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MARTIAL ARTS - I N T E R N A L

THE COMPLETE

FORM AND

QIGONG

Taijiquan, Classical Yang Style

傳統楊氏太極拳



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Foreword

Grandmaster Jou, Tsung Hwa

In 1985, I wrote a foreword for Dr. Yang when his first edition of the book, *Advanced Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan, Vol. 1* (note: new title is *Tai Chi Theory & Martial Power*) was published. Time flies like an arrow, and already fourteen years have passed. During this period, Dr. Yang has published more than thirty books and videotapes related to Chinese martial arts and Qigong. In addition, he has been offering Wushu and Qigong seminars and workshops every year in 18 countries in America, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

It is said in Chinese society that: “Even separated for three days, we should see each other differently.” This is really true. Dr. Yang, after more than ten years of further study and in-depth research, together with his abundant teaching experience, has written this new book, *Taijiquan, Classical Yang Style*. He asked me to write a foreword for him again.

Taijiquan has spread throughout the entire world. Millions of people now practice it. Unfortunately, I believe that almost all the essence of Taijiquan has also been gradually lost. Take a look at Wang, Zong-Yue’s *Taijiquan Classic*, where it is said: “There are many martial art styles. Although the postures are distinguishable from one another, after all, it is nothing more than the strong beating the weak, the slow yielding to the fast. The one with power beats the one without power, the slow hands yield to the fast hands. All this is natural born ability. It is not related to the power that has to be learned.” If we look at most of today’s Taijiquan tournaments, haven’t they entered the “side door” (i.e., wrong path)?

Again, let us read the following sentence from Wang, Zong-Yue, where it is said: “Consider the saying: “Four ounces repel one thousand pounds.” It is apparent that this cannot be accomplished by strength. Look, if an eighty or ninety year old man can still defend himself against multiple opponents, it cannot be a matter of speed.” Therefore, if we truly wish to learn the real Taijiquan, we must free ourselves from the prisons of “Li” (i.e., muscular power) and “speed.” Externally, we must learn to use the body movements to replace the hand movements. Internally, we must pursue and cultivate the real contents of Jing (essence, 精), Qi (energy, 氣), and Shen (spirit, 神). To reach this goal and to improve your Taijiquan, you are well advised to study Dr. Yang’s books, such as *Tai Chi Theory & Power* and this book, *Taijiquan, Classical Yang Style*.

Jou, Tsung Hwa
Taiji Farm, Warwick, NY
June 30, 1998

Preface

It has been almost forty years since Master Cheng, Man-Ching (鄭曼清) introduced the Taijiquan art to the west. Later, when Bruce Lee's (李小龍) motion pictures became popular, they stimulated an interest in studying Chinese culture, especially Chinese martial arts. In addition, President Nixon's visit to the Chinese mainland in the early 1970's led to more intense cultural exchange. The internal healing arts, such as acupuncture and Qigong have since become an important part of western alternative or complimentary medicine for illness treatment and prevention.

Qigong is a training system which helps to generate a strong flow of Qi (internal energy or known as bioelectricity) inside the body and then circulate it through the entire body. Many martial and non-martial styles of Qigong training have been created in the last four thousand years. The most famous martial styles are Taijiquan (太極拳), Baguazhang (八卦掌), Xingyiquan (形意拳), and Liu He Ba Fa (六合八法). These are considered "internal" styles (Nei Gong, 內功 or Nei Jia, 內家), as opposed to "external" styles (Wai Jia, 外家) like Shaolin Gongfu, because they emphasize heavily the development of Qi internally. The best known non-martial styles, which emphasize the enhancement of Qi circulation to improve health, are Wu Qin Xi (Five Animal Sports, 五禽戲), Ba Duan Jin (Eight Pieces of Brocade, 八段錦), Da Mo's Yi Jin Jing (Muscle Change Classic, 易筋經), and Shi Er Zhuang (Twelve Postures, 十二庄).

Taijiquan, which is said to have been created by Zhang, San-Feng (張三豐) in the twelfth century, is now the most popular martial Qigong style in the world, even though it was shrouded in secrecy until the beginning of the 20th century. At present it is widely practiced not only in China and the East, but in the Western world as well.

There are several reasons for the rapid spread of this art. The most important, perhaps, is that the practice of Taijiquan can help to calm down the mind and relax the body, which are becoming survival skills in today's hectic and stress-filled world. Secondly, since guns are so effective and easy to acquire, Taijiquan has been considered less vital for personal self-defense than it used to be. For this reason, more Taijiquan masters are willing to share their knowledge with the public. Thirdly, ever since Taijiquan was created, it has been proven not only effective for defense, but also useful for improving health and curing a number of illnesses.

Unfortunately, because of this healthful aspect the deeper theory and practice of Taijiquan, especially the martial applications, are being widely ignored. Therefore, the essence of the art has been distorted. Most people today think that Taijiquan is not practical for self-defense. To approach the deeper aspects requires much time and patience, and there are very few people willing to make the necessary sacrifices. In addition, few Taijiquan experts are still withholding the secrets of the deeper aspects of the training, and not passing down the complete art.

Anyone who practices this art correctly for a number of years will soon realize that Taijiquan is not just an exercise for calmness and relaxation—it is a complex and highly developed art. It is one of the most effective methods to understand the way

of the Dao and our lives. Through slow meditative movement, Taijiquan gives the practitioner a deep inner feeling of enjoyment and satisfaction, which goes beyond that of any other art. This is because Taijiquan is smooth, refined, and elegant internally as well as externally. The practitioner can sense the Qi (energy or bioelectricity) circulating within his body, and can achieve the peaceful mind of meditation. Qi circulation can bring good health and may even help you to reach enlightenment. Furthermore, when a Taijiquan practitioner has achieved a high level of Qi cultivation and development, he can use this Qi in self-defense situations. The principles that Taijiquan uses for fighting are quite different from most other martial styles, which rely on muscular force. Taijiquan uses the soft to defend against the hard, and weakness to defeat strength. The more you practice, the better you will become, and this defensive capability will grow with age instead of weaken. However, because the martial theory of Taijiquan is much deeper and more profound than that of most other systems, it is much harder to learn and takes a longer time to approach a high level of martial capability. In order to reach an understanding of the deep essence of Taijiquan, either spiritually (mentally) or physically, a knowledgeable instructor is very important. Correct guidance from an experienced master can save many years of wandering and useless practice.

Today, more and more Taijiquan practitioners are researching and practicing the deeper aspects of Taijiquan with the help of the very few qualified experts and/or the limited number of in-depth publications. Many questions have arisen: Which is a good style of Taijiquan? How can I tell who is a qualified Taijiquan instructor? What is the historical background of the different styles? Which styles can be applied best to one's health, or to one's martial arts training? How is Taijiquan different from other Qigong practice? How do I generate Qi? How do I coordinate my breathing with the Qi circulation? How do I use Qi in self-defense? What is Jin (power) and is there more than one kind? How do I train my Jin correctly? How does the fighting strategy of Taijiquan differ from other styles? All these questions puzzle people even in China today.

I wrote the Taijiquan book, *Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan*, published by Unique Publications in 1982. When I wrote this book, it was based on my understanding of Taijiquan after twenty years of Taijiquan practice. Since then, fifteen more years have passed. In these years, my experience and knowledge have also grown through pondering, studying, practicing, and teaching. In fact, in order to contribute all of my efforts to studying Chinese Qigong and internal arts, I resigned from my engineering job in 1984. I then started to write and teach extensively around the world, and my goal is that, through my effort, Chinese culture can be introduced to the west more rapidly and correctly. From 1984 until the present, I have written 18 more books and published 25 videotapes.

I have gained much knowledge and experience from reading the ancient documents, understanding them, compiling them and trying to organize them logically according to my scientific background. I have experienced the theories and techniques myself, and then published them into the books or videotapes. I deeply

believe that the ancient secrets must be revealed to the public in order to encourage wide scale study, research and development of the Chinese inner arts.

Now, after more than thirty-six years of study, I realize that Taijiquan is actually a profound training for spiritual enlightenment. Taijiquan was developed in Daoist monasteries nearly one thousand years ago. The final goal of its practice is enlightenment, which all Daoists at all times are pursuing. I realize that the method to reach this goal is through understanding the essence of the art through comprehending theory and practice correctly.

Among my writings since 1984, those which relate to Taijiquan are:

- *Tai Chi Theory and Martial Power, 1986.*
- *Tai Chi Chuan Martial Applications, 1986.*
- *The Essence of Taiji Qigong, 1990.*
- *Taiji Chin Na, 1995.*

Now, I have decided to write a new set of Taijiquan books based on my deeper understanding. This book, *Taijiquan, Classical Yang Style* is the first book in this effort. Over the next ten years, I will continue to write more books about Taijiquan:

- *Taiji Sword and Its Applications*
- *Taiji Saber and Its Applications*
- *Taiji Fighting Set*
- *The Root of Taijiquan*
- *Taiji Pushing Hands*
- *Taiji Staff and Spear*
- *Taiji Ball Qigong*
- *Taiji Sparring*

These new books will be based on my personal understanding of Taijiquan and my martial arts background. The purpose of these books is to offer you some reference material. You should not treat them as authoritative. Once you do so, you have blocked yourself from further pondering and studying. As we should always remember, the art is alive. As long as it is alive, it should and must grow. Otherwise, it is a dead art and not worth preserving.

In the first chapter of this book, a general discussion will be given, which will provide basic concepts for Taijiquan beginners. Next, since Taijiquan is considered a branch of Qigong training, the relationship between Taijiquan and Qigong training will be summarized in the second chapter. After you have built a firm understanding in Taijiquan theory from the first two chapters, then the most important foundation of Taijiquan practice—the thirteen postures—will be discussed in the third chapter. Finally, the traditional Yang Style Taijiquan form will be introduced in the fourth chapter. If you wish to understand more deeply both theory and martial applications, you should refer to the books which are listed above.

Imagined Opponent. If you practice Taijiquan for martial arts, then you must gradually build up a sense of enemy. This is done by imagining you are fighting with an opponent. Such practice will also help you understand the root of every movement. If this is done correctly, it will make each technique more accurate, and will promote the circulation of Qi more abundantly. While imagining your opponent, you must regard your waist as the first master (because it directs the action), your throat as the second master (because it controls the yell, which enhances the manifestation of Jin), and your heart as the third master (because it guides the mind).

Direction for the Taijiquan Sequence. For the purposes of indicating the direction of movement, Chinese martial books use a compass system. The original direction which a person faces is immediately and permanently designated N or North for the duration of the sequence. It does not matter which actual geographic direction the individual faces, the front will always be N. From this designation, the right side becomes E or East, the left side W or West, and back side S or South.

Finally, as a last reminder, the breathing during the sequence must be smooth and fluid. Never hold the breath. Every inhalation and exhalation should last the length of the form for which it was indicated. The breathing controls the speed of the movements, rather than the movements controlling the breathing. This is extremely important to always keep in mind.

Yang Style Taijiquan Sequence (Traditional Long Form)

傳統楊氏太極拳

1. Beginning (Taiji Qi Shi) 太極起勢

Movements:

Figure 4-109: (N) Feet are slightly spread beyond shoulder width. Hands are at the waist, palms down. Wrists must be loose. Inhale and exhale naturally and comfortably. Pay attention to your Lower Dan Tian. This is a Wuji (無極) state. Remember to keep the middle finger and the thumb slightly forward while gently pushing the pinkie backward (Taiji hand form).

Figure 4-110: (N) Rotate the wrists so the palms face each other. Lift the arms up to shoulder height. Do not raise or make the shoulders tight. Inhale. From this movement, the Yin and Yang are discriminated. When you do this, imagine that you are picking up an object between your palms. One flow of Qi to the arms and the other flow to the bottom of the feet. You should always remember that the motion of every form is directed by the waist area, at the center of gravity (Real Dan Tian, 真丹田). The motion then passes through the spine and chest, finally reaching to the arms. It is said in *Taijiquan Classic* that: “The root is at the feet, (Jin or the movement is) generated from the legs, controlled by the waist and expressed by the fingers.”¹² In order to reach this goal, your waist must be relaxed and loose, since it is like the steering wheel of a car. When this place is stagnant, the entire body will be stiff.

Figure 4-111: (N) Point the palms down. Move down slowly into Horse Stance (Ma Bu, 馬步). Lower the arms to lower abdomen level. Exhale. When you do this, imagine that you are pushing some object downward. That



Figure 4-109



Figure 4-110

means your mind is about six inches in front of the palms. In this case, the Qi will be led outward through the center of the palm (Laogong cavity, P-8, 勞宮).

Analysis:

This beginning action is also called “Sink Qi to the Lower Dan Tian” (氣沉丹田). This means that you are leading the Qi to the Lower Dan Tian to build your root and firm your center. In order to accomplish this, your torso is upright, your head is suspended, and your elbows and shoulders are sunk.

2. Grasp the Sparrow’s Tail: Right (You Lan Que Wei) 右攬雀尾

Grasp Sparrow’s Tail in Chinese is Lan Que Wei. Lan means grasp or seize. This implies that when you apply this technique you not only intercept your opponent’s strike, but also grasp him. A sparrow’s tail is very light and fragile, and also sensitive and mobile. Therefore, when you grasp the sparrow’s tail you must be cautious and sensitive, and you cannot use muscular strength. You must lead your enemy’s attack lightly and skillfully into a bad position where you can do the technique. In the Taijiquan sequence there are two forms of Grasp Sparrow’s Tail: right and left. However, the left form should be the follow-up to the right form, and so some Taijiquan masters would prefer to refer to the Left Grasp Sparrow’s Tail as Diagonal Flying (Left).

Movements:

Figure 4-112: (N) Raise both arms up with the right palm facing in and the left hand supporting the right forearm and start to turn the body to your right. Start to inhale.

Figure 4-113: (E) Continue turning your body to your right and change your stance into Mountain Climbing Stance (Deng Shan Bu, 蹬山步) while moving both of your arms up until the right hand is on the height of the eyebrows, with the elbow down, fingers pointing up. Your right toes should be slightly inward and your left toes should be lined up with your left knee.



Figure 4-111



Figure 4-112



Figure 4-113



Figure 4-114

Figure 4-114: (E) Next, bring your left leg next to the right leg. Left leg is on its toes. Complete the inhalation.

Analysis:

Your right hand moves up to intercept the opponent's punch and lift it upward, exposing his chest to attack. Your left hand is ready to protect your chest or control his elbow. Move the left leg close to the right leg immediately after the deflection to close your groin area and prevent your opponent from kicking you. Only the toes of the left foot touch the ground, and there is no weight on it, which allows you to kick or step any way you like. Grasp



Figure 4-115



Figure 4-116

Sparrow's Tail (Right) deflects the opponent's punch and also sets him up for your attack.

3. Grasp the Sparrow's Tail: Left (Zuo Lan Que Wei) 左攬雀尾

This posture is a follow-up to the previous one. While the previous posture is used for defense, this posture is used as a follow-up attack. Sometimes, this form is called Diagonal Flying (Xie Fei Shi, 斜飛勢) instead of Grasp the Sparrow's Tail.

Movements:

Figure 4-115: (N) Step back with your left leg. Begin to exhale. Turn on the heels into Horse Stance (Ma Bu, 馬步). Turn your right palm in, brushing by the face. Your right palm turns down and left palm faces up.

Figure 4-116: (W) Continue to exhale. Turn your body to your left and change your stance into Mountain Climbing Stance (Deng Shan Bu, 蹬山步). Swing your left arm to the front and the right hand to the side, with the left palm facing in and the right palm facing down. Complete your exhalation.

Analysis:

This posture is used for attack. The right hand's downward motion generates leverage for the left hand's upward attack. Moreover, the right leg is also used to support the left hand's offensive action.

4. Wardoff (Peng) 棚

The Chinese word for Wardoff is Peng. Peng means to arc your arms and use them to push or bounce something away. It is used in expressions like Peng Kai (棚開)(push open or push away), which refers to the motion you wish you could use to wade through a crowd and bounce people out of your way.



Figure 4-117



Figure 4-118

Movements:

Figure 4-117: (W) Turn the body slightly to your left and rotate your left palm until it is facing downward. Inhale, cave in your chest, and arc your back.

Figure 4-118: (W) Bring the right foot to the side of left foot. Continue inhaling. Swing the right hand to the front of the body, turn the palm up to face the left palm.

Figure 4-119: (E) Step back with the right leg. Turn on the heels to E while shifting into Mountain Climbing Stance (Deng Shan Bu, 蹬山步) and swinging the right arm to your right with the arm horizontal, palm facing in and your left palm under the right forearm with palm facing forward and slightly down. Exhale.

Analysis:

When your right leg moves close to your left leg it protects the groin from attack, and is also set up for kicking. When you use Peng to bounce your enemy, treat yourself like a beach ball bouncing an outside pressure away. Also, when you bounce, your direction should be forward and slightly upward to pull the enemy's root up so that he will move more easily.



Figure 4-119



Figure 4-120



Figure 4-121

5. Rollback (Lu) 搬

Rollback in Chinese is called Lu. Lu means to lead or neutralize the incoming power to the side.

Movements:

Figure 4-120: (E) Extend the right hand upward while sinking your right elbow. Continue your exhalation from last posture.

Figure 4-121: (E) Coil your right hand clockwise and forward until the palm faces forward while turning your left palm to face upward. Begin to inhale.

Figure 4-122: (E) Sit back into Four-Six Stance (Si Liu Bu, 四六步). Move the right arm down to the front and the left hand to your left chest area. Complete your inhalation.

Figure 4-123: (E) Turn the hips slightly to your left. Make a gentle small clockwise circle with your left hand on the left side of the body. This movement does not have a practical application; instead, it is the signature of Yang's style of Taijiquan. Exhale.

Analysis:

The first part of this form is used to intercept and connect to the opponent's arm. Once you have connected, you then rollback to lead his force sideward and past you. When you do Small Rollback, the movements are small and



Figure 4-122



Figure 4-123



Figure 4-124

quick with the intent of exposing your opponent's vital cavities to attack. Large Rollback is a larger move which is commonly used to pull the opponent's center and make him lose balance so that you can attack. It is frequently used with a step backwards. In order for your Rollback to be effective, you must have a firm root and good Listening, Understanding, Adhering and Sticking, and Leading Jins.

6. Press (Ji) 擠

The Chinese word for this form is Ji, and it means to squeeze or press against. Both hands are used to press against your opponent or to squeeze part of his body.

Movements:

Figure 4-124: (E) Bring the left hand to the inner wrist of the right hand while inhaling. Face turns to the E.

Figure 4-125: (E) Shift into Mountain Climbing Stance (Deng Shan Bu, 蹬山步) and extend both hands forward while still touching. Exhale as the arms are extended.

Analysis:

The main purpose of this form is to make the opponent fall or bounce away, although it is also used to strike areas such as the solar plexus to seal the breath, or the shoulder blade to numb the shoulder.



Figure 4-125



Figure 4-126



Figure 4-127

7. Push Forward (An) 按

This form is called An in Chinese. The Chinese character for the word is made up of two figures meaning “hand” and “peace,” and has the meaning of using your hands to hold someone down and inhibit his motion. In everyday speech An means to press or push down. In Taijiquan, An can be used for either offense or defense. When it is used for offense, it is used to push and bounce the opponent away or to push-strike the vital cavities. When it is used for defense, it is used to stick to the opponent’s arm and immobilize it, preventing further action. When it is applied onto your enemy, he should feel that his arms have been pressed down and he can neither lift them up nor get away. In offense, push can be used in any direction. When it is applied to the enemy for defense, it is usually directed downward.

Movements:

Figure 4-126: (E) Slide the left hand over the right hand. Open the arms to the width of the shoulder. Palms face down. Sit back in Four-Six Stance (Si Liu Bu, 四六步) while raising the arms up and back in a circular motion. Start to inhale.

Figure 4-127: (E) Lower the arms to the chest in a circular motion. Fingers point forward. Complete your inhalation.

Figure 4-128: (E) Shift to Mountain Climbing Stance (Deng Shan Bu, 登山步) and push the hands forward while settling down your wrists. Exhale.

Analysis:

Like Press, Push is mainly used as a long Jin, although it is sometimes used with short Jin for cavity strikes. To understand how to use Push Jin (or Press Jin) to bounce the opponent, imagine that you are pushing a large beach ball and trying to bounce it away. If your Jin is too short, the ball will bounce you away. However, if your Jin is long and you have a good root, then the energy which the ball accumulates will bounce it away.



Figure 4-128



Figure 4-129

In Taijiquan, when you want to uproot the opponent and bounce him away you should push forward and upward. When you want to make your opponent lose his stability and fall you should push to the side or downward. To strike the opponent in the stomach or immobilize his arms, push downward. You can use a single hand push to strike the opponent's solar plexus and bounce him away by using the same principle which was explained in the discussion of Press. Naturally, in order to generate enough power to bounce or uproot your opponent you must have a firm root first and then you must have strong Push Jin.

8. Single Whip (Dan Bian) 單鞭

The name refers to the way the right hand is held in the sequence; the movement of the left hand is a follow-up movement. The Chinese name is Dan Bian. Dan means single or alone. Bian is a whip which can be made of leather, rattan, or even wood. When it is made of leather it is called Ruan Bian (軟鞭), or soft whip. When it is made of rattan it is called Ruan Ying Bian (軟硬鞭), which means soft-hard whip. When it is made of wood it is called Ying Bian (硬鞭), which means hard whip. In ancient times a whip was necessary when riding a horse, and naturally techniques were developed for using the whip in battle. Because the whip is not sharp, it is usually only used for deflecting.

In Taijiquan, Single Whip is used to lead the opponent's hand or weapon past your body. The motion is similar to how you might use the whip when riding a horse. The deflection can be soft like a soft whip or hard like a hard whip, depending on the situation.

Movements:

Figure 4-129: (N) Turn both hands to face forward. Keep the arms locked in the same position and turn to N on the right heel so the stance is Horse Stance (Ma Bu, 馬步). Arms swing with the body. Begin to inhale.

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