects which are combat principles, applications, etc, are little known and in danger of being lost. As a martial art, Taijiquan is very different from the hard hitting external forms of martial arts.

What is combat Taijiquan like then? It is certainly not about great power even though Taijiquan is capable of generating great power. The Classics state clearly that the art is not based on great power. Once, when Yang Pan Hou had bested an opponent and was proud of himself because of it, Yang Lu Chan, his illustrious father pointed to Pan Hou's torn sleeve and said that he was happy that Pan Hou had won but did he use Taijiquan to win? The implication is of course that a torn sleeve is a sign of inappropriately used great power. Yang Lu Chan's own boxing was so soft that it was nicknamed 'cotton fist' or 'neutralising fist' and was once berated as not being combat effective because of its softness, a point which Yang refuted by promptly defeating the antagonist. More on this later on...

The following are some of the key elements used by Taijiquan exponents in combat.

## Combat Principles

### A Word About Anatomical Weapons

The anatomical weapons in Taijiquan are not rigorously hardened like in external styles of martial arts. This is because it is not hardness of the weapon but the energy within it that is the

effecting component. If the correct structure of the anatomical weapon is maintained, then structurally it will be substantial and able to deliver telling blows with much power without recourse to hardening. The appropriate efficient use of strength usually does not entail vast quantities of it to obtain the desired effect. The principles behind the adage of deflecting a thousand pounds with four ounces hold true in Taijiquan.

### ***Bu Tiu Bu Ding***

#### **"Not Letting Go, Not Resisting"**

This combat principle is first cultivated in Push Hands practice and later refined in San Shou practice. The key element in this principle is nian or sticking and it operates through nian jing or 'sticking jing'. This is because without sticking, one cannot 'hear' the opponent's energy and its qualities and so be able to control them effectively. And if we resist then we give the attacker a base for which to effect his attack.

That is why instead of deflecting, resisting and absorbing an opponent's attacking force, Taijiquan exponents evade, redirect and blend with it. Evade means simply to move out of his way. In any attack, there are only limited points of attack, so simply removing yourself out of his attacking focus by a change of position negates it. Upon contact, it is not a hard block but a blending with the attacking part by yielding, sticking and following his momentum, joining his energy and redirecting it to your advantage.

Through Nian Jing or 'sticking energy' we can then develop Ting Jing or 'listening to energy' which is the sensitivity to detect the opponent's strength, its origin, trajectory, magnitude and component vectors. Once we are able to detect his energy movement and his centre of mass, we can effectively know his intent and control it by affecting the energy flow and centre of mass efficiently.

### ***Sui Ren Zhi Shi, Jie Ren Zhi Li***

#### **"Following His Posture, Borrowing His Strength"**

This simply means to follow your opponent's structure and adapt to it so that it is ineffective. This is practical application of the principle of Bu Tiu Bu Ding by yielding and following him. Rather than a rigid application of postures learnt, the postures occur spontaneously in response to the opponent's structure.

Borrowing his strength is essentially utilising his own strength against himself, either by causing it to over extend or to channel it through your own body structure back to him. He is literally then hitting himself and there is little expenditure by way of energy for the Taijiquan exponent.

This following of the opponent's structure is first learnt from Push Hands, which is why it is important that it not degrade it to a choreographed exercise. Sensing the movements and responding to them is correct rather than just going through the motions and not sensing them. If he does not move, you should not move, but even static, there will be structural flaws that can be detected by the touch and one can attack them by moving first. But be always aware of a possible trap, even during an attack, sensing plays a very important role in avoiding traps by responding in mid-attack and countering the trap.

### ***Yin Jing Ru Kong***

#### **"Attract Into Emptiness"**

Literally it means 'attract into emptiness'. It is one of the most common tactic used in Taijiquan and is exemplified by the posture 'Roll Back' which implements the opponent's entry into emptiness. The tactic essentially is presenting a false target for the opponent to attack and when he does, you spring the trap of letting his own momentum and mass be his own undoing by overextending it. Finding no target, he is naturally unbalanced and is easy to counter.

## **Fa-Jing** **"Emitting Energy"**

This is when the Taijiquan exponent attacks, it refers to the emission/transmission of energy out of the exponent's body and into the enemy or target. The whole process is of an explosive nature but at no point in it is the body or limbs rigid. Taijiquan exponents are noted for their great power when it comes to uprooting or bouncing an opponent out. This power, however, is applied appropriately and efficiently. Having a lot of power but not knowing where to use it is quite useless, hence the importance of sensitivity. Sensitivity allows one to not only know the opponent and avoid his power but also know where to apply yours to greatest effect.

So is the appropriate use of great power then the key? No it isn't. Power in excess of what is required to achieve the neutralisation and control is inherently unstable. Refining the process till it becomes so efficient that minimum power can produce maximum effect. Then even an old man can best a young and strong one, not with more power but with the intelligent and efficient application of the body.

That is why masters like Zheng Man Qing can send a 200 pound man flying across the room but can find a bowling ball too heavy for him to carry on with the sport (example taken from Mr Lowenthal's book on Master Zheng). The seeming paradox is no paradox at all once one understands it.

## ***Chang Jing*** **"Long Energy"**

This is the most common type of energy emission used in Taijiquan. It develops from the feet and because the energy path is long, through all the joints and ending at the fingers, it is called 'Long Energy'. It is commonly seen when Taijiquan exponents 'bounce' out their push hands partners. The whole body of the opponent is physically pushed away by moving his centre of mass. If it is done correctly, both his feet should leave the ground when he is propelled away. This is why the technique is called 'uprooting'.

The energy can be developed from the rear foot, the front foot or from one to the other. All the joints in the body work coordinatively and smoothly without tension to transfer, amplify and focus the generated energy to the point of attack. This type of energy is usually the first to be manifested by the exponent and though it can be spectacular, it does not cause very serious injury.

## ***Duan Jing*** **"Short Energy"**

This type of energy emission is less common and is considered a rather advanced method. The energy transmission path is shorter than that of Long Energy and originates at the centre

of mass which is supported via the rooting leg. The energy emission begins at the centre of mass and propagates outwards. Down the root and out through the limbs. It is targeted on and acts upon the centre of mass of the opponent directly, using it as a base for a crushing attack that ruptures organs, rends musculature and breaks bones.

The fastest application of such energy is called Leng Jing or Cold Energy. The reason it is called this is that the emission was so sudden that it catches the opponent by great surprise, so great it became fright, causing him to break out in cold sweat.

### *Jie Jing*

#### **"Intercepting Energy" or "Receiving Energy"**

This skill has always been associated with the great masters and we know that Yang Lu Chan and more recently Yang Cheng Fu and his disciple Zheng Man Qing possessed this skill. It has been said to border on the mysterious and is hard to attain such skill. This skill can only be attained after one is learned in the feet, inches, tenths, hundredth parts and thousandths parts in Taijiquan. At lower levels of attainment, jie jing is expressed mainly through the hands, at higher levels where the entire body is responsive then it can be expressed from almost any part of the body.

What this skill really means is that with an incoming object at speed, the body or contact point, by sticking and yielding attains almost the same speed as the object. This means that since the acceleration of the object and the contact point is nearly the same, their relative speed to each other is small. By 'listening' to the object's centre and vectors, an appropriate minimum vector can be applied to change the object's trajectory. If it is a balanced object, it can be easily pushed, if it is not it can be easily redirected. This is what Zheng Man Qing meant that in Jie Jing one must first attract the object first then throw it away.

## **Feet, Tenths, Hundredths Parts And Thousandths Parts**

This means the division of each movement in Taijiquan into ever finer gradations of movement, technique and jing flow. Each part is then meaningful and has an application in a combative context. The refinement of movements to efficiency is but the beginning, later each part of the movement itself has meaning and later each part of every part and so on.

This practice also ensures that the mind is conscious of every part of the movement and every tiny movement of the body. Sensitivity is thus trained to a very fine degree as is the response to such minute stimuli. As the Classics state the goal quite clearly, to be so light and sensitive that a feather cannot be added nor a fly alight.

## **The Four Advanced Yang Taijiquan Combat Skills**

There are situations where the skills and principles above require some augmentation to make them even more effective. This is usually where the opponent's skill level is high enough so that an effective counter is not possible using less injurious means. With such situations stronger discouragement is required and to cater for such eventualities, Yang Taijiquan has four advanced combat skills. These four skills can only be learned and applied effectively after one is able to understand each individual portion of any technique. In other words, one must be able to comprehend and put into practice the feet, tenths, hundredth parts and thousandth parts in Taijiquan. These four skills are recorded in the handwritten manual

handed down from Yang Lu Chan. It must be noted that the four skills are not used entirely on their own but are integrated to form a comprehensive system of attack and defence built upon the basics of stability, sensitivity, agility and efficient use of the body and energy.

## ***Bi Xue***

### **"Sealing Accupoints"**

This is also known as 'Hitting Accupoints' and is more commonly known among Chinese martial artists as Dian Xue or 'Dotting Accupoints' because the majority of these kinds of attack make use of the fingertips. Attacking accupoints is by no means unique to Taijiquan but the way it is done is certainly quite unique. Whilst other martial arts often make use of serious conditioning of the anatomical weapons and vigorous body conditioning to develop the strength and resistance required to hit accupoints, Taijiquan uses positional and structural advantage to let the opponent provide the power to hit himself with his own power and mass.

Accupoints are divided into fatal and non-fatal accupoints. Fatal accupoints are only used in a life and death situation as they cause death very quickly and should not be used indiscriminately. Non-fatal accupoints are used to simply disable or incapacitate the opponent without causing too much harm. There are also accupoints that are more effective at different times of the day depending on the qi flow in the body. These timed strikes are of a more insidious nature as they are used for delayed killing or assassinations.

A short list of some of the accupoints used in Taijiquan is provided but readers are advised against using them unless absolutely necessary and to refrain from experimentation as the recovery techniques should be properly understood before one should practice with accupoints. Even then it is advisable not to practice them with any sort of impact since any accupoint strike on the body is a severe disruption of the body's systems and will have an affect on health of the body, both in the long term and in the short term. In most cases, even after remedial massage and accupoint treatment is carried out, herbs are taken to strengthen and stabilise the body in order to eliminate any after effects.

***Grasp Sparrow's Tail : Peng (Ward-Off)***- Wrist and forearm points (LI 4/5/7/10/11, SI 6/7, Lu 5/6/7/8, H 2/3/6, P 6, TW 5)

**Lu (Rollback)** - wrist and upper arm points (TW 11/12, LI 13, P 2)

**Ji (Press)**- centre of chest (Ren 15/17, K 23, and flank, Liv 13/14, Sp 21, GB 24)

**An (Push)**- ribs (K 23, St 19) and floating ribs (Li 13/14)

## ***Zhua Jing***

### **"Grasping Muscles"**

Grasping musculature in Taijiquan is akin to the specialisation of Chin-Na (Grasping and Holding) which is an advanced skill in many forms of Chinese martial arts. The difference is that in Taijiquan, the use of positional advantage, momentum and structural advantage is of more importance than super strong fingers. The sensitivity of combat Taijiquan permits the use of the opponent's structure, position, mass and momentum against himself causing him to literally lock and tie himself up with his structure with the Taijiquan exponent simply 'helping' him do it.

The result of this is that his body is unstable, rendering him vulnerable to serious injury should the the Taijiquan exponent chooses to do so. The locks and holds also cause sprains, tears of the musculature and dislocations of bones at the joints which further disable the opponent.

### *Jie Mo*

#### **"Sectioning Fascia"**

This skill is directed at restricting blood flow so as to render the body ineffectual in the execution of attacks. This is done primarily by structural control so that the position and state of the musculature and soft tissues of the opponent are such that the blood flow to certain parts of the body is restricted. Blood flow pressure points or gate points as they are referred to in Chinese are also used to effect this. This can cause the limb to 'go to sleep' or cause a knock out. Also part of this skill is the restriction of air flow by attacking the respiratory system and the musculature that powers it. Strikes are sometimes used to effect this.

Positional and structural advantage and use is essential to restrict and control his body. This is possible to a fine degree through the tactile sensitivity attained through dilligent practice in pushing hands and sparring hands.

### *Na Mai*

#### **"Holding Vessels"**

This refers to the grasping, holding and pushing of the qi meridians and accupoints with the purpose of disrupting and controlling the qi flow in the body. This makes the body impaired in terms of function and movement rendering the opponent vulnerable. Where Grasping Muscles attacks the physical structure of the body and Sectioning Fascia attacks the circulatory system, Holding Vessels attacks the internal vital energy flow which is distinct from the accupoints and the striking of them.

A good knowledge of the body's qi meridians is necessary as is the results of their disruption and blockage. As with the above skills, the opponent own body and energy is used against himself through superior information via tactile sensitivity and appropriate efficient application to obtain the desired result.

## **Healing And Harming**

When one can destroy a thing, one controls a thing. The knowledge and skill to cause destruction and death of the body can also be used to restore health and prolong life. The four advanced skills mentioned briefly above all require a thorough and intimate knowledge of the body and its functions. This knowledge can be used to heal injuries and illnesses by opening blockages to qi and blood circulation, restoring proper musculature position and function.

Often, this healing function is learned first before the harming function is taught. This ensures a proper disposition and respect for the skill as well a firm grounding in the theoretical base and its practical application. It is because these skills are so destructive that they are seldom taught and a large proportion of exponents in the art are not aware of their existance. They are passed on only to the most trusted of disciples who will not abuse them but use them for the benefit of all mankind.

## **The Taijiquan Martial Artist**

Above all, Taijiquan exponents are encouraged to be moral people. A sense of righteousness, chivalry, kindness, compassion, nobility and being a benefit to society should always be the code of conduct for a Taijiquan practitioner. A good example of a moral Taijiquan exponent will be the great master Sun Lu Tang who was not only a great martial artist but also a great man. A practitioner should embody the principles of his art and apply its stratagems and philosophies in their dealings with all things.

The aim of Taijiquan as a martial art is to stop violence conclusively without recourse to more violence, most of the time the violence is redirected against itself or rendered ineffectual. Hence Taijiquan exponents usually just overpower their opponents by turning their own violence against themselves, educating them rather than hurting them. Violence begets violence but by making violence not an option by rendering it pointless, since in Taijiquan it acts against itself, the destructive cycle is broken and a more rational, less confrontational solution becomes the most effective.

Can Taijiquan be used as an attacking art? Yes, but violence should only be the last recourse, never the first. Ego has no place in Taijiquan as it gets in the way of efficient practice and usage of the art. Violence is seldom the solution to a problem and all life is precious and should be treasured. Taijiquan itself is an art to prolong life, in peace and in combat. In practicing Taijiquan as a combat art, peace is learnt and cherished. We learn the art that we may never have to use it. That with the knowledge of violence and its consequences, we choose to avoid it.

# The Taijiquan Classics In Li I Yu's Handwritten Manuals

The Taijiquan Classics are a collection of early writings on the art that are regarded by Taijiquan practitioners as containing the essence of the art. The majority of listings of these classical works contain the writings recorded in Li I Yu's handwritten manuals. The contents of these manuals are regarded as the core writings in the Classics and hold a special place in literary tradition of Taijiquan. They are also probably the oldest writings available on the art of Taijiquan.

In addition to the translation into English for these classic works, I will be adding my own commentaries to them to further expand upon the meanings contained in them and their context and historicity. Some of the translations are taken from earlier translations, I have felt that there was no need to redo their fine work, others which have never been translated before have been translated by myself. Where the translations are not my own, they have been credited to the original translators.

## Translator's Note

*Some might regard the the translations I have done as being overly literal. There is a reason for this literal translation, I have tried not to paraphrase or rephrase as far as possible so as to prevent an unintentional insertion of my own meaning into the text rather than let the text speak for itself. The result is not likely to be very idiomatic but it does bring out the original flavour of the text as well as its most probable meaning in the context of the art of Taijiquan.*

*There is a specific place for my own interpretations and they are to be found in the commentaries which I have written on the individual classic works. Some of these interpretations have been handed down to me by my teachers and seniors, others have come from my own experience and research into the art. They should be read on their own merit and not regarded as anything beyond one practitioner's interpretation. The definitive interpretation being possible only by the authors of the original works.*

## The Li I Yu Collection Of Taijiquan Classics

[Wang Tsung Yueh's Taijiquan Classic](#)

[The Eight Body Methods By Wu Yu Xiang](#)

[The Thirteen Posture Form](#)

[The Thirteen Posture Saber Form](#)

[The Thirteen Posture Spear Form](#)

[The Four Saber Methods](#)

[The Four Spear Methods](#)

[Short Explanation For Weapons Practice](#)

[Plain Sayings On Each Posture Song By Li I Yu](#)

[Thirteen Posture Long Boxing](#)

[Song Of The Thirteen Postures](#)

[Hitting Hands Essential Sayings](#)

[Sparring Releasing Secret Formula](#)

[Hitting Hands Song](#)

[Sparring Hands And Walking Frame Essentials By Li I Yu](#)

[Five Word Formula By Li I Yu](#)

[Four Word Secret Formula By Wu Yu Xiang](#)

[Hitting Hands Sparring Releasing By Wu Yu Xiang](#)

---

## Wang Tsung Yueh's Taijiquan Classic

*Translation taken from Robert W. Smith and Cheng Man Ching's book "T'ai Ch'i"*

Taiji comes from infinity; from it spring yin and yang. In movement the two act independently; in stillness they fuse into one. There should be no excess and no insufficiency.

You yield at your opponent's slightest pressure and adhere to him at his slightest retreat. To conquer the strong by yielding is termed "withdraw" (*tso*). To improve your position to the detriment of your opponent is called "adherence" (*chan*). You respond quickly to a fast action, slowly to a slow action. Although the changes are numerous, the principle remains the same. Dilligent practice brings the skill of "interpreting strength". Beyond this achievement lies the ultimate goal: complete mastery of an opponent without recourse to detecting his energy. This, however, requires arduous practice.

The spirit of vitality reaches to the top of the head and the qi sinks to the navel. The body is held erect without leaning in any direction. Your opponent should not be able to detect your change from substantial to insubstantial or vice versa, because of your speed in effecting this change. When your opponent brings pressure on your left side, that side should be empty. The same holds for the right side. When he pushes upward or downward against you, he feels as if there is no end to the emptiness he encounters. When he advances against you, he feels the distance incredibly long; when he retreats, he feels it exasperatingly short.

The entire body is so light that a feather will be felt and so pliable that a fly cannot alight on it without setting it in motion. Your opponent cannot detect your moves but you can anticipate his. If you can master all these techniques you will become a peerless boxer.

In boxing there are myriad schools. Although they differ in form and scale, they can never go beyond reliance on the strong defeating the weak or the swift conquering the slow. Yet these are the result of physical endowments and not practical application and experience. The strong and the quick, however, cannot explain and have no part in the deflection of a thousand pound momentum with a trigger force of four ounces or of an old man defeating a great number of men.

Stand like a balance and move actively like a cart wheel. Keep your weight sunk on one side. If it is spread on two feet you will be pushed over easily. Coordinating the substantial is the key here. If that is achieved, then you can interpret strength. After this, by practicing vigorously, studying and remembering, one can reach the stage of total reliance on the mind. Forget yourself and yield to others. Go gradually, according to the right method. Above all, learn these techniques correctly; the slightest divergence will take you far off the path.

---

## The Eight Body Methods

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

1. Hollow The Chest
2. Raise The Back
3. Bind/Wrap The Lower Abdomen
4. Protect The Abdomen
5. Lift and Prop Up (head)
6. Lift Lower Abdomen (tail bone)
7. Loosen Shoulders
8. Sink Elbows

---

## The Thirteen Posture Form

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

1. Grasp Sparrow's Tail
2. Single Whip
3. Lift Hands Upwards Posture
4. White Crane Reveals Wings
5. Brush Knee Bend Step

6. Hand Play The Lute Posture
7. Brush Knee Bend Step
8. Hand Play The Lute Posture
9. Deflect, Parry And Punch
10. Apparent Closure
11. Embrace Tiger Push Mountain
12. Single Whip
13. Under Elbow See Fist
14. Repulse Monkey
15. White Crane Reveals Wings
16. Brush Knee Bend Step
17. Three Through Back
18. Single Whip
19. View Hands (Yun Shou - same pronunciation as Cloud Hands)
20. High Pat Horse
21. Left Right Lift Legs
22. Turn Body And Kick With Leg
23. Treading Step Hit With Fist
24. Turn Over Body Double Lift (Double Lift Legs)
25. Drape Body (Chop With Fist)
26. Kick With Leg
27. Kick With Sole
28. Step Forward, Deflect, Parry And Punch
29. Apparent Closure
30. Embrace Tiger Push Mountain
31. Slanting Single Whip

32. Part Wild Horse's Mane
  33. Single Whip
  34. Fair Lady Threads Shuttle
  35. Single Whip
  36. View Hands
  37. Downward Posture
  38. Change Chicken Standing On One Leg
  39. Repulse Monkey
  40. White Crane Reveals Wings
  41. Brush Knee Bend Step
  42. Three Through Back
  43. Single Whip
  44. View Hands
  45. High Pat Horse
  46. Cross Sweep Lotus (Cross Figure Single Sweep Lotus)
  47. Step Forward Point Fist At Pubic
  48. Step Forward Grasp Sparrow's Tail
  49. Single Whip
  50. Downward Posture
  51. Step Forward Seven Stars
  52. Step Down Ride Tiger
  53. Turn Leg Sweep Lotus
  54. Bend Bow Shoot Tiger
  55. Double Draping Fist
-

# The Thirteen Posture Saber Form

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

1. Press Saber
  2. Green Dragon Emerging From Water
  3. Reeling Wind Damages The Blossoms
  4. White Clouds Cover The Mountain Top
  5. Back Saber
  6. Go Cemetery Ghost Puzzle
  7. Brace Leg Lift Saber
  8. Open Clouds And View The Sun
  9. Evade Saber
  10. Feudal Lord Raises Urn
  11. Single Incense To The Sky
  12. Pull Saber Defeating Posture
  13. Hand Playing Lute Posture
- 

# The Thirteen Posture Spear Form

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

1. Single Ward-Off Staff/Spear
2. Green Dragon Emerges From Water
3. Child Praying To the Goddess Of Mercy
4. Hungry Tiger Pounces On Prey
5. Blocking Road Tiger
6. Bend Step
7. Diagonal Posture
8. Wind Sweeps The Plum Blossoms

9. Centre Soldiers Send Troops
  10. Veteran Bird Returns To Nest
  11. Pull Staff Defeating Posture
  12. Agile Cat Catching Mouse
  13. Hand Playing Lute Posture.
- 

## The Four Saber Methods

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

1. Inner Wrist Cut
  2. Outer Wrist Cut
  3. Press Down Wrist
  4. Hold Up Wrist
- 

## The Four Spear Methods

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

1. Level Pierce The Heart
  2. Slanting Pierce The Shoulder
  3. Downward Pierce The Instep
  4. Upward Pierce The Throat
- 

## Short Explanation For Weapons Practice

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

For the above saber methods and spear methods, the body methods must be in place, with emphasis on following jing.

---

## Plain Sayings On Each Posture Song by Li I Yu

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

Raise and prop (the head), lift the pubic, conceive in the mind,  
Loosen the shoulders, sink elbows, qi at the tan tien;  
Wrap the pubic, protect the abdomen must downward posture,  
Hollow chest, raise back, return to natural.  
First posture left right Lazily Arranging Clothes,  
Two hands pushing out pulling single whip.  
Lift Hands Up Posture looking towards space,  
White Crane Reveals Wing fly up to the sky.  
Brush Knee Bend Step hit to the front,  
Hand Playing The Lute hides and draws close to the side.  
Brush Knee Bend Step repeat the Downward Posture,  
Hand Playing The Lute again once more.  
Step forward first hit with Palm To The Face,  
Deflect, Parry, Punch hits the front of the chest.  
Apparent Closure pushes to the front,  
Draw Body Embrace Tiger go push the mountain.  
Return body pull to form Single Whip,  
Fist Under Elbow hits the centre of the waist.  
Repulse Monkey repeats the posture 4 times,  
White Crane Reveals Wings until the cloud top.  
Brush Knee Bend Step must Downward Posture,  
Withdraw Body Lute at front of chest.  
Press Posture overturn body Three Through Back,  
Twist neck turn the head back pull Single Whip.  
View Hands three times then High Pat Horse,  
Left Right Lift Legs who dares stand in the way.  
Turn Body One Leg (kick) Then Plant Fist,  
Overturn Body Double Lift kick to break the sky.  
Hold body retreat step Subdue Tiger Posture,  
Kick With Leg Turn Body is tightly continuous.  
Kick With Sole step forward deflect, parry, hit,  
Apparent Closure hands face the front.  
Embrace Tiger Push Mountain repeat Downward Posture,  
Turn head back and again pull Single Whip.  
Part Wild Horse's Mane advances towards the front,  
Lazily Arranging Clothes is indeed fresh.  
Turn Body again pull Single Whip,  
Fair Lady Threads Shuttles complete the four corners.  
Change pull Single Whip is really ingenious,  
View Hands Downward Posture probes the pure spring.  
Change Chicken Stands On One Leg is divided into left and right,  
Repulse Monkey is again repeated.  
White Crane Reveals Wing extends the body,  
Brush Knee forward hand is down at the side.  
Press Posture Green Dragon again emerges from the water,  
Turn body again and again pull Single Whip.  
View Hands High Pat palm against heart,  
Cross Figure Sweep Lotus overturns to the back.  
Point Fist To Pubic hits downwards,  
Lazily Arranging Clothes in tight continuity.  
Again pull Single Whip again Downward Posture,

Step up begin discharge Seven Star Fist.  
Withdraw body step backwards pull Riding Tiger,  
Turn leg out hit Double Sweep Lotus.  
Scoop Up The Moon At The Sea Bottom must have Downward Posture,  
Bend Bow Shoot Tiger neck faces forward.  
Embrace Twin Fists who dares advance,  
Walk the whole earth no one dares stand in the way.  
This song this song 60 verses,  
If don't meet an intimate friend don't transmit lightly.

---

## Thirteen Posture Long Boxing

*Translated by Zee Wen from the book by Mah Yueh Liang and Wu Ying Hwa "Wu Style Taichichuan - Forms, Concepts and Application of the Original Style"*

Long Boxing, which denotes the serial forms, is like the flow of water in a great river or sea, running without end. The thirteen kinetic movements are: *peng* (warding), *lu* (diverting), *ji* (pressing), *an* (pushing), *tsai* (plucking), *lieh* (twisting), *chou* (elbowing) and *Kao* (leaning) which are connected with the eight trigrams, and *jin* (stepping forward), *tui* (stepping backward), *ku* (look to the left), *pan* (look to the right), and *zhong ding* (central equilibrium) which coincide with the five elements, namely, metal, wood, water, fire and earth. *Peng*, *lu*, *ji* and *an* are called the four straight direction manipulations which are toward the south, west, east and north respectively. *Tsai*, *lieh*, *chou* and *kao* are the four diagonal manipulations toward the four corners of northwest, southeast, northeast and southwest respectively.

(Original annotation: This is the work of the late Chang San-feng of Mt. Wu-Dang, who wanted the "heros" in the world to prolong life and not solely for martial arts).

---

## Song Of The Thirteen Postures

*Translated by Ben Lo et al, from their book "The Essence Of T'ai Chi Chuan"*

The thirteen postures should not be taken lightly;  
The source of the postures lies in the waist.  
Be mindful of the insubstantial and substantial changes;  
The qi (breath) spreads throughout without hinderance.  
Being still, when attacked by the opponent, be tranquil and move in stillness;  
(My) changes caused by the opponent fill him with wonder.  
Study the function of each posture carefully and with deliberation;  
To achieve the goal is very easy.  
Pay attention to the waist at all times;  
Completely relax the abdomen and the qi (breath) will raise up.  
When the coccyx is straight,  
The shen (spirit) goes through the headtop.  
To make the whole body light and agile suspend the headtop.  
Carefully study.  
Extension and contraction, opening and closing, should be natural.  
To enter the door and be shown the way, you must be orally taught.

The practice is uninterrupted, and the technique (achieved) by self study.  
Speaking of the body and its function, what is the standard?  
The i (mind) and qi (breath) are king, and the bones and muscles are the court.  
Think over carefully what the final purpose is: to lengthen life and maintain youth.  
The Song consists of 140 characters; each character is true and the meaning is complete.  
If you do not study in this manner, then you will waste your time and sigh.

---

## Hitting Hands Essential Sayings

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek (first 2 parts), part 3 translated by Robert W. Smith and Cheng Man Qing from their book "T'ai Ch'i"*

Explanation:

Use the mind to move the qi, exerting sunk one, then can the qi gather in the bones, that is what is called 'the source of the postures lies in the waist'. The intent and qi should change actively, it should be round and lively, that is what is called 'be mindful of the insubstantial and substantial changes'. The upright body is erect, peaceful and comfortable, able to support 8 sides; move qi like 9 curved pearls, there is nowhere it does not reach, that is what is called 'the qi spreads throughout without hindrance'.

Emitting strength (fajing) should be sunk, relaxed and quite, in one direction only, this is what is called 'be still, when attacked by the opponent, be tranquil and move in stillness'. In moving back and forth one must fold repeatedly, advancing and retreating must have turns and changes, this is what is called '(my) changes caused by the opponent fill him with wonder'. In curves seek the straight, store then emit, this is what is called 'study the function of each posture carefully and with deliberation, pay attention to the waist at all times'. Lift the consciousness, then can one be without worry about being slow and heavy, this is what is called 'completely relax the abdomen and the qi will raise up'. Empty the neck and prop up (the head) with strength, sink the qi to the Tan Tien, not slanting not leaning, this is what is called 'when the coccyx is straight, the shen (spirit) goes to the headtop, to make the whole body light agile suspend the headtop'. Move the body using qi, exert on this to succeed, then can one facilitate the mind, this is what is called 'extension and contraction, opening and closing, should be natural'. The mind is the command, the qi the flag, the consciousness the commander and the body the one ordered about, this is what is called 'the i (mind) and ch'i (breath) are king, and the bones and muscles are the court.

Explanation:

Though the body moves, the mind holds preciously to quietness, qi must accumulate, the consciousness comfortable. The mind is the command, qi is the flag, the consciousness the commander and the body the one ordered about. Always keep this in mind, the method will yield benefits. The mind is the first, the body comes after. The body only does not know the hand and its movements, the foot and its stepping. This is what is called a single breath completion, abandoning oneself and following others, attracting into emptiness, four ounces drawing out a thousand catties. You must know that in moving, everything moves, when quiet everything is quite, see movement but still quiet, see quiet but still moving, inside is resolute consciousness, outside when seen is easy and comfortable. One must follow along with others, going along with others is lively, following self is stagnating. Those that esteem breath have no strength, those that cultivate the qi have pure hardness. If the other does not move, I do not

move; the other moves slightly, I then move first. Labour to know yourself, only then can you turn and receive at will; for oneself to stick to others, one must know others, only then can one be not too late or too early. One must be able to raise the consciousness, then you don't have the worry about being slow and heavy; sticking and following gives agility, then one can see the ingeniousness of 'into emptiness'. One must divide Yin and Yang when moving back and forth, advancing and retreating has turning and closing. Opportunity comes from oneself, strength is borrowed from others. In emitting strength (fajing), the upper and lower must be coordinated, then in going one is invincible; the erect body must be upright without leaning, able to support 8 sides. Quiet like a mountain, moving like a river. Stepping forward like standing on the edge of a pond, move strength (jing) like drawing silk, store strength (jing) like stretching a bow, emit strength (fajing) like shooting an arrow. Move qi like 9 curved pearls, there is nowhere it does not reach; propel qi like steel refined a hundred times over, there is nothing hard that it cannot destroy. Form like targeting when catching a mouse, the consciousness like a cat catching a mouse. Seek the straight in the curved, store then emit. To take in is the same as to emit, joining without breaks. From extreme softness then can it be extremely strong and hard; can stick and follow then can be agile. Qi is cultivated directly without harm, strength (jing) is stored in the curved and with surplus. Compliance comes gradually, only knowing can one achieve it.

Also said:

In any action the entire body should be light and agile and all of its parts connected like pearls on a thread. The qi should be cultivated; the spirit of vitality should be retained internally and not exposed externally.

Sound boxing is rooted in the feet, develops in the legs, is directed by the waist, and functions through the fingers. The feet, legs, and waist must act as one. There should be no hollows and projections and no severance, so that when advancing and retreating you can use both your opponent's defects and your own superior position. If you fail to gain these advantages, your body will be disordered and confused. To correct this fault you must adjust your legs and waist. The same principle applies irrespective of direction or attitude.

Taiji hinges entirely upon the player's consciousness (i) rather than upon his external muscular force (li). When attacking above, you must not forget below; when striking left, you must pay attention to the right; and when advancing, you must have regard for retreating. This principle applies for both the attacker and defender. If you want to pull something upward, you must first push it down, causing the root to be severed and the object to be immediately toppled. The substantial and the insubstantial must be clearly differentiated. Every part of the body has both a substantial and an insubstantial aspect at any given time. The entire body also has this feature if considered as one unit. All parts of the body must be threaded together, not allowing the slightest severance.

---

## Sparring Releasing Secret Formula

*Translation taken from T.Y. Pang's book "On Tai Chi Chuan"*

Lift his body, using his power--  
be flexible;  
Draw his body, storing your  
strength--be able to gather;

Relax, don't lock your strength--  
be tranquil;  
Release, pay attention to your  
waist and legs--be integrated.

---

## Hitting Hands Song

*Translation by Robert W. Smith and Cheng Man Qing from their book "T'ai Ch'i"*

In Ward-off, Rollback, Press and Push,  
You must find the real technique-  
If he goes up, you follow;  
If he goes down, you follow;  
Then he cannot attack.  
Let him attack you with great force,  
And use four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds,  
Neutralizing him until he becomes powerless,  
And then use withdraw-attack.  
Also adhere and lift, support from below,  
Stick horizontally, and attach from the rear-  
Without letting go and with no resistance.

---

## Sparring Hands And Walking Frame Essentials By Li I Yu

*Translated by Ben Lo Et Al in the book "The Essence Of T'ai Chi Ch'uan"*

Formerly people said: being able to attract into emptiness, you can use four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds. Not being able to attract into emptiness, you cannot deflect a thousand pounds. The words are simple, but the meaning complete. The beginner cannot understand it. Here I add some words to explain it. If someone is ambitious to learn this art, he can find some way to enter it and every day he will have improvement.

Desiring to attract into emptiness and use four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds, first you must have the correct timing and position. To obtain the correct timing and position, you must first make the body one unit. Desiring to make the body one unit, you must first eliminate hollows and protruberances. To make the whole body without hbreaks or holes, you must first have the shen (spirit) and qi (breath) excited and expanded. If you want the shen and qi activated and expanded, you must first raise the spirit (pay attention) and the shen should not be unfocussed. To have your shen not unfocussed, you must first have the shen and qi gather and penetrate the bones. Desiring the shen and qi to penetrate the bones, you must first strengthen the two thighs and loosen the two shoulders and let the qi sink down.

The jing (internal force) raises from the feet, changes into the legs, is stored in the chest, moved in the shoulders and commanded in the waist. The upper part connects to the two arms and the lower part follows the legs. It changes inside. To gather is to close and to release is to open. If it is quiet, it is completely still. Still means to close. In closing there is opening. If it is moving, everything moves. Moving is open. In opening there is closing. When the body is

touched it revolves freely. There is nowhere that does not obtain power. Then you can attract to emptiness and use four ounces to deflect a thousand pounds.

Practicing the form every day is the kung fu (way of practicing) of knowing yourself. When you start to practice, first ask yourself, "Did my whole body follow the previous principles or not?" If one little place didn't follow (them), then correct it immediately. Therefore, in practicing the form we want slowness not speed.

Push hands is the kung fu of knowing others. As for movement and stillness, although it is to know others, you must still ask yourself. If you arrange yourself well, when others touch you, you don't move a hair. Follow the opportunity and meet his jing (internal force) and let him naturally fall outward. If you feel someplace (in your body) is powerless, it is double weighted and unchanging. You must first seek (the defect) in yin and yang, opening and closing. Know yourself and know others: in one hundred battles you will win one hundred times.

---

## Five Word Formula By Li I Yu

*Translated by Ben Lo Et Al in the book "The Essence Of T'ai Chi Ch'uan"*

### **CALM**

The mind should be calm. If it is not, one cannot concentrate, and when the arm is raised, (whether) forward or back, left or right, it is completely without certain direction. Therefore it is necessary to maintain a calm mind. In beginning to move, you cannot control (it) by yourself. The entire mind must (also) experience and comprehend the movements of the opponent. Accordingly, when (the movement) bends, it then straightens, without disconnecting or resisting. Do not extend or retreat by yourself. If my opponent has li (strength), I also have li, but my li is previous (in exact anticipation of his). If the opponent does not have li, I am also without it (li), but my mind is still previous. It is necessary to be continually mindful; to whatever part (of the body) is touched the mind should go. You must discover the information by non-discrimination and non-resistance. Follow this method, and in one year, or a half-year, you will instinctively find it in your body. All of this means use i (mind), not jing (internal force). After a long time the opponent will be controlled by me and I will not be controlled by him.

### **AGILITY**

If the body is clumsy, then in advancing or retreating it cannot be free; therefore it must be agile. Once you raise your arm, you cannot appear clumsy. The moment the force of the opponent touches my skin and hair, my mind is already penetrating his bones. When holding up the arms the qi (breath) is threaded together continuously. When the left side is heavy, it then empties, and the right side is already countering. When the right is heavy, it empties, and the left is already countering. The qi is like a wheel, and the whole body must mutually coordinate. If there is any uncoordinated place, the body becomes disordered and weak. The defect is to be found in the waist and legs. First the mind is used to order the body. Follow the opponent and not yourself (your own inclination). Later your body can follow your mind, and you can control yourself and still follow the opponent. When you only follow yourself, you are clumsy, but when you follow (coordinate with) the opponent, you are lively. When you can follow your opponent, then your hands can distinguish and weigh accurately the amount

of his force, and measure the distance of his approach with no mistake. Advancing and retreating everywhere (the coordination) is perfect. After studying for a long time, your technique will become skillful.

## **BREATH**

### **To Gather the Qi**

If the qi is dispersed, then it is not stored (accumulated) and is easy to scatter. Let the qi penetrate the spine and the inhalation and exhalation be smooth and unimpeded throughout the entire body. The inhalation closes and gathers, the exhalation opens and discharges. Because the inhalation can naturally raise and also uproot the opponent, the exhalation can naturally sink down and also discharge (fa fang) him. This is by means of the i (mind), not the li (strength) mobilizing the qi (breath).

### **The Complete Jing**

The jing of the (whole) body, through practice becomes one unit. Distinguish clearly between substantial and insubstantial. To fa jing (discharge) it is necessary to have root. The jing starts from the foot, is commanded by the waist, and manifested in the fingers, and discharge through the spine and back. One must completely raise the spirit (pay attention) at the moment when the opponent's jing is just about to manifest, but has not yet been released. My jing has then already met his (jing), not late not early. It is like using a leather (tinder) to start a fire, or like a fountain gushing forth. (In) going forward or stepping back, there is not even the slightest disorder. In the curve seek the straight, store, then discharge; then you are able to follow your hands and achieve a beneficial result. This is called borrowing force to strike the opponent or using four ounces to deflect thousand pounds.

## **SPIRIT**

### **Shen Concentrated**

Having the above four, then you can return to concentrated spirit: if the spirit is concentrated, then it is (continuous and) uninterrupted, and the practice of qi (breath) returns to the shen (spirit). The manifestation of qi moves with agility. (When) the spirit is concentrated opening and closing occur appropriately and the differentiation of substantial and insubstantial is clear. If left is insubstantial, the right is substantial, and vice versa. Insubstantial does not mean completely without strength. The manifestation of the qi must be agile Substantial does not mean completely limited. The spirit must be completely concentrated. It is important to be completely in the mind (heart) and waist, and not outside.

Not being outside or separated, force is borrowed from the opponent, and the ch'i is released from the spine. How can the qi discharge from the spine? It sinks downward from the two shoulders, gathers to the spine, and pours to the waist. This is qi from up to down and is called "closed". From the waist the qi mobilizes the spine, spreads to the two arms and flows to fingers. This is qi from down to up and is called "opened". Closed is gathering, and opened is discharging. When you know opening and closing, then you know yin and yang. Reaching this level your skill will progress with the days and you can do as you wish.

---

## **Four Word Secret Formula By Wu Yu Xiang**

*Translation taken from T.Y. Pang's book "On Tai Chi Chaun"*

To **Spread** is to circulate the Qi in my body, to spread it upon his strength so he cannot move freely.

To **Cover** is to use my Qi to cover the point of his attack.

To **Confront** is to use my Qi to match his approach precisely.

To **Swallow** is to use my Qi to receive and transform his power completely.

These four words are formless and soundless. Only one who understands strength and achieves the finest stages can know the meaning of what has been said here about Qi. Only one who cultivates his Qi correctly so that it spreads to the body's four limbs will be able to respond to the soundlessness and formlessness of these four words.

---

## Hitting Hands Sparring Releasing

*Translated by Peter Lim Tian Tek*

**Peng** - Upper Flat

**Ye** - Entering Sound

**Yi** - Upper Sound

**Hai** - Entering Sound

**Hu** - Upper Sound

**Hang**

**He**

**Ha**

# Dit Ta: The Chinese Art Of Healing Injuries



by Peter Lim Tian Tek

---

## Foreword

Chinese Martial Arts are very capable in causing injury to an opponent. In fact, causing injury is the major means employed by a majority of the Chinese Martial Arts to gain victory. Quite often as well, injury occurs during training in them. This is mainly due to the difficulty of the techniques, accidents during two man training instances and hardening anatomical weapons.

Out of this need to heal these injuries and to prevent them from occurring again by strengthening the body, traditional Chinese Medicine was incorporated in to the Chinese Martial Arts. This branch of Chinese Medicine was much dedicated to osteopathy and traumatology and employed the theories and herbs of Traditional Chinese Medicine in these areas.

Many boxers earned their keep by selling injury healing medication and treating such injuries. The poorer ones selling their wares in the street and demonstrating their effectiveness by causing injury to themselves and then applying the medication to show how fast it healed the injury.

They also demonstrated feats of great strength and skill to convince the crowds of their credibility. A common demonstration was to take an iron chain or bar and hit it against the arm or body to cause injury and then applying the medication to show the boxer's confidence in its healing powers. Out of this kinds of demonstrations came the common name of this branch of Chinese Medicine: 'Dit Ta' in Cantonese, 'Tieh Ta' in Mandarin and 'Iron Hitting' in English. Those who were physicians and did not ply their healing art in the streets by giving demonstrations adopted a similar sounding name for their art which has the meaning 'Fall and Hit' but they are actually one and the same healing art.

Dit Ta Medicine comprised of methods of healing injuries sustained and methods of using medication to prevent injuries during training in Chinese Martial Arts. One of the famous techniques that came out of this science is the Iron Palm. The science of Dit Ta Medicine is usually kept quite secret by Chinese Martial Arts exponents and they do not reveal their recipes and techniques easily or willingly. Dit Ta Medicine also has in its repertoire knowledge of poisons and how to use them to heal and kill.

In recent years, many such Dit Ta medications are now produced commercially and can be bought from the local Chinese Medicine Shop or from pharmacists. Examples of these commercially available medicines (which saves time since they can be bought off the shelf) and traditional recipes will be given in this article. As far as possible the western names of the herbs have been given. Dit Ta Medication consists of two major areas: Internal Medicine (Nei Ke) and External Medicine (Wai Ke).

These medications should not be used on pregnant women and women during menstruation. For these two cases, please consult a professional Chinese Physician or Dit Ta doctor for specific prescriptions if you wish to use Chinese methods of healing.

## Internal Medicine

These medications are taken internally to strengthen the body, improve the circulation, break up blood clots, stop internal bleeding and heal the musculature and bones of injury. They usually come in the form of decoctions, powders, pills and wines.

This kind of medication is often taken as a complement to externally applied medication on the site of the injury. Some of the herbs used in these two kinds medications are often the same but the quantity used for external application is often more. Some medicated wines can often be used both internally and externally.

There are several types of internal Dit Ta medication available commercially. One of the most famous is the Yunnan Bai Yao or Yunnan White Medication. It is excellent for injuries and can be used both internally and externally. It is available both in powder and capsule form. Another is the Shaolin Tieh Da Huo Xue Dan or Shaolin Iron Hitting Blood Invigourating Pill, it is taken for injuries resulting from falls and contusions.

The use of internal medication often requires a clear understanding of the internal condition of the patient. Traditional formulas are often 'tailored' for the specific individual to suite their body make-up. So no traditional formulas are presented here because of this consideration.

## External Medicine

This is where Dit Ta Medication is most well known. External Dit Ta Medication comes usually as powders, plasters, pastes, balms and liniments. The liniments being the most famous of the lot often being referred to as Dit Ta Jow (Iron Hitting Wine) or Dit Ta Yow (Iron Hitting Oil). External medication is often toxic and should not be consumed, they should be kept out of reach of children. Some of these medications also open up the pores and circulation and so for the duration of the effect of the medication, the wound should be kept away from water, cold air or wind or rheumatism might set in.

These are applied directly to the injury and acts through the skin (some medication is only suitable for injury that does not break the skin and cannot be used in open wound situations) to reach the damaged tissue and bone. They are also good for cases of rheumatism and arthritis. Liniments are rubbed onto the skin and often if the injury involves a joint or major muscle or is a sprain, the area is manipulated to straighten the tendons and bones and to increase the blood circulation to the area. Such manipulations are a science unto themselves and form an essential part of the science of Dit Ta Medicine. As they are many and varied, they will not be discussed here.

Powders are usually used for open wounds and if mixed with wine into a paste, as a compress or poultice. These are most often used when there has been a severe injury with crushed muscles or broken bones. These pastes are often referred to as bone setting pastes (Jie Gu Gao) and because of their effectiveness, Dit Ta Physicians are also often referred to as Bone Setting Doctors.

These powders and pastes are usually not commercially available and are kept rather secret. A good powder that is used for bruises and fractures is the Shaolin Chi Li San. The ingredients are crushed into powder form and then mixed with white rice wine into a paste which is used over the injured area (no broken skin) and wrapped with gauze and bandaged into place. It is

left overnight and removed the next day and the medication is continued until the injury is healed.

### **Recipe For Chi Li San:**

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Defatted Croton Seed Powder | 5g  |
| Frankincense                | 5g  |
| Myrrh                       | 5g  |
| Resina Draconis             | 5g  |
| Natural Copper (crushed)    | 5g  |
| Sodium Borate               | 5g  |
| Tuber of Pinellia           | 5g  |
| Radix Angelica Sinensis     | 10g |

Plasters are used not only to heal the injury but to draw out the 'damp' from the wound and so prevent rheumatism. Many such medicated plasters are now available commercially and are used mainly for rheumatic pain. The older form of the plaster was just a round dab of thickened medicinal paste in the centre of a piece of paper or thick cloth which was administered to the desired area of skin. Its quite troublesome to make in small quantities and so commercial preparations are preferable.

By far the most noted medication from the repertoire of Dit Ta Medication are the liniments. These have long been used to heal and prevent injuries due to martial arts training. So much so that they are often an indispensable companion to the martial artist. The recipes for these liniments are always a closely kept secret and often are very old. There are basically four types of liniment in Dit Ta Medicine. Wine based liniment, oil based liniment, vinegar based liniment and water based liniment.

Of the four types of liniment, each having its own advantages, wine or alcohol based liniment is the most preferred. This is because alcohol based liniments penetrate quickly to deliver the herbal medication and evaporate quickly leaving the herbs to do their work. It also achieves a higher concentration of the herbal essences since alcohol is a good solvent. The herbs are soaked in the wine for a period of time until their essence becomes dissolved in the wine. In the old days, it was not uncommon for the medicated wine to be buried underground for months, burying keeps the mixture at quite a cool constant temperature.

### **Iron Hitting Wine Recipe**

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Camphor (crushed)                       | 10g  |
| Raw Fruit of Cape Jasmine               | 5g   |
| Raw Root of Kusenoff Monkshood          | 25g  |
| Raw Aconite Root                        | 25g  |
| Raw Tuber Of Jackinthepulpit            | 25g  |
| Raw Pinellia Tuber                      | 25g  |
| Cattail Pollen                          | 25g  |
| Raw Chinese Quince                      | 200g |
| Raw Rhubarb                             | 150g |
| Root-Bark of slenderstyle acanthopanax  | 100g |
| Rhizome of incised notopterygium        | 200g |
| Root of double teeth pubescent angelica | 200g |
| Root of Red Peony                       | 150g |

Place in a sealed jar with white wine (Gao Liang Wine or any other high alcohol content wine) for 7-15 days. It can be used for all injuries that don't break the skin.

Oil based liniments are prepared in much the same way with the herbs soaking in vegetable based oil like olive oil. At times the herbs are simmered with oil in a non-metal pan (metal pans may cause chemical changes in the herbal mix) to draw out the essences. Oil based liniment penetrate relatively slowly compared to wine liniments and they remain there for a longer period of time. Whilst useful for certain types of injuries such as crushed musculature without swelling, it is best not to use it in cases where there is swelling as it might aggravate the swelling.

Water based liniments usually need to be warmed before use, this is to aid the penetration of the medication through the skin. It is the cheapest to produce this kind of liniment. Since it can be made in large quantities at relatively low costs it is often used in training to harden anatomical weapons.

It has a disadvantage that water when retained in the hand and subject to cold air or wind can result in poor circulation and 'damp' leading to rheumatism. So in using such liniment in training, it is important to let the hand dry by itself thoroughly without cold air or wind. The liniment is usually used before and after such hardening training. A simple hand washing liniment for the Iron Palm is as follows:

### **Iron Palm Water Based Liniment (Yi Jin Jing Recipe)**

Equal quantities of Chinese Wolf Berry and table salt in a large pot of water. Simmer the mixture for about 30 minutes. Warm the mixture to about 40 degrees Celcius before using and wash the hands, massaging them in the mixture, before and after training. Make sure you take the precautions state above.

Vinegar based liniments are good to reduce swelling and inflammation but prolonged use makes the bones brittle and so they should not be used for sustained training like Iron Palm. They are also prepared by soaking herbs in the base.

Commercial preparations are now available for such liniments, some like Zhen Gu Shui are excellent. There are many such liniments available off the shelf and many share common herbal elements. Some of these liniments have also been mixed with thickener or a cream base and sold as balms. Tiger Balm is an example of such a balm. The advantages of a balm over a liquid is that it won't spill and can be carried around in a small container safely everywhere you go.

## **Conclusion**

Commercial preparations make it convenient to use these age old recipes for healing injuries and for training purposes. Some may still prefer to prepare them in the traditional fashion as this may result in a higher concentration.

There are thousands of such traditional recipes and many of them are kept secret by the different masters and schools of Chinese Martial Arts. Some of these recipes are highly effective. Perhaps in the future, such recipes will be commercially available or recorded down and made available for the benefit of all. The science of Dit Ta Medication still holds treasures and fascination for many martial artists. It has done so for many centuries and may very well go on doing so for many centuries to come.

# Peng Jing FAQ Cross Reference

By Peter Lim Tian Tek

The Peng Jing FAQ was first compiled by the Neijia Mailing List as a collection of information which purportedly supports their unique definition and ideas about Peng Jing as the core of Taijiquan. The Peng Jing FAQ is eclectic in nature in its contents and the cross reference does not intimate that what is quoted from the original posters is their personal opinion. It is simply a commentary to the FAQ and not its contributors who may have simply reported information that has come their way.

> =====

>

>From: Rreylloc@aol.com  
>from Tai Chi Boxing Chronicle  
>by Kuo Lien-Ying

We are not certain that this book is actually from Kuo's work since the Author does not identify himself clearly and the Peng Jing material is not in Mdm Kuo's book or Kuo's book in Chinese published in the 60s. It post dates Gu's book.

>=====

>

>From: Jesse Marandino  
>  
>Jingyu Gu, third generation student of Wu Jian-Quan lineage, practitioner  
>of taiji for +20 years:  
>Jingyu "Don't even talk about any of the other jings if you do not  
>understand peng-jing."

We have no documentary evidence for this one. It is certain that other books by Wu Jian Quan's students do not emphasize this. That the learning sequence for the Jing follows the order Peng Lu Ji An Chai Lieh Chou Kao, it is not surprising that the statement is such, but the sequence is not in order of importance. We note that Wu Jian Quan's own material does not have this emphasis. We also note that this does not mean that the other jings are not more important or can be ignored.

>

>=====

>

>From: allen@starfire.utias.utoronto.ca:  
>[[in discussion about written commentary in re 'peng jing']]  
>  
>I wouldn't say as recent as Feng ZhiQiang...I would push it back as far as  
>Chen FaKe, who was reported to have said that there are two types of peng,  
>one being the technique, one being \*the\* basic taiji jing, and \*is\* the  
>silk reeling jing. That would be from the period that he was in beijing  
>(1930's to late 50's). In Shen JiaZhen's Chen style taijiquan book  
>(1963), he clearly and unmistakably identified peng jing as the basic  
>internal strength of taijiquan. Since Shen JiaZhen's book was viewed as

Shen Jia Zhen's book was co-authored with Gu. That is the one we are referring to, the 1963 book. Gu was the primary author and was in charge of producing a series of books on the different styles of TCC for the government to disseminate. We note that both had studied Yang style before and so would have been familiar with the Eight Gates Jing (the 8 basic Jings of the Yang related lineages). Early Chen references and even some later ones, including those from the mentioned Feng Zhi Qiang and also Chen Xiao Wang maintain the same emphasis as Chen Xin's seminal work in stating the Chan Ssu Jing is the basic Taijiquan Jing. This relating only took place in 1963 when the book was published. Since both Feng and Chen Xiao Wang derive their arts from Chen Fa Ke, one being a relative and the other his disciple, one would expect that they share the same emphasis as Chen Fa Ke on this matter which seems to be the case. This would dispell as myth Chen Fa Ke's reported emphasis above.

>the definitive work representing Chen FaKe's teaching in his later years  
>(the book had inputs from many of FaKe's students, and was edited by Chen  
>ZhouKui), and was considered as the official Chen style book, I believe  
>this is when \*it\* started (he even said taijiquan is peng jing quan).  
>Heck, most of Chen style stuff and silk reeling stuff in Jou Tsung Hwa's  
>book were "copied" from this book. So he has this half-cooked idea about  
>peng as the basic jing, but then he mixed it up with the peng technique  
>from Yang style, added in the description of peng from Shen JiaZhen's  
>book, and some of his ideas, and you have this strange section in the  
>chapter (heck the entire chapter) where you don't really know exactly  
>where  
>he got his sources. I used the same trick writing thesis report in my  
>undergrad years. :)  
>  
>As I said, Shen's book crystalized the concept and made it public.  
>However Chen FaKe did mention it earlier (as reported in Hung JunShen's  
>book). Before that there doesn't seem to have any record describing peng  
>jing as \*the\* basic jing. So I'd say no earlier than 1930's and no later  
>than 1963.

He's right here, there was no references earlier than this one describing Peng Jing as the basic Jing. We note that Hung Jun Shen's book should be taken in context, a mere mention of the words Peng Jing does not mean that he held it pre-eminant. We note that Chen's disciple, Li Jing Wu, whose material formed the basis of Gu and Shen's book on Taijiquan does not have such emphasis and Li's own writings and system of Internal Strength stresses the training of Jing (essence), Qi (vital energy) and Shen (Consciousness/Spirit).

>  
>=====

>  
>Fu Sheng Yuan has not written on this, however, we certainly have had some  
>good discussion on it. Fu S.Y. has repeatedly told me that without peng jin  
>there is no tai chi. Those who say otherwise clearly do not understand the  
>art. The fault, he believes, is of poor or incomplete understanding by  
>"teachers" not the students.  
>  
>LeRoy Clark

>>[Note: Fu Shen Yuan is Fu Zong Wen's son. Fu Zong Wen was Yang Chengfu's  
> nephew. TWC]

But of course, missing any one of the 8 jings would make the art incomplete. But this emphasis on Peng jing is missing from Fu S.Y.'s book and the book he coauthored with his father Fu Zhong Wen on Taijiquan and its proper transmission and teaching.

>  
>=====

>  
>From: Jack Rowley

>  
>> Thought a quote from Ling ZhiAn article in "T'ai Chi"'s latest  
>issue  
>> would amuse and beguile:  
>> "Generally, we separate jing into eight kinds of jing. But altogether  
>there  
>> is only one jing. That is called  
>> peng jing, or ward off energy. Peng jing means that your limbs and  
>body  
>> extend and issue the energy like  
>> a spring."  
>> He said that when you issue peng jing, you must combine it with  
>your  
>> mind and qi. But if you  
>> extend your limbs and body and overdo it, then you become rigid.  
>>

This is a late reference. Issuing energy is fa-jing not peng jing. Peng Jing is used to Ward Off upwardly and outwardly, like water on a boat on its surface. Fa-jing can be effected in any posture but it is distinct from the primary jing that is the foundation of the posture. Peng jing is already one of the 8 jings which relate to the 8 trigrams. All 8 are given equal emphasis in material that predates the 1963 book.

>  
>=====

>  
>From: wooi

>This is a quote Gu Luixin attributed to Hong Junsheng and used in his  
>book Pao Chui (published by Hai Feng I believe in 1983 or so):  
>  
>'Taiji is peng jing, movements are done in spirals'  
>

This is also a late reference by the same man that wrote the 1963 book that first posited it. This is not the only view on the structure of Taijiquan, it is not in line with the early material where we find no equivalent. We note that in Gu's last book in 1985 'Taijiquan shu', he no longer equates Peng Jing with Internal strength nor does he repeat that statement. In fact, Peng Jing in that book is no longer stressed as being pre-eminant.

>=====

>

>[[researched by Forrest Chang]]

> Quoted from an interview with Yang Zhen Duo (son of Yang Cheng >Fu) in T'ai Chi Magazine, vol 19. No. 5.:

>

> "Normally, when we talk about peng( ward off)," Yang said, "we >are not talking about the ward off in the the form .. the left ward >off and right ward off. Peng is to intentionally let go and make the >body loose so the body is connected. The inner feeling is that it is >like there is a metal spring in the body. This is ward off" .....

>

> < Yang goes off and describes qualities of

> roll back, ji, an, tsai, lieh, kao >

>

> .....

>

> He said that these energies should not be confused with

>specific postures and cited the example of the ward off postures.

>"The way ALL THE POSTURES ARE USED IS WITH PENG JING (ward off >energy). And this is done continuously. As soon as you stay loose, >you have ward off energy. So EVERY FRAME HAS WARD OFF ENERGY. But in >some postures it is more apparent".

>

>=====

This is not reflected in Yang Zhen Duo's material in his two books, one in Chinese, the other in English. It is also missing from his older brothers, Yang Zhen Ji's book and Yang Shou Chung's book. One would expect that something that he feels is as important as this would be recorded in his signature works. We note similar attributions to Chen Xiao Wang but we have material from him that contradicts this which makes such reporting suspect. (Forest is simply repeating the material, he is not the source nor does it imply that it is his opinion)

>

>Allen Chen:

>> I tend to agree that such a reference is rare outside of the Chen FaKe

>> line. Although Ma YueLiang did have a similar reference in his push hand

>> book. But really, I don't see the problem. It doesn't really matter

>> which term you use to describe the basic internal strength.

>>

>> I think the whole point is about "doing", and not about names.

>

>Jim Keenan:

>>>The point is not accuracy in translation. The point is use of the

>accurate

>>>term.

>

>Allen Chen:

>> The point is about accuracy in "concept". Who cares if you call it

>> "neijing", "pengjing", "chansijing", "zhengjing", "huenyuenjing",

>> "zhengtijing", or ahgo ahmao jing?  
>

Change the meaning of the terms of reference and you change the concept and hence the art.

>=====

>

>from a post by Terry Chan:

>

>These are all good points. People have already mentioned  
>Ma Yueliang's and Kuo Lien-ying's references. Forrest  
>posted the recent interview with Yang Zhenduo of the Yang  
>family and if you look back at several of the featured  
>interviews in \_T'ai Chi\_ (famous and not so famous guys  
>and from different styles), there has already been a clear  
>and fair amount of usage to convey the importance and  
>usefulness of this concept.

>

>Peter Lim, in his salad days, once wrote a post translating  
>excerpts of a book by Zhang Yijun, who compiled the the  
>teachings of his teacher, Li Yaxuan (aka Li Chunnian), a  
>noted disciple of Yang Chengfu (the book is \_Taijiquan Li  
>Chuan Chen\_, published in 1986).

>

>After a general discussion on jing, Li discusses peng jing  
>and noted:

>

> "Peng Jing is after long periods of sincere practice of Taijiquan and  
> push hands, resulting in a type of sung (no tension) yet not sung, soft  
> but carrying in it hard, active but sunk and heavy, elastic and pliable  
> type of jing, which includes sticking (nien), neutralising (hua),  
> bouyant (fu), trapping (kun) usage type of jing, also called internal  
> jing (neijing)". Also we have from from myriad schools and students who  
> hold "Taiji is peng jing, movement goes spiraling (luo xuan)" as the  
> central maxim.

>

>Again this comment (esp. the last sentence) is relayed by a  
>disciple of Yang Chengfu, not through the Chen Fake line. If  
>he saw things that way, it certainly sounds like the idea of  
>peng jing being a central basis of Taijiquan is probably more  
>widespread than what [some people] seem to believe.

If you look carefully at the article, the author says that that last line is inaccurate. To read it out of context like this would be tantamount to an attempt at misinformation. The whole article which speaks against regarding Peng Jing as the core jing or pre-eminant jing can be found on this website. This would recommend that we examine the context in the information contained in the Peng Jing FAQ and whether they have been taken in context and in the original meaning of the sources.

>

>Why and how does this idea of looking at peng jing (esp. on

>this list) come about? Of Taijiquan's traditional eight  
>powers (peng, li, ji, an, cai, lie, zhou, kao), the most  
>straightward is peng. An old method of training is to train  
>in one posture until you get the body mechanics (internal and  
>external) correct (a method not generally used much these days).  
>  
>When you have this initial understanding or foot in the door,  
>it is much easier to understand the others instead of trying to  
>do all eight (much less couple them with the five elements).  
>Perhaps that's why Ma Yueliang calls the understanding of peng  
>is when the beginner crosses the threshold into real learning.

Note that the chapter quoted from the book deals with the 13 kinetic movements, i.e. the 13 postures of TCC not jings. Peng is the first to be taught and one should get that right first before he goes into real learning of the 13 techniques.

>  
>When you approach the training of the neijia with this practical  
>orientation, it's easy to see why people do say "peng jing" or  
>Taiji is all peng-based. Of course, if we take this discussion  
>out of the abstract and the academic, it's not going to be  
>exactly accurate because really, if you examine the form, none  
>of the eight postures stand on their own. They're present in  
>different combinations (depending on the application) but that's  
>too complex. [It's] For exposition and understanding of how to  
>develop Taiji skill that they're broken out and discussed this way.

From a practical orientation, all 8 jings are needed. If there was only Peng Jing then wouldn't it be clearly stated in the Classics and the works of early noted masters? This emphasis is a late phenomena not in line with the earlier material from all schools of Taijiquan.

>  
>Of course, if one is only interested in the academic sphere of  
>things and not in what it takes to help people reach a level  
>of skill, then the practical approach is going to drive you crazy.  
>  
>Even if it were only Feng Zhiqiang, Ma Yueliang, and Yang Zhenduo  
>saying this, it would be useful enough for me. I'm not into the  
>theory and writings of past masters for the semantic and linguistic  
>pleasures but for the practical insights that their writings and  
>approach can give.

Actually Feng Zhi Qiang's material focuses more on silk reeling jing. In the books I have read by him, he does not mention that Peng Jing is the central Jing. We note that the reference to Mah Yueh Liang is inaccurate and that for Yang Zhen Duo is most probably so as well since we have material from him on the whole content of the art without a single mention of such an emphasis.

>  
>The other point is, I don't know of any outstanding writer who's  
>also of any high skill at Taijiquan. If great linguistic facility

>(or mathematics) was what it takes to "really understand" Taijiquan  
 >(or whatever), then the highest levels of accomplishment would be  
 >dominated by those sorts of people. Somehow, that doesn't seem to  
 >work out.  
 >  
 >Terry Chan  
 >=====

>  
 >From: Mike Sigman  
 >  
 >Although there is some cavilling about the term "peng (jing)", I think  
 >that the relationship of "peng" as in "wardoff" and "peng" as the core  
 >jing (which powers wardoff and most of the internal movements, when its  
 >sophistication is understood).. is obvious to someone who really has and  
 >understands the skills. I have never run into an argument about "peng"  
 >except from people who don't really understand the use of the jing (and I  
 >mean in more than just letting someone test your "root").  
 >  
 >As a background, let me quote from a Wu-style book by Ma Yueh Liang and  
 >Zee Wen about peng:  
 >  
 >"Peng. It is the concealed strength because it is created mainly by  
 >feeling and crafty and it can be barely discerned in the surface of the  
 >forms. It ranks first in the Thirteen Kinetic Movements, which  
 >indicates its importance. In tuishou practice, the learner is said to  
 >have crossed the threshold only when he has learned the meaning and  
 >method of warding. Beginners often take years to accomplish this.....  
 >While practicing, not only the hands and arms, but any part of the body  
 >get into contact with the other side should one makes use of the warding  
 >force.

Please see above point on how this is quoted out of context. What is referred to is Peng the technique/posture. M.Sigman's definition of Peng Jing is different from Mah's since Mah does not refer to it as a jing path or body alignment. We note here that the definition used by the Chinese masters differs from the one used for the term in this FAQ and so references to the material of Chinese masters should take this into account.

>  
 >It has been described as an audible force, because you can detect the  
 >fine motions of your opponent as if through the sense of hearing, and you  
 >can thus make a rapid response for rapid attack and a slow response for  
 >slow offensive. It is also a force of support and attack."

That is ting jing (listening to strength) which is a component of all TCC techniques. It is a constituent part of Peng the posture/technique. This is a result of nian jing or sticking jing which maintains contact with the opponent and so enables the exponent to 'listen' for the opponent's structure and centre.

>  
 >(from Wu Style "Taichichuan Tuishou" by Ma Y.L. and Zee Wen)  
 >

>In the above quote, there is a mirroring of the common idea that peng  
>jing is the core, without which one is not doing "real" (tm) Taiji. :^)  
>However, there is also the comment about peng's use as an "audible" force  
>for listening to the opponent's body and motions.

Since the above quote is talking about Peng the posture/technique, the subsequent conclusion is therefore inaccurate.

>  
>"Listening" and "Sensitivity" have been interpreted (as has just about  
>every other term related to the neijia) to mean whatever a particular  
>teacher chooses to mean (all the while believing that his/her intuition  
>is infallible, etc.). Almost everyone who has some experience in not  
>only static, but moving jing has had the experience of feeling another  
>person and being able to locate tensions, off-balance areas, beginnings  
>of  
>movements, etc.

What they mean is quite clearly stated in the Classics actually. For more elaboration, please see the articles on this website.

>  
>On the other hand, there are many "sensitivities" that someone can  
>develop that have nothing to do with peng jing. For instance, it doesn't  
>take much practice to rest a wrist against another's arm and lightly  
>maintain contact while the other person moves their arm about. Yet this  
>is not "Listening" in the neijia sense.

Its nian jing (sticking jing) and its from that contact that you can 'listen'. How you use the information gathered from this 'listening' is the function of the 13 postures, each of which are comprised of several jings.

>  
>The point I was slowly getting to was to express an opinion (i.e., I  
>could be wrong and I'm interested in others' opinions) about  
>"listening". In my experience, I think that establishing a good peng  
>path to your hands (or other body areas) allows a constant base from  
>which to judge things. In other words, it is like a comparator circuit  
>or any sensing device which has a known "base" to use as a comparison.

What he is talking about is jing path which is related to rooting, Peng is a jing, its not a path. There is relates to Li I Yu's Five Character Classic in which there is a section on Zheng Jing which describes the generation of jing. The path of that jing takes does not denote its name in Taiji nomenclature, its usage and characteristics does.

>  
>When I touch someone, I am trying to feel the ground through them.  
>Anything that hinders a "pure" ground signal is obvious, whether it is a  
>tense shoulder, tense back, unbalanced posture, etc. When someone moves  
>their arms using local arm and shoulder musculature (as opposed to

>manipulating the ground strength with the waist and back), it is  
>immediately apparent, no matter what their spiel is. :^)

Feel his centre of mass which may or may not be supported by the ground. Some techniques from other styles don't always have their feet on the ground. Also, from related material from Chen Wei Ming, etc, we are given knowledge that the body should be separated into parts when neutralising, it prevents one's opponent from getting to the centre of mass or the root thus upsetting it.

>

>So the question is, what is the exact mechanism of using the peng jing as

>a "detector" of another persons posture and moves?

>

>=====

Detection comes from nian jing which maintains contact and ting jing which exerts a correct pressure to 'listen'. With this information then the 8 jings can be used appropriately. As Yang Zhen Ji puts it, 'bu nian bu nen da' or cannot stick then cannot fight.

>

>

>>From allen@starfire.utias.utoronto.ca Mon Jul 22 14:06:35 1996

>

>Hong JunSheng is one of the very senior and still surviving student of  
>Chen FaKe. His skill is so high the Japanese call him "wizard hand". He  
>also tries to preserve the authenticity of Chen FaKe's teaching, and I  
>think it's quite safe to say that he can represent Chen FaKe's ideas with  
>great accuracy. Below are some (unauthorized) translations from his  
>book.

>Any mistake in the translation is probably, well most likely, mine.:

>

>"There are two aspects of Peng. One is referred to the 'jing' aspect,  
>which is the 'silk reeling jing'. This jing is obtained naturally through  
>prolonged training in the interchanging of opposing helical motion. My  
>teacher Chen FaKe called this 'peng jing', which is what is commonly known  
>as "neijing" [internal strength]. Applying this jing through various  
>techniques we have the eight techniques of taijiquan. The second aspect  
>is the Peng Technique from the eight techniques. This is a technique for  
>meeting the incoming hand of the opponent.....The emphasis of the  
>Peng Technique is on the leading and neutralizing of the incoming force."

This terminology and emphasis is missing from the works of his classmates Chen Ji Pu, Feng Zhi Chiang, Li Jing Wu, etc. So this cannot be said to be representative of Chen Fa Ke's views. We also note that what he may be speaking about is probably not the same 'Peng Jing' that this FAQ refers to since its definition of the term is different from that of the Chinese masters. This is also a late reference.

>

>"Chen Xin said: 'Taijiquan is Chan Fa [the technique of reeling and  
>winding].' He also said: "if you don't understand this, you don't  
>understand taijiquan." It is clear that the fundamentals of taijiquan is

>the reeling technique. The appearance of the motion in Chen style  
>taijiquan is helical. This form of spiral movement not only appears on  
>the surface of the skin, but also appears inside through the whole body.  
>It causes every joint, muscle bundle, and even every cell to experience  
>motion. Through repeated stretching and twining in the training for a  
>prolonged period of time, the body will naturally attain a resilient and  
>elastic strength that is loose and yet not loose at the same time. This  
>is the silk reeling jing. In the Chen style this is also known as "peng  
>jing", or the "neijing" commonly known in taijiquan literature. ChanFa,  
>the 'technique of reeling', then, is the various application of this  
>strength."

Silk reeling jing is from Chen style, the other styles refer to using jing like reeling silk which is another matter altogether. Peng Jing and neijing are two different things actually, whilst peng jing is a kind of neijing, so are the other jings in TCC and neijing is present in other arts and is different from Chen style's silk reeling jing. We note that Chen Xin did emphasize Chan Ssu Jing but not Peng jing in his book so the above which attempts to link Peng Jing to Chan Ssu Jing is inaccurate.

>  
>"We must understand how to apply hardness and softness, what is softness,  
>what is hardness, and how hardness and softness can interchange and  
>compliment each other. People who do not study Chen style taijiquan, or  
>study it but don't understand the technique of reeling, when they apply  
>hardness and softness their motion are usually linear. Or maybe they

Actually all styles of TCC stress circularity in motion and in jing usage.

>understand how to move in large orbital curves, but they don't have the  
>spin coupling with the orbital motion. The result is that when they use  
>hardness they feel they are resisting, when they use softness they would  
>feel they are letting go. All motion in Chen style taijiquan, whether it  
>is large or small, are spinning. If you turn half a circle, you have 180  
>degrees of arc composed of points. At the contact point with your  
>opponent, if you meet the motion head on (meeting the point), then you  
>feel hardness; if you meet the motion from the side (meeting the arc),  
>then you feel softness. If your point meets the opponent's arc it will

One of the core principles in TCC is not to resist and not to lose contact, the curves can be both large and small and spin coupling is present in other TCC styles as well. Chen style does not have a monopoly on these.

>slide over and becomes softness. Only if you meet point with point will  
>the hardness appear. If both sides meet each other head on, however, it  
>becomes resisting force with force. At this point, whoever has bigger  
>strength and faster motion will bounce out the weaker and slower. In Chen  
>style, although you need to use your point to attack the opponent's point,  
>you should use the point in the arc from the spinning motion, so during  
>fajing there is no feeling of resistance."

If you lead it into emptiness there is no need to fajing even since it uses the opponent's strength to defeat himself. Following his posture and using his strength is another principle in TCC.

>

>"We can use the motion of the screw as an example. Whether you are  
>driving in or taking out the screw, you cannot use pulling or pushing  
>motion because of the thread. It feels sticky and yet it can easily move  
>in both directions if you just turn the screw. This is what the Classics  
>mean when it says 'Nien is Zou, Zou is Nien'.....Taijiquan is a whole  
>body exercise. The requirement of the body being centered without

Nian means 'to stick' which aptly describes bu tiu bu ding or not letting go, not resisting. It can be done without the spiral emphasis as well and should be applied according to the situation.

>leaning is a vertical thread; the two legs are two threads going down;  
>the two arms are threads that can change in any direction depending on the  
>situation. When everything is coupled together, the directions can change  
>in a million ways, and the opening/closing, substantial/insubstantial, and  
>hardness/softness of the jing is very difficult to predict. Although

Not if it finds no purchase and you can detect the jing path and centre of mass. Find its origin and you can influence it directly, that comes from nian jing which permits ting jing which leads to dong jing (understanding jing).

>every part of the body are like the gears in the clock and can have it's  
>own motion, the most important part is still the motion of the torso. So  
>the Classics says "it is governed at the waist". The turning of the waist  
>is what moves the arms and the legs, and the compliment motion of the  
>arms and the legs also can not be ignored."

>

Actually the turning of the Kwa is the primary component of moving the waist, not twisting it and relying solely on torso power. This view is that of many masters including Master Zhu Tian Chai of the Chen Villiage (One of the Four Strong Men of the Chen Village).

## **An Selected English Bibliography**

Draeger D. F. & Smith R. W. (1969). *Comprehensive Asian Fighting Arts*. Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd (1980 reprint). ISBN 0-87011-436-0.

Huang W. S. (1973). *Fundamentals Of Taijiquan*. Hong Kong: South Sky Book Company (1984 reprint).

Mah Y. L. & Zee W. (1986). *Wu Style Taichichuan Tuishou*. Shanghai: Shanghai Book Company. ISBN 962-239-100-1.

Pang T. Y. (1987). *On Taijiquan*. Washington: Azalea Press, ISBN 0-9612070-1-9.

Smith R. W. (1974). *Chinese Boxing - Masters And Methods*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books (1990 reprint), ISBN 1-55643-085-x.

Smith R.W. (1967). *T'ai Chi*. Rutland. Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc. ISBN 0-8084-0560-1

Wang P. S. & Zhen W. Q. (1983). *Wu Style Taijiquan*. Beijing: Zhao Hua Publishing House. ISBN 962-238-015-8.

Wile D. (1983). *T'ai-chi Touchstones: Yang Family Secret Transmissions*. Brooklyn. Sweet Ch'i Press.

Wile D. (1996). *Lost T'ai-chi Classics From The Late Ch'ing Dynasty*. Albany. State University Of New York Press. ISBN0-7914-2654-8

Yang Z.D. (1988) *Yang Style Taijiquan*. Beijing. Zhao Hua Publishing Company. ISBN 7-5054-0123-8/G.0009

Zhao Hua Publishing House (Comp.). (1984). *Chen Style Taijiquan*. Hong Kong: Hai Feng Publishing Company. ISBN 962-238-016-6.

## **A Selected Chinese Bibliography**

Chai L. Y. (Ed.). (1987). *Zhong Hua Wu Shu Ci Dian*. [Dictionary Of Chinese Martial Arts]. Anwei: Anwei Ren Ming Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-212-00042-6.

Chen G. W. (1982). *Taijiquan*. Taipei: Wu Ling Chu Pan You Xiang Gong Si (1993 reprint). ISBN 957-35-0432-4.

Chen J. P. (1935). *Chen Shi Taijiquan Hui Chong*. [Chen Family Taijiquan Compendium]. Nanjing.

Chen W. M. (1925). *Taijiquan Shu*. [The Art Of Taijiquan]. Shanghai: Chung Hwa Shu Ju.

Chen W. M. (1927). *Taijiquan Da Wen*. [Questions And Answeres On Taijiquan]. Shanghai: Da Dong Shu Ju.

Chen, X. (1933). *Chen Shi Taijiquan Tu Shuo*. [Chen Family Taijiquan Pictorial Explanation]. Shanghai: Kai ming ying shua ju.

Chen, Z. M. (1935). *Chen Shi Chuan Xie Hui Pian*. [Chen Family Fist And Weapons Compendium]. Shanghai.

De C. (1991). *Shaolin Wu Shu Da Chuan*. [The Complete Shaolin Martial Arts]. Beijing: Beijing Ti Yu Xue Yuan Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-81003-401-4.

Dong Y. J. (1948). *Taijiquan Shi Yi*. [Explanation Of Taijiquan]. Shanghai: Shanghai Shu Ju (1986 reprint).

Dong C. Z. (1994). *Dong Shi Taiji Quai Quan Quan Shu*. [Dong Family Taiji Fast Boxing Complete Book]. Shijiyashi: Hebei Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5375-1297-3.

Fan S. F. (1991). *Chang Shi Taijiquan*. [Chang Style Taijiquan]. Shanghai: Shanghai Jiao Yu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5320-2302-8.

Feng Z. C. (1984). *Chen Shi Taiji Dao*. [Chen Family Taiji Broadsword]. Singapore: Traditional Classical Arts Enterprises.

Fu Z. W. (1963). *Yang Shi Taijiquan*. [Yang Family Taijiquan]. Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She (1985 reprint).

Gu L. X. (1982). *Taijiquan Shu*. [The Art Of Taijiquan] Shanghai: Shanghai Jiao Yu Chu Pan She.

Hao S. R. (Ed.). (1963). *Wu Shi Taijiquan*. [Wu Family Taijiquan]. Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She (1984 reprint). ISBN 7-5009-0756-7.

Hao S. R. (Ed.). (1992). *Wu Shi Taijiquan* (revised edition). [Wu Family Taijiquan]. Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5009-0756-7.

Hao X. L. (1990). *Kan Feng Chi Ji Ji Fa*. [The Attacking Methods Of Kan Feng Chi]. Beijing: Beijing Ti Yu Xue Yuan Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-81003-404-9.

Huang A. (1993). Complete Tai-Chi. Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Publishing Co., Inc.. ISBN 0-8048-1897-5.

Li C. S. (Ed.). (1987). Zhong Guo Gong Fu Ci Dian. [Dictionary Of Chinese Kungfu]. Chengchou: Zhong Chou Gu Pu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5384-0014-5.

Li T. J. (Ed.). (1988). Wu Dang Jue Ji. [Wu Dang Ultimate Skills]. Gulin: Gulin Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5384-1059-8.

Liu H. S. (1991). Wu Dang Zhao Bao Chuan Tong San He Yi Taijiquan. [Wu Dang Zhao Bao Traditional Three Combined Into One Taijiquan]. Xian: Shanxi Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5369-0796-6.

Mah Y. L. & Wu Y. H. (1988). Wu Shi Taijiquan Xiang Jie (third edition). Shanghai: Huan Qiu Tu Shu Chu Pan She.

Mah Y. L., Wu Y. H. & Lu M. L. (1987). Wu Shi Taiji Quai Quan. [Wu Family Taji Fast Boxing]. Zhoukou: Henan Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5349-0121-9.

Mah Y. L. & Chen Z. M. (1935). Wu Jian Quan Shi De Taijiquan. [Wu Jian Quan Family Taijiquan] Hong Kong: Xiang Kang Mien Hwa Chu Pan She.

Ong. F. Q. & Li B. C. (1994). `Yang Yu Ting Taijiquan Xi Li Mi Yao Ji Jin. [Yang Yu Ting Taijiquan Details, Secret Requirements Compendum]. Beijing: Ao Ling Pi Ke Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-80067-166-6.

Wu T. N. (1931). Taijiquan. Hong Kong: Xiang Kang Mien Hwa Chu Pan She.

Pei X. S. & Li C. S. (Eds.). (1984). Wu Dang Wu Gong. [Wu Dang Martial Skills]. Changsha: Hunan Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Pan She.

Qi J. K. (1561). Ji Xiao Xin Shu. [New Record Book Of Effective Techniques]. Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She (1988 reprint).

Shen J. C. & Gu L. X. (1963). Chen Shi Taijiquan. [Chen Family Taijiquan]. Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She (1988 reprint). ISBN 7-5009-0198-4.

Song Y. H. (1991). Zhao Bao Taijiquan Tu Pu. [The Pictorial Manual Of Zhao Bao Taijiquan]. Xian: Shanxi Ke Xue Ji Shu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5369-0914-4.

Sun J. Y. (Ed.). (1957). Sun Shi Taijiquan. [Sun Family Taijiquan] Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She (1986 reprint). ISBN 7-5009-0193-3.

Tang H. (1935). Taijiquan Zhong Si Wang Tsung Yueh Kao. [A Study On Taijiquan Grandmaster Wang Tsung Yueh]. Hong Kong: Unicorn Press (1969 reprint).

Tang H. & Gu L. X. (1964). Taijiquan Yan Jiu. [Research On Taijiquan]. Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She (1992 reprint). ISBN 7-5009-0774-5.

Various Authors. (1918). Quan Jing. [Boxing Canons]. Tianjin: Tianjin Shi Gu Pu Shu Dian (1987 reprint). Xi Y. T. (1985). Zhong Guo Wushu Shi. [The History Of Chinese Martial Arts] Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She.

Various Authors. (1992). Taiji Ming Jia Tan Zhen Di. [Taiji Noted Masters Discuss True Transmissions]. Beijing: Zhong Guo Kwang Po Dian Shi Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5043-2032-3.

Various Authors. (1990). Zhong Guo Wu Shu Da Ci Dian. [The Big Dictionary Of Chinese Martial Arts. Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5009-0463-0.

Various Authors. (1991). Taijiquan Pu. [Taijiquan Manual]. Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5009-0684-6.

Wang W. S. (1989). Wudang Chang Sung Chi Pai Nei Jia Quan. [Wu Dang Chang Sung Chi Style Internal Boxing]. Hong Kong: Hai Feng Publications. ISBN 962-238-118-9.

Wang X. C. (Ed.). (1984). Shaolin Hung Quan. [Shaolin Red Fist]. Beijing: Ren Min Ti Yu Chu Ban She. ISBN 7-5009-0473-8.

Wang Y. C. (1990). Yang Shi Tai Ji Quan Shu Zhen. [The Real Art Of Yang Family Taijiquan]. Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5009-0513-0.

Wu. M. X. (1958). Taijiquan Jiu Jue Ba Shi Yi Shi Zhu Jie. [Taijiquan Nine Formulas Eighty-One Posture Compendum] Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She (1983 reprint).

Wu T. N. & Mah Y. Q. (Ed). (1984). Taijiquan Zhi Yan Jiu. [Research On Taijiquan]. Hong Kong: Shang Wu Jing Shu Guan (Xiang Gang) You Xian Gong Shi (1988 reprint). ISBN 962-07-5024-1.

Xu Y. S. (1921). Taijiquan Shi Tu Jie. [Pictorial Explanation of Taijiquan]. Beijing: Jing Cheng Ying Shu Ju.

Xu Z. J. (1990). Yang Shi Taijiquan. [Yang Family Taijiquan]. Beijing: Beijing Ti Yu Xue Yuan Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-81003-509-6.

Xu Z. Y. (1958). Wu Shi Taijiquan. [Wu Family Taijiquan]. Beijing: Ren Ming Ti Yu Chu Pan She (1988 reprint). ISBN 7-5009-0196-8.

Xu Z. Y. (1927). Taijiquan Qian Tan. [Introduction To Taijiquan]. Beijing: Wen Hua Shu Ju.

Yang C. F. (1931). Taijiquan Shih Yung Fa. [Taijiquan Usage Methods]. Shanghai: Wen Kwang Ying Shua Ju.

Yang C. F. (1934). Taijiquan Ti Yung Chuan Shu. [Complete Usage Of Taijiquan]. Shanghai: Da Dong Shu Ju.

Yang Z. J. (1993). Yang Cheng Fu Shi Taijiquan. [Yang Cheng Fu Style Taijiquan]. Kwangxi: Kwangxi Ren Ming Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-5363-1984-3.

Zhao B., Zhao A. B. & Lu Y. M. (1992). Yang Shi Taijiquan Zhen Zhong. [Orthodox Yang Family Taijiquan]. Xian: San Tai Chu Pan She. ISBN 7-80546-379-4.

# Peter Lim Tian Tek

## Highlights

**Name**

Peter Lim Tian Tek

**Home**

Singapore

**Best known for**

Being overly serious at times.

**Hobbies**

Martial Arts, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Fishing, Computers, etc.

## About Peter

A Computer Systems Analyst by training, Peter works in a multinational computer firm looking after and providing systems support for corporate clients of the Singapore Regional Office. He is also currently reading a Masters in Business (Information Technology) course from Curtin University of Technology.

He started training in qigong and pile standing (zhuang gong) since he was 8 years old and formally began martial arts at the age of 9. His first martial art was Taijiquan and it has become his main art today. He also studied external martial arts such as TKD, Shaolin 5 Animal Fist, Sam Nan Tui, Ba Gua Pole, Wing Chun and Northern Shaolin Continuous Boxing. The internal martial arts he studied are Yang style Taijiquan, Wu Jian Quan style Taijiquan, Wu Yu Xiang style Taijiquan, Chen style Taijiquan, Master Cheng Man Qing's 37 posture short form, Ba Gua Zhang, Yin Yang Ba Gua Zhang and a little Hsing-I. He has also learned some sets from other martial arts through friendly exchanges of knowledge with friends.

Peter's principle Taijiquan form is the old Yang form though he also knows Yang Cheng Fu's standard large frame and has studied other Yang forms including Master Cheng Man Qing's 37 posture short form, Taiji Long Boxing and Yang Shao Hou's small frame.

He combines both practice and study into the martial arts and has made studies into the historicity and development of the martial arts he has studied as well as the theoretical and philosophical basis of these arts. He stresses that theoretical grounding, practice and application of the art are equally important.

Peter is also a qualified TCM practitioner, having taken up the art to complement his martial arts training. He has also learnt some Dit Ta medicine from the teachers he has studied with.